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The Swedish Defense Doctrine in the Postwar Era
Changes and Implications

Introductory remarks

The development and actual change of the Swedish defense doctrine in the period 1945–1982 has been brought to public attention through Wilhelm Agrell's doctoral dissertation *Alliansfrihet och atombomber, Kontinuitet och förändring i den svenska försvarsdoktrinen 1945–1982* (Non-Alignment and Nuclear Weapons. Continuity and Change in the Swedish Defense Doctrine 1945–1982).[1] Relying for a good part on an analysis of Agrell's research results, we shall discuss primarily the broader political implications of the probable next change of the actual, though not necessarily the explicit, Swedish defense doctrine.

Part of Agrell's aim was to elucidate "the character and development of Swedish security and defence policy."[2] This goal will be pursued also in this article, the main difference being that the analysis will be brought one step further and touch the future.

1

Agrell defines the defense doctrine as consisting of world views, threat perceptions, and recommendations (patterns) for action. World views and threat perceptions are regarded as the theoretical elements of the doctrine, whereas the patterns for action constitute the practical element. If a rational perspective, which is based upon the actors' own descriptions, is applied, recommendations for action will be logically entailed by the theoretical propositions. However, referring to Graham T Allison's work *Essence of Decision*,[3] Agrell contends that the rationalistic perspective must be supplemented by both an organizational and a structural one. This is necessary in order to take care of institutional interests and the general effects of research and development in defense-related areas.[4]

Agrell's purpose is "to identify what might be labeled the Swedish defense doctrine" in order to be able to scrutinize "the widespread belief that

the Swedish defense doctrine has remained essentially unchanged in the postwar era."[5] Already at the outset of his analysis, Agrell declares that this wide-spread belief is wrong. The doctrine has changed: "The emerging pattern of change in world views and threat perceptions indicates that nuclear weapons, in their capacity of threat as well as a means of defense, have played a decisive role in the development of the doctrine."[6]

In this way, the question of Swedish nuclear weapons is brought to bear directly on the Swedish defense doctrine and is no longer relegated to the political environment only. It is hypothesized that the availability or non-availability of a certain weapon affects the doctrine and not the other way around, i.e. that the defense needs, as defined by the doctrine, should determine what weapons are deemed necessary.

Agrell has made a qualitative content analysis of the manifest Swedish defense doctrine in the years 1945–1982. His description shows that the doctrine changed in the course of the sixties. A doctrine of unlimited defense goals was replaced by a doctrine of limited defense goals. The goal of limited defense has as its premise that the threats as well as the defense measures are of a limited character.[7] Agrell does not analyze the implications of this change for Swedish security policy in general. However, before we return to this problem, it is necessary to dwell upon some details in Agrell's analysis.

2

According to Agrell, the change in the Swedish defense doctrine was not caused by any change of world views or threat perceptions but by the fact that the military leaders in practice – though not in theory – abandoned the idea of Swedish nuclear weapons. Agrell summmarizes his findings as follows:

"The decisive turning point seems to have come in 1961–62, when the military authorities in practice abandon the prioritation of the nuclear weapons program and start arguing along different lines. The change in the strategic outlook and of the interpretation of the nuclear threat comes second.

The changed attitude towards the Swedish nuclear weapons program therefore causes a profound change of the whole nuclear weapons doctrine. This is necessary because the different elements of the doctrine had been explicitly linked. The change of the nuclear weapons doctrine in its turn causes important changes in the defense doctrine as a whole.

The abandonment of the nuclear weapons program means a sudden change from one doctrine to another. Unlimited defense is neither possible nor desirable any more."[8]

The central document which constitutes the basis of Agrell's content

analysis is *ÖB 62. Riktlinjer för krigsmaktens fortsatta utveckling.* (Supreme Command 62. Guidelines for the continued development of the military forces). Agrell shows that the text is incoherent, because there is no congruence between world views and threat perceptions, on the one hand, and the recommendations for action, on the other. The former still implicate Swedish nuclear weapons as the only effective means of defense, but the recommendations are based upon the thesis that a successful defense is possible with the use of conventional arms only. The lack of consistency in the text is evident, but in order to be able to explain how it came about, Agrell found it necessary to carry the analysis one step further, i.e. to go behind the document Supreme Command 62.

