

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

The premier's first visit to Moscow

Carlsson's travel policy hasn't quieted Swedish officers, nor has it changed Soviet military intentions toward Sweden.

Following in the footsteps of his slain predecessor, Swedish Premier Ingvar Carlsson's mid-April trip to Moscow will make him the first Western leader to visit the Kremlin since the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. But Carlsson's desire to be accommodating isn't earning him any visible tokens of gratitude from Moscow.

Before Carlsson's departure, Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Lomeiko summoned journalists for a briefing on April 8. He announced that Moscow has cancelled its offer to withdraw select nuclear missiles from the Baltic Sea prior to Scandinavian creation of a nuclear-free zone, despite previous offers to "thin out" its estimated 1,000 warheads in the region as an inducement to the Scandinavian countries.

Lomeiko's rude slap in the face of Swedish "useful fools" occurred one day after Carlsson, on a visit to Helsinki, Finland, had reiterated the great hopes placed by his government on creating a nuclear-free zone.

In his dinner speech to an audience including Finnish Social Democratic Premier Kalevi Sorsa, Carlsson stated his "support of the proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the Nordic countries, which seems to gain ever stronger popular support and which completely coincides with our own security interests. I know that our two governments are both ready to go on working trying to realize the idea of a zone.

"I am anxious on this occasion to

reassure the government of Finland," Carlsson urged, really addressing Finland's growling neighbor to the East, "that it also in the future can count on Sweden in the work for peace and détente."

One day after Lomeiko's ungrateful rebuff, a meeting of Nordic foreign ministers ended in failure, as Norwegian Foreign Minister Svann Stray made it clear that a nuclear-free zone would be unacceptable to Norway.

After a few weeks of relative silence after the murder of Olof Palme, which all but paralyzed Swedish society, military officers have resumed their warnings of the Soviet threat.

During the week before Easter, the chief of the Swedish Air Force, Lt.-Gen. Sven-Olof Olson, called for adding 50 new *Viggen* jet-fighters to the Air Force, noting that while Sweden has cut its Air Force in half since the early 1970s, the Soviets have increased their air power in the region from 100 to 1,000 jet-fighters.

In an interview published by the mass circulation Gothenburg tabloid *GT* on March 30, Navy Commander Hans von Hofsten warned of a Soviet surprise strike against Sweden. Last year, Hofsten became the spokesman of an "officers' revolt" within the Navy, attacking Palme's appeasement of Moscow.

Hofsten, until recently the commander of the destroyer *Halland*, today is based at the Stockholm Navy Staff. In his interview: 1) The aggressor is mentioned by name; it is the Soviet Union. 2) He warns that Swe-

den is to be conquered by complete surprise, and that 3) such a blitz attack can come at any time, not only when the world situation already has aggravated to the point of general war.

Hofsten outlines the following hypothetical scenario:

"During Christmas night, the aggressor strikes. A night during which Sweden is asleep, the common Swedes, happy and bloated, are resting after the sweetmeats of the Christmas dinner-table. . . . Then the frogmen enter our shores, coming from submarines and small landing vessels, with the task of rapidly striking, protected by the darkness, against vital functions of society.

"Just before the early church service on Christmas morning, Sweden will be plunged into darkness and all information to the people blacked out. Yet a few hours will pass before we realize what the cause is of the electricity black-out and the silence of the radio.

"How else do you conquer a country which can mobilize 850,000 troops? An impressive army, the Swedish forces are actually twice as large as the complete U.S. forces in Central Europe today.

"It was regarded as militarily absurd for Japan to strike against Pearl Harbor. Yet the attack occurred. And nobody had expected that the Soviets, during Christmas holidays, would invade Afghanistan.

"One must not get blinded by the military situation of yesterday. Just take a look at the map to realize why: At Murmansk, the Russians have built up the world's largest naval base, and there is nothing to defend up there. Their Northern Fleet is offensive, but NATO could stop it from bases on Iceland and Norway. The Russians, therefore, have to take Norway rapidly in a war—and the simplest path is passing through us."