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TEN STEPS TO COUNTER MOSCOW'S THREAT TO NORTHERN EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

Moscow has been escalating military and political pressures on northern Europe. In early April, the Soviet Northern Fleet conducted its largest maneuvers ever in the Norwegian Sea and North Atlantic as part of an aggressive show of force following NATO's deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. The Swedes have been searching for yet another Soviet submarine near the naval base at Karlskrona and the Norwegians have been sighting foreign frogmen in Norway's territorial waters. All this is part of what appears to be a calculated strategy by Moscow to test its northern neighbors' defenses and to intimidate their peoples. More ominous, given the aggressive nature of Soviet amphibious assault exercises and fully coordinated "all arms" attacks near the shores and borders of its neighbors, the Kremlin probably is actually planning offensive operations against the Nordic countries.¹

The Soviet military buildup in northern Europe threatens NATO control of the Scandinavian littoral, the Baltic Straits and the vital sealanes across the Atlantic upon which NATO depends for reinforcements in any major military conflict in Europe. Soviet naval and air power projection capabilities also intensify the strategic nuclear threat to the continental U.S. and complicate timely defense against Soviet missile submarines and bombers. Finally, Soviet occupation of the Scandinavian littoral will provide Moscow with a springboard for a decisive strike against Central Europe.

¹ Marian K. Leighton, "Soviet Strategy Toward Northern Europe and Japan," Survey, Autumn/Winter 1983, pp. 112-151.

The Nordic countries are also targets of Soviet destabilization and subversion. In January, for example, Arne Trehold, a high Norwegian official, was arrested for being a Soviet Spy. Moscow, meanwhile, exercises considerable influence in the debate on NATO nuclear force modernization; its agents were in the cockpit of the opposition movement against missile deployment and directed antinuclear activists throughout Scandinavia.

In the past, the Soviet threat to the Nordic countries was viewed solely in the context of a war in central Europe, with the Scandinavian peninsula as a peripheral theater.² But there is growing concern that the peninsula itself now may be a major target in order to alter dramatically the geostrategic map of NATO's northern flank. Physical control of Norway and the Baltic straits could then provide Moscow with a secure flank and a springboard for subsequent attacks on central Europe.

To counter this, the U.S. and its NATO allies must adopt a ten-point plan that includes:

- 1) Increased Allied naval activity in the North;
- 2) Upgraded anti-submarine warfare capabilities;
- 3) Stockpiling more supplies in the North;
- 4) Expansion of Norwegian and Danish airbases;
- 5) Improved northern air defenses;
- 6) Increased training in northern terrain;
- 7) Upgraded command, control, and communications systems;
- 8) Streamlined command structures;
- 9) Encouraging Sweden to intensify its defense efforts;
- 10) Heightened U.S. concern with the security of the area.

THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NORTHERN FLANK

NATO control of the Baltic straits, the Norwegian littoral, and the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. gap (GIUK) is critical to the

² Kenneth A. Myers, North Atlantic Security: The Forgotten Flank?, Washington Paper No. 62, Georgetown University, Center for Strategic and Alternative Studies, 1979; Marian K. Leighton, The Soviet Threat to NATO's Northern Flank (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1979); Erling Bjørl, "Nordic Security," Adelphi Paper, No. 181, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983).

superpowers' strategic nuclear balance. The Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap forms the first line of defense for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) against Soviet nuclear powered ballistic submarines (SSBNs) leaving the Baltic and Barents seas. Conversely, the U.S. deploys a significant number of Poseidon and Trident submarines in the North Atlantic within striking range of Soviet targets; their continued safety hinges on NATO's ability to keep Soviet attack submarines from reaching the open ocean.

NATO command of the passageways to the North Atlantic is also vital to ensure timely reinforcement of Europe. NATO's entire military planning and strategy of flexible response depends on the safety of the sealanes of communications during wartime. World War II underscored the strategic significance of the North Atlantic and the Norwegian sea, where a few German submarines and aircraft operating from bases in Norway inflicted significant losses on allied convoys en route to the ice free Soviet harbor of Murmansk on the Kola peninsula. Growing sea denial capability of Soviet naval forces thus jeopardizes not only the integrity of NATO's northern flank but also might spell defeat in central Europe.

In addition to its strategic significance, the northern flank's growing commercial importance could tempt Moscow. There are rich hydrocarbon and fishing resources. The precise demarcation of the continental shelf in the Barents Sea is disputed and a constant source of tension between Norway and the USSR. Moscow has been flouting Norwegian sovereignty and is quietly establishing a military outpost in the Svalbard archipelago, despite Norwegian protests.