Agrell has analyzed the secret archival sources left by the working commission within the Defense Staff which prepared Supreme Command 62. The analysis shows that the Air Force, through its representative, expressed reservations as regards the nuclear weapons line and argued that it was necessary to "make clear which conventional arms could be acquired for the nuclear weapons money." On another occasion, but at roughly the same time, the representative of the Air Force underlined that the Chief of the Air Force shared the sceptical attitude towards nuclear weapons. At that time, in the spring of 1961, the Chief of the Air Force was General Rapp, who succeeded General Swedlund as commander-in-chief on 1 October 1961. Swedlund had been strongly in support of nuclear weapons. The Defense Staff decided to concentrate the arguments in Supreme Command 62 on "the basic question" (Agrell writes "the big question"), i.e., "unanimous recommendations for continued long range planning and development within reasonable economic limits."[9] Within these limits there was not any place for the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Why was the Air Force – which had been in favor of nuclear weapons in the early fifties – against the idea of nuclear armament in 1961, and why did the whole nuclear weapons program head for a crisis? According to Agrell, the causes were not related to world views or threat perceptions. They were organizational:

> "Because of the budgetary situation, the expansion of costs and the technological developments, the Air Force had, around 1960, small organizational interests in a nuclear weapons program, as it would not have any appropriate carriers for these weapons. Instead the primary institutional interest was . . . to try to maintain as much as possible of the existing military organization. Consequently, the nuclear weapons project lost one of its main supporters."[10]

There were also other reasons why the nuclear weapons program went into a crisis. At this time, the nuclear weapons committee of the ruling Social Democratic Party had given its consent only to research on defense against nuclear weapons (although it was admitted that it was hard to define the borderline to research aimed at their construction). This meant that "a de-

cision which might openly have started the program" was ruled out, as the party line was the same as government policy. At the same time, the civil nuclear research program abandoned the "Swedish" heavy water line, which would have given plutonium for an eventual weapons production.[11]

3

The remarkable point in Agrell's analysis is not the simple observation that the military leaders abandoned the nuclear option in the beginning of the sixties. What is of interest is the thesis that the abandonment of the nuclear option entailed a change in the defense doctrine, from unlimited to limited defense goals, as well as a subsequent adaptation to this change of the expressed threat perceptions. The logic was that it is possible to defend Sweden successfully without recourse to nuclear weapons only in the case of a limited war, when the whole of Sweden is not attacked at one and the same time with all the resources of a great power. Related to this is Agrell's thesis that a defense doctrine – in the present case Sweden's – is not the result of logical and rational connections between world views, threat perceptions and recommendations for action, but rather the effect of organizational interests and structural traits in societal development in general. Have the implications for the Swedish defense doctrine passed unnoticed?

Already in 1979, a researcher at the Swedish Defense Research Institute, Lars B. Wallin, observed that the nuclear option was abandoned in the early sixties. Wallin noted that a new Swedish defense policy evolved in the sixties, "partly as a result of the decision to abstain from developing a Swedish nuclear weapon, partly as a result of a growing conviction that a defense designed to fight a nuclear war could not be achieved at reasonable costs and that a large-scale nuclear war on Swedish territory would have unacceptable consequences."

Wallin gave the impression that the threat perceptions were changing parallel to this. It is obviously his opinion that the decision to abstain from nuclear weapons entailed a change in defense policy. In this case, policy is equivalent to what Agrell labels "doctrine."[12]

The problem thus has been approached in earlier research, although the change in the doctrine is not seen as problematical by Wallin. Supreme Command 62 and the end of the nuclear option has also been treated by J. H. Garris, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation in 1972.[13] Garris's primary concern is not the defense doctrine as such but the broader public debate on nuclear weapons, but he does go into the arguments of the Swedish military. He notes:

"ÖB-62 is an unusual document because it devotes more than six pages to the question of Swedish atomic weapons despite the fact that the debate was generally con-

sidered over. This is a considerable surprise since ÖB-57, written at the height of the debate, only contained a little over two pages of discussion."[14]

In distinction to Agrell, Garris does not discern that Supreme Command 62 actually does not plead for nuclear weapons, but all the same he seems convinced that the nuclear option was dismissed in practice. Garris does not discuss the defense doctrine, but he sees that the necessary abstention from nuclear weapons influenced the thinking of the military. He finds that this happened simultaneously with a change in the expressed threat perceptions:

"While the military proposed the immediate acquisition of atomic weapons in 1957, seven years later they called only for certain preparatory research to keep the nuclear option open. This change in the military's attitudes is partly due to the growing general consensus in Sweden against atomic weapons. It is also due in part to changes in the strategic situation between East and West and the stress placed upon limited non-nuclear warfare by Secretary McNamara."[15]

Garris thus indicates a turning point in the attitude towards nuclear weapons in the early sixties and he seems to believe that Swedish domestic political reasons lay behind the changed arguments of the military. However, he does not consider the abstention from nuclear weapons to be the main cause behind the change in the Swedish defense doctrine.

We can summarize our scrutiny of the state of research by concluding that the early sixties have been regarded as a turning point prior to Agrell's investigation, without, however, the underlying processes in military thinking and in nuclear power policy in general being duly acknowledged. The implication of both Wallin and Garris is that what caused the change in the defense doctrine was political developments. Agrell has turned our attention to the organizational and structural causes of the change.

