

Scandinavia by Göran Haglund

Sweden bids to join new world order

Shedding Sweden's traditional "neutrality," Premier Bildt is jumping on the faltering Bush bandwagon.

Visiting the United States Feb. 18-21, Swedish Premier Carl Bildt whole-heartedly endorsed President Bush's new imperial world order, and scolded Bush's Democratic and Republican opponents alike. Arriving in New York City the day of the New Hampshire primary, Bildt used a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations to call for Bush to continue his present foreign policy.

Two days later, on the White House lawn, Bildt proclaimed that "if there is one single message that I would like to bring to you, Mr. President, it is that the active involvement of the United States will be as indispensable in the 1990s as it has been in the past. We need the vision, the determination, and strength of the United Nations when it comes to securing this new peace."

After decades of heckling American policy, neutralist Sweden has become one of Bush's staunchest supporters—concerning policy in Europe, toward the new nations liberated from the Soviet empire, against Libya, or even in Central American policy, which was for years the biggest stumbling block in U.S.-Swedish relations. And lest anybody think that is because Sweden's social democratic regime has been replaced by a more conservative coalition, Bildt's social democratic opponents at home voiced broad support for his performance in the United States.

When Swedish premiers visited the U.S. in the past, "we had sharp disagreements. This is no longer the case, and this is good. . . . It is good

that Sweden is represented by an informed and respected prime minister with an international outlook," said Pierre Schori, the social democratic foreign policy spokesman who used to be number two at the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

The role of Sweden in a future, enlarged European Community is one issue of particular interest to the Bush administration. In the climate of trade war wielded by an economically weakening United States against competitors like Europe, the traditionally Anglophile Scandinavian countries represent a key lever of potential influence to check the strongest continental European power: unified Germany. As pointed out by Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen during his recent visit to Sweden, after Sweden, Norway, and Finland join the EC, the Nordic countries, with 22 million inhabitants, will have 16 votes in the EC Council of Ministers, whereas Germany, with 80 million people, has only 10 votes.

"The decision to apply for membership in the EC brings Sweden into the circle of allied European countries with which the U.S. has close contacts in the field of politics, security policy, and economic policy," stated U.S. Ambassador to Stockholm Charles Redman earlier this year. "We are no allies, we are partners in cooperation. We are strong supporters of continued U.S. presence in Europe," a Swedish Foreign Ministry source is quoted in the press.

Both Bush and Secretary of State James Baker were reportedly very in-

terested to hear "the Swedish view" of the situation in Russia—no wonder, as one member of Bildt's delegation was none other than Soviet expert Anders Åslund, who along with Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs, is the chief economic adviser to the government of President Boris Yeltsin.

Not surprisingly, Bildt received full backing for his policy of pushing for early membership in the International Monetary Fund of the three Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Scandalously neglecting any support for its nearest neighbors to the east, at the time when their national independence was in jeopardy, the Swedish government now is happy to lead those countries over the abyss of IMF-imposed economic ruin.

Sweden is trying to obtain a seat in the United Nations Security Council in 1993, which requires U.S. support. Since the U.N. was founded, Sweden has been one of the most outspoken supporters of a strong role for the supranational institution, rendered relatively pitiful as a result of the Cold War, but given a new boost after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Former premier Ingvar Carlsson is expected to become the chairman of a new commission to investigate how the U.N. can be granted more power, the so-called Stockholm Initiative, launched on April 22, 1991, by some 30 international leaders.

A document signed on that occasion calls for more power to the U.N. secretary general as well as to the Security Council, and for the writing of a new "world law," stipulating sanctions and military action against countries violating the U.N. Charter. "The U.N. ought to become something of a world government," Carlsson demanded.

Smelling a new springtime for their ideas of supranational rule, Bildt, Carlsson, et al. seem to be shedding their "neutralist" clothing.