THE GROWTH OF SOVIET POWER IN THE ARCTIC

Immediately after World War II, Moscow sought a territorial buffer zone in the North akin to the one it was establishing in Eastern Europe. It failed at this when Denmark and Norway became founding members of NATO. The Kremlin then launched the major economic and military development of the Kola region. The railway to Leningrad was completed and Moscow enlarged the White Sea canal as an internal link between the Northern and Baltic Fleets. This transformed the Kola peninsula into a vast military base.³

Frontline ground forces are concentrated in two 12,000-strong motorized rifle divisions, especially equipped for high mobility arctic warfare. Modern Hind MI-24 attack helicopters, also in

³ Frank Brenchley, Norway and Her Soviet Neighbor: NATO's Arctic Frontier (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1982); John Erickson, "The Northern Theater: Soviet Capabilities and Concepts," Strategic Review, Vol. 4, 1976, pp. 67-82.

use in Afghanistan, and HIP (MI-8) transporters give these divisions great tactical mobility. These are backed by five reinforcement divisions. Air defense is provided by SA-2/3/6 missiles as well as the ZSU-23 anti-aircraft gun system. Permanently deployed forces number more than 70,000 and can swell to 120,000 armed with 1,400 tanks. Three airborne divisions further augment this formidable force.

There are also two tactical missile brigades, equipped with Scud and Frog nuclear capable surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 40 miles and 170 miles, respectively, a separate air defense brigade armed with SA-4 missiles and an independent army artillery regiment. The naval infantry regiment is armed with amphibious light tanks, armored personnel carriers, other light fighting vehicles as well as assault landing ships. Its naval pioneers, frogmen and demolition experts can support an amphibious assault behind enemy lines to establish bridgeheads and conduct sabotage missions against coastal fortifications.

Soviet regional air power has improved in range and payload. Forty first-rate airbases, protected by extensive air defense missile systems, can accommodate about 600 sophisticated aircraft. About 100 all-weather fighters and interceptors are permanently deployed for terminal air defense, including the MiG-23 Flogger B and Su-19 Fencers. The MiG-21 Fishbed Hs and MiG-27 Flogger D attack aircraft and MiG-25 Foxbat B reconnaissance aircraft have offensive strike missions. Some 40 medium-range transport planes for airborne troops or reinforcement via seized Norwegian airfields are also available.

Soviet aircraft flying from Kola bases can cover most of Norway and Sweden; the SU-24 Fencer with a range of 1,000 miles is even able to strike targets in southern Norway. Together with the air forces located in East Germany, Poland, and on the Soviet Baltic littoral, Moscow can strike the entire Nordic region from the air.

Soviet offensive naval aviation consists of 50 patrol aircraft, 150 Tu-16 Badger, 30 Tu-22 and the new long-range Tu-26 Backfire bombers for strike and ASW missions. There are also two medium range ballistic missile launching sites with SS-4 Scandal missiles. Advanced SS-22 nuclear tipped missiles are currently being deployed as part of the Soviet response to intermediate-range nuclear force deployment by NATO. Finally, the perimeter acquisition radar for the Moscow anti-ballistic missile system "Galosh" is located on the Kola peninsula, increasing further the region's strategic importance to Moscow.

Ground and airforces protect the formidable Northern Fleet that grew from a coastal defense force in the 1950s into a powerful force projection armada. Moscow deploys 70 percent of its seabased nuclear forces with the Northern Fleet on 45 submarines of various types which have theater and strategic nuclear missions. The bulk of the strategic force consists of the 9,000-ton Delta

class submarines with 16 SS-N-6s or 12 SS-N-8 ballistic missiles, the latter with a range of 4,200 nautical miles, placing all of Europe within their range from their sanctuaries north of the Arctic Circle.

In 1983, a gigantic 30,000-ton Typhoon class submarine was sighted with the Northern Fleet. Continuous modernization with deeper diving, faster, and less noisy submarines with longer range ballistic missiles diminishes their vulnerability to NATO anti-submarine warfare along the GIUK gap and will eventually allow strikes against the continental U.S. from Arctic sanctuaries. U.S. attack submarines will then have to search and destroy Soviet missile boats in the vast expanse of the polar waters, a virtually impossible mission given the small number and tactical limitations of U.S. offensive submarines operating under the ice cap.⁴

Moscow's 130-plus attack and patrol submarines, some armed with the SS-N-19 long-range antiship cruise missile, including the high-speed nuclear powered Alpha class, can engage NATO naval forces in the area. The deployment of some 30 Victor class submarines upgrades Soviet anti-submarine capabilities against U.S. strategic nuclear submarines and attack submarines escorting U.S. carrier task forces. The newest model, the Victor III is fitted with the Soviets' first towed array ASW sensor. The Northern Fleet has 72 major surface combatants including the Kiev V/STOL carrier and nuclear powered Kirov class cruiser. The fleet also deploys 11 ships for amphibious landing and a large number of craft for coastal defense.

The Northern Fleet enjoys a well-rounded capability. With its supply and repair ships, it can remain on station in the North Atlantic for long periods of time under protective cover of Soviet long-range naval aviation. The fleet's task forces are configured to conduct simultaneously anti-submarine, interdiction and sea denial missions in an ever growing operational area.