4

However, more can be said about the thesis that world views and threat perceptions play a minor role in the development of the action recommendations of the Swedish defense doctrine. In his scrutiny of the military's view of international developments and of the risk of a war between the great powers, Agrell notes with a certain surprise that the Supreme Command uses the term "cold war" not to denote a certain historical period but to denote a form or level of conflict.[16] Agrell contends that as the discussion on the cold war regards the relationship between the super powers, the term should be used to denote a period in global developments. In the chapter in question, Agrell himself is using the subtitles "The Cold War" and "A New Cold War or a Temporary Defeat?", i.e. as labels for periodization. However, if one looks more closely into the military use of the term

"the cold war," one recognizes that the context is not that of international tension or detente, but the belief that there is always war, in general and against Sweden in particular. According to this view, a cold war is a war which is fought by non-military means, at least without the active use of arms.

It should not come as a surprise, then, that the Supreme Command describes the cold war as a "means" in the power struggle of the great powers.[17] This understanding of the concept is also behind a statement in 1957 by the director of the Swedish National Defense Research Institute, Martin Fehrm, that "news [about weapons] has value also in the cold war and is therefore published."[18]

Supreme Command 62 defines "psychological warfare" as a kind of cold war. It states that Sweden "for the time being" is not the primary goal of any cold war but takes care to note that "in the country there are many organs and organizations that already in peacetime carry out such an activity, directed against Sweden." It is added that it is probable that in the cold war which will precede a hot war against Sweden "other means and methods of psychological warfare will also be used." The summary of Supreme Command 62 makes it clear that this interpretation of the concept of cold war is the basis for the argument that a strong military defense is always necessary:

"The political, psychological and economic power of resistance must be sufficient to counter a 'cold war'. A sufficient power of resistance can be acquired only if the state authorities and the people trust the ability of the military forces and the civil defense to solve their tasks."[19]

In Supreme Command 65 this understanding of the concept of cold war comes through still more clearly:

"In peacetime, an aggressive power may try to obtain concessions in one form or another with the help of political, economic and psychological measures or through the threat of military violence – *cold war*. This activity, which is more often than not being pursued in internationally acknowledged forms, is in a certain sense permanent. Even Sweden is concerned."

Also in this case, the thesis about the constant cold war is used in support of the argument for a strong military defense:

"Because of our stable domestic political conditions, an adversary probably would not have any possibilities of defeating us through a cold war. Our military defense in these circumstances does play an important role as a support for our policy of non-alignment and for our ability to resist external pressures."[20]

Commenting on Supreme Command 65, a teacher at the Royal Military College stated that "measures at a lower level" [than all-out general war] were "far more probable" against "political objects of compensation in Scandinavia":

"The great power may begin with using political and/or economic pressures – cold war and seclusion – to force the state in question to yield."[21]

According to the Swedish military in the period under scrutiny, cold war is not a state in international relations but a means of war, a kind of warfare against which it is necessary to take precautions already during what is regarded, in normal language, as "peace". This use of the term "cold war" is not accidental but of great importance as an indication of the main thrust of the military's attempt to combine military defense and political means in a comprehensive security policy package.

5

The thesis about the constant cold war implies that it is necessary to keep a (very) strong Swedish military defense in all circumstances. However, the military constantly used a number of other arguments to support the demands for a retained or even increased defense capability. This is noted and reported by Agrell. Supreme Command 47 states that even if the great powers disarm to some degree, this fact does not entail lesser demands on the Swedish defense, as "significant forces" can be used against Sweden in any case. Analyzing Supreme Command Answer 67, Agrell can conclude that it adheres to the notion that "no stabile tendencies of far-reaching and prolonged detente can be discerned, rather the contrary" and, moreover, that it states that "any decision to weaken our defense in a significant way most probably would not promote international detente." Agrell observes that detente now is even used as an argument for the retention of a strong Swedish defense.[22]

It must be underlined that the arguments of the Swedish military follow the logic of "heads I win, tails you lose." Whatever happens, there is war; whether hot or cold does not matter much as far as Swedish armament needs are concerned – they are always on the increase. Without highlighting this special logic, Agrell notes the tendency also at such a late date as Supreme Command 80, "where detente is *not* regarded as a process changing the foundations of the relations between the super powers but as one in a series of long waves in a constant super power contradiction in the post-war era."[23]

Agrell interprets this as an argument about "a new cold war," but according to my analysis above of the Swedish military's language, it is rather an expression of the thesis of the permanent war – hot or cold. And even if the cold war – in the military's own sense – between the super powers would cease, the need for a strong Swedish defense would remain. Supreme Command 80 argues that a far-reaching understanding between the super powers might be detrimental to the interests of small states. Isolated Swedish disarmament would not promote security:

"Since the late sixties, our country has diminished its defense efforts. This has taken place against a background of expectations in the positive results of the policy of detente and expectations of diminution of the military forces in the environment. These expectations have not been met. Developments have instead, for a number of years, gone in the opposite direction. The cuttings of our defense have not served either as an example to emulate even in our closest surroundings. The diminished defense efforts are now definitely making themselves felt in our military organization. Our defense ability is decreasing.

