

Northern Flank by Göran Haglund

Norway turns socialist

With the resignation of the conservatives, the party of Soviet spy Treholt has been charged with the defense of Norway.

Failing to ram his austerity package through parliament, Premier Kaare Willoch of Norway's conservative Høyre party officially resigned on May 2, advising King Olav to assign the Norwegian Labor Party, Arbeiderpartiet, the task of forming a new government.

By a proverbial pen stroke, Willoch decided that his adherence to conservative budget-cutting mania had to prevail over safeguarding the integrity of NATO's northern flank.

The socialist government of Norwegian Labor leader Gro Harlem Brundtland will be a minority regime, facing a four-party non-socialist opposition comprising 80 of the 157 seats of the Storting, Norway's parliament. The inability of Willoch to unify the non-socialist majority coalition around a viable economic policy has prompted this majority to prefer becoming the opposition, abandoning its governmental responsibilities.

But the new socialist minority regime does not only have just as poor a notion of the economic policy required to deal with Norway's staggering balance of payments deficit, incurred as a result of the oil price collapse. It is also heavily biased against meeting the Soviet military buildup on the northern flank by a strong NATO defense position.

The Norwegian branch of the Socialist International, Mrs. Brundtland's Arbeiderpartiet, has never clearly distanced itself from the activities of convicted spy Arne Treholt, who was a prominent representative of the new generation of Norwegian

Labor Party leaders until his arrest in 1984 as a top Soviet KGB spy.

Just two weeks before Willoch's resignation, the Soviet Northern Fleet, headquartered in Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula, conducted large-scale maneuvers off the Norwegian coast. The maneuvers included landing of a reinforced marine infantry brigade—about 4,000 elite combat troops, with tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and other military hardware—packed on board four amphibious landing ships, escorted by a large task force led by the aircraft carrier *Kiev*, and backed by strong air support.

The Soviet forces simulated a wartime invasion and occupation operation against the fjord terrain of the poorly defended, but strategically crucial ports and airports in northern Norway.

The heavily armed and equipped Soviet marine-infantry brigade provocatively landed in the Volkovojfjord, a mere eight miles away from the border of Finnmark, Norway's northernmost province—which the Norwegians, in attempted appeasement of the gloating Russians, have virtually declared a unilaterally demilitarized zone!

Shortly after the Soviet invasion exercises, as the Willoch regime announced that it was making the April 30 parliamentary vote on its austerity package a vote of confidence for the non-socialist government coalition, Norwegian military commanders released new information about the strength and tasks of Soviet forces near Norway, including a first-ever map of

the Soviet naval bases on the Kola Peninsula.

According to the new information, contained in the just-released Norwegian edition of *The Military Balance* magazine, published by the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, the Soviets have secretly stationed another marine-infantry brigade on the Norwegian border. This new Soviet elite force, which has been trained for strictly offensive tasks, is equipped with tanks, assault helicopter gun ships, and landing vessels.

"We should not be surprised," emphasized Maj.-Gen. Martin Vadseth, the commander of the northern Norwegian forces, "if in an eventual attack, we suddenly face this secret brigade. Properly speaking, what is already known should be more than enough."

The commander was referring to the Spetsnaz units of at least 1,000 special commando forces and the 3,000-plus troops of Russian marine infantry already known to be stationed near the Norwegian border.

All reinforcements taken into account, this means that nearly 10,000 heavily armed and equipped Soviet elite troops have been brought into "jumping off" positions along the border, facing the Norwegian border patrol of about 100 men.

According to the map of Soviet bases on the Kola Peninsula, within a range of about 100 miles from the Norwegian border, the Russians have built no less than 12 large naval bases plus 16 airfields. At the Gremikha naval base, the Soviet Northern Fleet's four strategic submarines of the new Typhoon class are reportedly stationed, carrying long-range nuclear-tipped missiles that can reach targets in the United States from their firing positions anywhere in the Barents Sea, including under the Arctic ice-cap.