In situations when the military resources in our surroundings are increasing, a continuation of the line begun may lead to a questioning of our will to pursue our neutrality policy."[24]

The arguments of Supreme Command 80 might make one believe that the military at an earlier point in time considered the defense assignments to be sufficient and in accordance with the threat perceptions. However, this is not the case. Agrell touches this aspect when he discusses "Wiberg's law," i.e. Håkan Wiberg's theses on "the appropriate threat" and on "the great leap." The first part of the law says that it is the existing defense structure and its organizational goals that determine the kind of threat picture to be sketched. Both threats that are too limited and those that are too serious are dismissed, without regard for their respective probability. The latter part of the law says that the defense organization may increase its capability considerably if only it gets, say, three percent more assignments, while a decrease in its budget of, say, one percent might cause inability to act at all.[25]

Agrell notes that the thesis of "the appropriate threat" is reasonable as a general principle, and he refinds the thesis of "the great leap" to lie behind the arguments in Supreme Command 57. However, it is evident that "Wiberg's law" is paramount in the Swedish military mind. Already Supreme Command 47 contends that the state budgetary assignments are too meager to cover the needs of defense.[26] Supreme Command 54 argues that it is impossible to keep costs at the previous level.[27] Supreme Command 62 contends that "the existing balance of power between the great powers . . . has even increased our ability to secure, at a reasonable increase of costs, the peacekeeping effect of our defense,"[28] and Supreme Command Answer 67 refers implicitly to the thesis of "the great leap" when it concludes that the difference in costs between the different levels suggested has as its counterpart a significantly greater difference in defense capabilities.[29]

One may even say that some of the political actors were aware of "Wiberg's law." At the congress of SSU (the Social Democratic Youth Union) in 1958 a speaker quoted defense minister Torsten Nilsson as having said "the defense will never be strong enough but it will always be too expensive." The young social democrat in question used the statement as proof of the assertion that it was impossible to pay for a sufficiently strong defense.[30]

6

The above analysis of the military's understanding of the concept "cold war" and of its general adherence to "Wiberg's law," supports the hypothesis that the practical part of the defense doctrine, i.e. that which refers to action, does not need any theoretical foundations expressing world views or threat perceptions. These may be adapted to the organizational prerogatives and aims at will.

To abandon the nuclear option is to abandon the doctrine of unlimited defense, as Agrell correctly points out.[31] However, it must be underlined that in this perspective the problem to explain is not why the Swedes discussed the possibility of nuclear weapons for defense, but why they decided to abstain from such weapons.

Whereas Agrell concentrates his analysis on sources emanating from the Supreme Command, defense committees and propositions in the Swedish parliament, and reaches the conclusion that the nuclear option was abandoned in 1961–1962, data from other sources indicate that the actual decision may have been over-determined, i.e. implicated by earlier events. It is noteworthy that Agrell himself, when reviewing the plea for nuclear armament in Supreme Command 57, observes that "the intense public debate" already decided the way the argument was presented. In 1959 a petition from the Supreme Command for money for nuclear construction research was rejected not only with the argument that the parliament in 1958 had decided that a decision on the nuclear weapon question should be postponed, but also with the argument that an attitude of wait-and-see was of importance in order to underline how vital it was to Sweden to reach international agreements on a test ban and on a limitation of the production of nuclear arms. In 1958, 1959, and 1960, the Swedish parliament had decided that freedom of action should be preserved, i.e. that no decision on the acquisition of nuclear weapons should be taken as long as international developments remained obscure.[32]

Agrell points to an important political background to the question by mentioning the apparent ambitions among the Social Democratic leaders to postpone a decision in order to avoid causing an open split in the party, a split that could be taken advantage of by the bourgeois opposition. There was not any *political* freedom of action left.[33] This conclusion receives strong support in political sources not used by Agrell.

Whereas Agrell's conclusion that to avoid an open split in the party was an important motive behind the Social Democratic postponement line, the matter had wider implications. A new, qualitatively different defense doctrine was in the making. At the congress of the Social Democratic Youth Union in 1958, Olof Palme argued for a postponement rather than a definite decision against Swedish nuclear defense. The argument was that as long as Sweden kept its option open, the country could induce the great powers

to try to reach internationally binding agreements on non-proliferation and a test ban.[34]

Consequently, those "supporting" Swedish nuclear defense among the Social Democrats treated the open option not as an element that was important to the defense doctrine in a military sense, but as an instrument of general security policy, an instrument for international political influence. Sweden should *threaten* to acquire nuclear weapons to force the nuclear powers to agree on a non-proliferation agreement. In this way the possibilities of the proliferation of nuclear bombs and the concomitant risks of nuclear war would be reduced. This argument was public and also known by the Swedish military.

On the eve of the Social Democratic Youth Union congress in 1958, its leaders made a statement on the nuclear power question which is worth quoting:

"It seems obvious that the nuclear powers are interested in stopping other nations from acquiring nuclear weapons. This knowledge must exert a certain pressure on the nuclear powers to try to reach an agreement that restricts the possession of nuclear weapons to those who already have them. This pressure would of course decrease if potential nuclear powers say no to nuclear weapons in advance and regardless of developments. If the great powers reach an agreement, the question would lose its relevance for Sweden."[35]

During the congress, Olof Palme was outspoken regarding this tactical dimension:

"The equation of world politics used to be dominated by Eisenhower and Khrushchev, but suddenly new factors enter: Nasser and Ben Gurion, the Indians, the Pakistani, Franco, de Gaulle. The great powers . . . cannot control all these states. Because of this the thought of one small state after another acquiring nuclear weapons must be a nightmare for them. – . . . maybe the small states can . . . blackmail the great powers."[36]

Shortly thereafter, a similar argument was forwarded by the Social Democratic nuclear committee. It argued that as Sweden had the technical competence soon to produce nuclear weapons, it had especially good merits for reminding other states of the great risks inherent in a proliferation of nuclear weapons.[37]

This line of argument was well known by the military. Already in 1957, the Social Democrat and infantry officer Nils Sköld – who subsequently came to belong to the group preparing the background analysis for Supreme Command 62 – had the following to say at the Social Democratic Youth Union conference:

"I think it is obvious that if we acquire nuclear weapons this cannot impede our work for peace, disarmament and a ban on nuclear weapons. If we intend to work for peace, our position would rather be stronger. We say that we find the world situation disquieting. The great powers cannot reach an agreement. In this dangerous

world we have to look after our own house. However, at the same time we say: Basically, we want an agreement. We want to try every possibility to reach an agreement on a ban on nuclear weapons. And if an agreement guaranteeing our security is reached, we will abstain from all preparations and immediately cancel our [nuclear] project. I find this to be a stronger position than to say: We will never acquire nuclear weapons."[38]

Sköld's statement may have been tactical in the sense that he presented an argument that really would keep the nuclear option open in spite of the strong opposition among Social Democrats. However, by making the statement, Sköld implicitly recognized the political – not military – nature of the option. It is not unlikely that Sköld's military superiors came to the conclulsion that the nuclear option, because of political considerations, was no longer a reliable basis for Sweden's defense doctrine.

Given that the Supreme Command during the whole period under investigation took the position that the defense needed more money, and given that already in the late 1950s it must have realized the impossibility of a nuclear weapons doctrine, the plea for nuclear weapons in Supreme Command 62 must be considered to be an orderly retreat, and nothing more.

Agrell is correct in his assertion that a change of doctrine should be gradual and not sudden in order to be trustworthy, if the change is caused primarily by the organization's wish to underline its own importance.[39] However, in this case the incipient change of doctrine may be explained with the help of rationalistic arguments also, i.e. by viewing the military as "political men" and not only as members of a certain organization.

7

Regardless of the level of analysis chosen – structure, organization, political scene – Agrell's thesis on the change of the Swedish defense doctrine is firmly anchored in the source material. However, by stressing the political dimension more than Agrell has done, one has a better basis for understanding the subsequent development of the official Swedish defense policy. Playing with the nuclear option as a threat in international politics – cf Palme's arguments in the late 1950s – the political leaders of the country removed the core of defense policy from the military to the political arena. From now on, i.e. from the late 1950s, Swedish security was to be safeguarded not only by military defense but also by an active international policy. This new line acquires a certain significance in light of military developments in the Nordic area during the last quarter century. This is exactly the point where Agrell's interesting analysis must be brought one step further.

Our point of departure is Agrell's observation that the doctrine of unlimited defense could be coupled both to the theory of isolated Swedish war fighting capability and to the notion of marginal deterrence. According to

the latter, the overriding conflict was between the great powers. Sweden's defense needed to match only those forces that the great powers could use after having deployed the bulk of their forces against the principal adversary. Agrell concludes that it follows from the doctrine of marginal deterrence that the best defense policy for Sweden is to design its military defense against the superior part in the balance of power, or, more precisely, against that great power which constitutes the most obvious offensive threat in the Nordic area. From Supreme Command 47 to Supreme Command 65 is stressed help from the West to the Swedish defense in case of an attack, and Agrell apparently interprets this to be the consequence of the combination of the marginal deterrence theory and the original unlimited defense doctrine.[40]

It is only in his postscript that Agrell touches upon the broader implications of Swedish relations with the West. He argues that the lack of historical analyses of this question "has created a blindness that probably has contributed to the confusion typical for the debate on problems of security policy in the beginning of the 80s."[41]

The relations with the West have obviously been important for the theory of marginal deterrence not only during the period of the doctrine of unlimited defense, but also during the very beginning of the period of the doctrine of limited defense. Agrell has reminded us of the presence of this dimension both before and after 1961–1962, i.e. the alleged year of change in the doctrine. After 1965, however, there are no indications of a counting on the West in the Swedish defense doctrine. The theory of marginal deterrence is pushed into the background.

The security problems of the early 1980s, referred to by Agrell, are connected with the well-known Soviet military violations of Swedish territorial waters and air space. What is of interest in the context of this discussion, is that the increased pressure from the East comes in a situation when reliance on the West has been obliterated from the Swedish defense doctrine, a doctrine which now is one of limited defense. Limited defense goals and a very vague theory of marginal deterrence:[42] what are the implications for the future?

The question posed above can be discussed in terms of "balance or bandwagoning." This theory of international relations says that a small state that perceives a threat from a stronger neighbor either can ally itself with a more distant, strong adversary of the threatening neighbor – balance – or comply with the demands of the neighbor – bandwagon. The American scholar Stephen M. Walt has made an investigation of both the theory and some practical applications of it. He has made the following observation:

"Although statesmen frequently justify their actions by invoking the bandwagoning hypothesis, history provides little evidence for this assertion. On the contrary, balance of power theorists from Ranke forward have persistently and persuasively shown that states facing an external threat overwhelmingly prefer to balance against the threat rather than bandwagon with it. This is primarily because an align-

ment that preserves most of a state's freedom of action is preferable to accepting subordination under a political hegemon. Because intentions can change and perceptions are unreliable, it is safer to balance against potential threats than to hope that strong states will remain benevolent."[43]

Walt points out how the United States has experienced "counterproductive excesses" in its foreign policy because of the neglect of the strong tendency to balance among small states. There has been an exaggeration of the risk that states bordering on the USSR would bandwagon, and there has been an attempt to frighten states lying close to the United States – Cuba, Nicaragua – to bandwagon. United States policy has been of the self-fulfilling negative prophecy kind, or so one must interpret Walt on this point. However, as regards the allies in Western Europe, the policy has been successful and also beneficial for Western Europe, Walt argues:

"For the medium powers of Western Europe and Asia, the U.S. is the perfect ally. It is sufficiently powerful to contribute substantially to their defense, it is driven by its own concerns to oppose Soviet expansion, and yet it is sufficiently distant from those allies so that it does not itself pose a significant threat."[44]

By implication, Walt's argument is relevant for Sweden as well, as long as its defense doctrine counted on help from the West. In Sweden's case, "reliance" on the West, ultimately on the United States, must be said to have been of the balance and not of the bandwagon kind. As Agrell has remarked, during the early postwar era, Sweden had a comparatively strong military defense which gave it a special position among the small states of Europe.[45] However, for reasons of foreign policy, balancing towards the United States could not be officially acknowledged to be a part of the Swedish defense doctrine.

When the defense capability of Sweden began to decline – in relative terms – in the mid-1960s, the question of balance vis-à-vis bandwagon took on a new significance. Supreme Command 80 remarked that the environment had increased its attention to the reductions in the strength of the Swedish defense forces.[46] Whereas militarily Sweden can be said to have been a medium power up to the beginning of the 1960s, Sweden in the 1980s must be considered a weak power. Balancing away from the threatening neighbor made sense as long as the effect of marginal deterrence was believed in. But what happens when the overruling doctrine is one of limited defense and the theory of marginal deterrence is practically abandoned?

Walt observes that although bandwagoning is less usual than balancing, it may occur if one of three conditions is at hand: 1) the state is so weak that it is highly vulnerable to pressure and militarily worthless to either side; 2) any help from the "other" side is improbable; 3) there is a close ideological community between the weak state and its strong neighbor.[47]

One must note that all three conditions are vaguely defined. Their operationalization in politics or research demands a close scrutiny of the actual

circumstances. It must also be added that the concept of "collective security" may make the picture more complicated as one can imagine an international system of checks and balances that makes invalid the simple balance-bandwagon dichotomy.[48]

For Sweden vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, condition number three among Walt's alternatives is ruled out for obvious reasons. However, given the technological and global strategic developments in the 1980s, Walt's conditions one and two are relevant. Under circumstances when balancing is abandoned in the explicit, open Swedish defense doctrine, and when a system of collective security in the Nordic area is improbable, bandwagoning is implicated, though probably not consciously chosen nor perceived as a politically tolerable option.

8

The question of nuclear weapons and the way this option was practically abandoned are acquiring new importance in the light of what has been said above. The abstention from nuclear weapons meant abstention from the doctrine of unlimited defense and, within a rather short time, from the theory of marginal deterrence as well. In practice, politics was substituted for military defense, at least as concerns the relative weight given to these two components of the broad concept "security policy." But if military capability is comparatively weak and "confidence-building" and "active" foreign policy part of the security policy, bandwagoning after the strong neighbor is an obvious objective option. It is reasonable to assume that the great power whose "confidence" is judged to be most important is the one which is closest to the small state both geographically and in terms of military forces available for immediate attack.

In the perspective just outlined, we can apprehend the significance of the Swedish military's use of the term "cold war" up to 1965. A cold war with the threatening neighbor is part of a balancing away, meant to create and sustain the ideological and socio-psychological environment of a military defense intended to be able to carry out marginal deterrence. Whereas the military continued to argue for a strong military defense, for example in Supreme Command 80, the political decisions ran counter to their wishes. Relative Swedish disarmament had gone so far by the early 1980s that the balancing inherent in the original postwar doctrine could not be pursued as a viable alternative any more. This cannot be admitted officially, but the growing difficulty to duck the question comes through in a declaration by the 1984 Defense Committee:

"It may be noted that the number of qualified units in Sweden's armed forces has diminished in the last deccades. But the fundamental aim of our defence policy – to make an aggressor's sacrifices in conjunction with an attempt to invade or otherwise exploit our country considerably greater than the possible gains – still lies with-

in the bounds of our economic and technical potential."[49]

To this quotation should be added the judgment that the political will to utilize the "economic and technical potential" must be at hand if the "fundamental aim of our defense policy" should be met. Accordingly, we would argue that politics, not economic potential, is the key, and that the general domestic political development has been and will be more important for the actual and eventual changes of the Swedish defense doctrine than the changing world views and threat perceptions expressed in the military sources. As noted above, the term "cold war" in these sources does not express a world view but simply a commitment to balancing and marginal deterrence as integrated elements in the defense doctrine.

If the thesis on the incipient bandwagoning behind the USSR is true, one can say that the Swedish defense doctrine has adapted to the reality of being a militarily weak power. In this perspective, security policy means accommodation with the strong neighbor and not a commitment to safeguard national sovereignty at any price.

The conclusion might seem both premature and insidious. However, it is our contention that much as the practical abandonment of the nuclear option occurred well before the official acknowledgment to abstain from these weapons, today the practical abandonment of the theory of marginal deferrence and hence of the military option as such is under way without any acknowledgment at all. As in the case of nuclear weapons, the primary reasons are political and not organizational, i.e. not dependent on the military establishment. They are not structural either, i.e. in the meaning of being dependent on any defense industry inertia. (As we shall argue below, it is rather a question of the insufficient capability of the domestic defense industry.) As was the case also with the abandonment of the nuclear option, the opposite of what is going on is stated in official sources. Our stern argument makes a rather long quotation from the 1984 Defense Committee necessary:

"Preparations and consultations with a view to military collaboration with other states in wartime are out of the question. In procuring equipment we must seek to avoid such dependence on other countries as could make us susceptible to pressure. We must be able to use and maintain our equipment independently of others.

A domestic defense industry with a competence for development and production facilitates the accomplishment of these aims. It also makes it easier to procure equipment that is specially suited to our environment and our system of compulsory military service. In addition, it makes it possible to chose our own defence profile, designed to reduce the effects of the weapons and countermeasures developed by the power blocs against one another."[50]

It is easy to discern elements of political bargaining in the quotation. Those stressing the value of the conscript army have got their say, those defending the interests of the technologically advanced industry, with its stake in military equipment production, have got theirs. Whereas the in-

tentions are good and honorable, it is very difficult to call them realistic. Implicit in the argument is the notion of symmetry, i.e. of keeping an equal distance to both superpowers. In practice, however, self-sufficiency in weapons procurement, apart from putting the national economy under enormous strain, means increasing the military technological distance from the one countervailing, i.e. balance power, the United States. It is not realistic to assume that it is possible to create political unity behind a policy of drastic increases in defense expenditures, as would be necessary to sustain domestic production of all vital components and systems. For all practical purposes, reducing the links with the distant balance power cannot imply increased absolute independence but may rather make bandwagoning behind the big neighbor seem the logical option. It is not a question of willing, and absolutely not of bad will, but a matter of expediency.

Wilhelm Agrell has shown the fruitfulness of viewing the defense doctrine of Sweden not as a factor determining Swedish defense and security policy but as a function of other, and as has turned out to be the case, more basic factors. Whereas Agrell has stressed the importance of the organizational perspective in the analysis, the present study has tried to show that the traditional political aspect is very important as well. Agrell's basic methodological approach has been preserved in the respect that the causes of change are supposed not to be pointed out in the source material. They must be deduced by way of an analysis of the broader political context. In essence this is a corroboration of the thesis that while history cannot be written without sources, the written sources must not be allowed to speak for themselves.[51] This rule is as important when it comes to the interpretation of contemporary political sources, including the statements of political actors, as when one is analyzing medieval chronicles. However, in our case a special dimension of contemporaneousness must be underlined.

Whereas we see it as natural, and therefore take it for granted, that the past must be reinterpreted and cannot be described in the same terms as those used by the original actors, it is a good deal more difficult to realize that in the contemporary world as well there may be something going on under the surface that must be interpreted and that cannot be taken at face value. This means that the researcher must make a conscious attempt to distance himself from his role as a citizen, as one taking part in the historical process, and view that process instead from a distance. In the present case viewing it from a distance means that we have analyzed not what the actors involved have thought or believed that they have been doing. Instead we have treated the military and the politicians as historical actors. Accordingly, what has been sought in the analysis is not the conscious reasons and motives of these actors but the historical significance of their actions. It is part of the game that this significance may not be realized or acknowledged by the actors themselves.

Concluding remarks

It is our conclusion that both organizational and political processes were important factors behind the change of the Swedish defence doctrine from unlimited to limited defense, and that the political factor alone probably will be the main cause of the potential next change, from balancing to bandwagoning. The structural factor is also present, of course, but only in the vague sense that contemporary developments have made it impossible for a small country like Sweden to be scientifically, technologically and economically self-sufficient. However, whereas Agrell's results regarding the past can hardly be refuted – history cannot be changed – our hypothesis about the way the political factor will operate in the future may be rejected by reality. Theoretically, the option of close military technological collaboration with the West and of balancing towards the United States and away from the Soviet Union is still open for Sweden.[52]

NOTES

1. Stockholm 1985. For a critical review of Agrell, see Kristian Gerner, "Den svenska försvarsdoktrinens historia", *Historisk Tidskrift* 1987 (forthcoming).
2. Agrell, p. 15 f.
3. Boston 1971.
4. Agrell, pp. 24 ff.
5. Ibid., p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 9.
7. Ibid., pp. 263 f., 269 f.
8. Ibid., p. 285 ff.
9. Ibid., pp. 310, 321 f, 327.
10. Ibid., p. 357.
11. Ibid., pp. 359 f.
12. Wallin, Lars B., *Doctrines, Technology and Future War. A Swedish View,* Stockholm 1979, p. 54.
13. Garris, J. H., *Sweden and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Study in Restraint,* Los Angeles 1972 (unpubl. doct. diss.).
14. Garris, p 306.
15. Ibid., pp. 331 f.
16. Agrell, p. 124 (regarding "Supreme Command 54"), p. 155 ("Supreme Command 80").
17. Ibid., p. 17.
18. *Vårt framtida försvar.* SSU:s 3:e försvarskonferens 5–6/11 1957, Stockholm 1958, p. 13.
19. *ÖB-62. Riktlinjer för krigsmaktens fortsatta utveckling,* Stockholm 1962, p. 66.
20. *ÖB-65. Utredning om det militära försvarets fortsatta utveckling.* Stockholm 1965, pp. 53, 55.
21. Wulff, Torgil, "Sveriges säkerhetspolitiska situation", *Strategisk Bulletin,* No. 4, 1965, p. 26.
22. Agrell, p. 92 ("Supreme Command 47"), p. 142 ("Supreme Command Answer 67").
23. Ibid., p. 155.
24. *ÖB-80. Perspektivplan del 2,* Stockholm 1980, pp. 35, 140.
25. Agrell, pp. 118, 187, 191 note 46.
26. *Vårt framtida försvar – överbefälhavarens förslag* ("Supreme Command 47"), Malmö 1947, pp. 230 ff.
27. "Alltjämt ett starkt försvar. ÖB-förslaget 1954" ("Supreme Command 54"), *Kontakt med krigsmakten,* No. 10–12, 1954, p. 362.

28. *ÖB-62*, p. 3.
29. *ÖB-svaret 1967*, Stockholm 1967, p. 45.
30. *SSU:s kongress 1958*. Protokoll, Stockholm 1958, p. 244.
31. Agrell, p. 287.
32. Ibid., pp. 222 ff.
33. Ibid., p. 359.
34. *SSU:s kongress 1958*, pp. 281 f.
35. Ibid., p. 95.
36. Ibid., pp. 280 f.
37. *Neutralitet, Försvar, Atomvapen*, Stockholm 1960, p. 104.
38. *Vårt framtida försvar*, p. 93.
39. Agrell, p. 288.
40. Ibid., p. 175.
41. Ibid., pp. 381 f.
42. Cf. *Sweden's Security Policy: Entering the 90s*. Report by the 1984 Defence Committee, SOU 1985:23, unofficial translation, p. 58.
43. Walt, Stephen M., "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", *International Security, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1985*, p. 15.
44. Ibid., p. 36.
45. Agrell, p. 70.
46. *ÖB-80* (2), p. 124.
47. Walt, pp. 16 ff.
48. I thank Sven Tägil for this important observation.
49. *Sweden's Security Policy: Entering the 90s*, p. 84.
50. Ibid., pp. 85 f.
51. See further Nilsson, Göran B., "Om det fortfarande behovet av källkritik", *Historisk Tidskrift*, No. 2, 1973.
52. Cf. Goldmann, Kjell, "Blir neutralitetspolitiken omöjlig?" and "Vi kan inte bara strunta i varningssignalerna", *Svenska Dagbladet* 1.6. and 1.7. 1983. In the former article, Goldmann invited to a discussion of whether a Swedish pact of friendship, security and help with NATO, along the lines of the Finnish pact with the USSR, could be an instrument for strengthening Sweden's policy of neutrality under the conditions of the 1980s. After receiving much criticism for this unorthodox suggestion in the ensuing debate, Goldmann in his second article emphasized that he had in mind a situation of increased Soviet threat and insufficient Swedish military defense. Our concluding remark should be interpreted in the light of this scenario.