SOVIET POWER IN THE BALTIC

The strategic center of Soviet naval power has shifted from the Leningrad military district to the Murmansk area. But the Baltic Fleet still plays a critical role in Soviet strategy for military conflict in Europe. It has been modernized commensurate with growing mission requirements. Moreover, the combat capabilities of Moscow's troops deployed in East Germany, and along the Baltic inside the Soviet Union have been improved through comprehensive modernization of ground and air forces.

The Baltic Sea is both a buffer and a theater of operations. Warsaw Pact control of the Baltic Sea enables Moscow to attack

⁴ Barry R. Posen, "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank," International Security, Fall 1982, pp. 28-54.

simultaneously southern Norway via neutral Sweden, to deny NATO command of the Danish straits and to exert military pressure on the northern sector of the central front by inserting troops on the Jutland peninsula and the coastal areas of northern Germany.⁵

Since the southern littoral is occupied by Warsaw Pact countries and constitutes their strategic rear in any war in central Europe, the chief objective of Warsaw Pact naval forces is to protect this exposed flank against interdiction and to quickly deny NATO naval forces the Baltic through offensive and defensive engagements.

Moscow's Baltic Fleet is supported by the smaller, specialized navies of Poland and East Germany. It is designed for local operations, has modest theater nuclear capabilities and plays no role in strategic deterrence. Its few large surface combatants will probably be deployed elsewhere before the start of hostilities and its mission now extends into the North Atlantic as joint naval exercises with the Northern Fleet have been conducted regularly in recent years.

The amphibious assault landing ships in service with the Baltic Fleet pose perhaps the most serious threat to NATO. The latest innovation is the Rogov class landing ship, the largest ever built by the Soviets and capable of handling 5,100 tons of cargo, including helicopters and hovercraft. The Warsaw Pact deploys a combined total of about 110 landing craft for rapid amphibious assault.

The fleet's growing number of hydrofoils, which carry 400 naval infantry troops or a mix of tanks and soldiers with light armor, are essentially invulnerable to conventional mining and ideally suited for landing operations across mined areas in the shallow western part of the Baltic.

The Warsaw Pact navies are able to conduct large-scale amphibious operations against the Jutland peninsula, the Danish isles and the West German coast of Schleswig-Holstein with minimal warning. The Soviet Baltic Fleet alone is capable of landing three fully armed regiments with 6,000 soldiers at any location in the Baltic. Warsaw Pact merchant fleets have a growing number of roll-on/roll-off ships that do not need unloading facilities and are ideal to support amphibious operations. U.S. designed Seabee barge transports from Finnish shipyards that can unload 25,000 tons of cargo in only 13 hours are also in service with the Baltic Fleet. Flying from airfields in East Germany, Soviet tactical attack aircraft can reach their targets in the Danish isles and southern Sweden in about two minutes and thus can provide air cover for amphibious operations.

⁵ Erling Bjøl, "Nordic Security," op. cit., pp. 33-44.

NATO'S INDIGENOUS CAPABILITIES ON THE NORTHERN FLANK

NATO defense of its northern flank relies on the military resources of Norway, Denmark, West Germany, augmented by rapid reinforcements, mainly from the U.S., U.K., and Canada. Though they are NATO members, Norway and Denmark are careful not to provoke Moscow. Consequently, the two NATO states do not allow the permanent stationing on their soil of foreign troops or nuclear weapons during peacetime. Both restrict exercises of NATO troops on their territories. This constricts peacetime military preparations and limits NATO's ability to mount a successful defense of Norway and the Baltic approaches.⁶

Denmark

Danish military strength has been sapped by years of austere defense budgets. Active personnel declined from 44,500 in the early 1970s to about 32,000 today. Major force modernization programs have been impossible because of inadequate funding, amounting to a mere 2.4 percent of GNP (compared to 5.8 percent for U.S., 3.5 percent for West Germany, and 14 percent for the USSR). U.S. leaders openly have raised questions about continued commitment of U.S. troops to reinforce Denmark in the light of the country's unwillingness to intensify its own defense efforts.⁷

Denmark's Army consists of 18,000 troops, one-third of them conscripts, organized in five infantry brigades. They are armed with 250 main battle tanks, 700 M-113 armored personnel carriers and 350 artillery pieces of which only a dozen are larger than 155mm. The Army also has three regimental combat teams, composed of two infantry battalions and one artillery battalion. Its Bornholm Force consists of one reduced infantry brigade.

The navy has a peacetime strength of 5,800 and operates 5 submarines, 10 frigates, 22 large patrol craft and 13 mine/anti-mine warfare vessels. Underfunding has forced the navy to withdraw from the open Baltic. It is now simply a coastal defense force in the internal waters of the Danish archipelago. Mine warfare is its major mission. Its resources are inadequate even for this.

The Danish Air Force of 7,800 flies 112 F-104G Starfighters, Drakens, and F-100 Super Sabres which are nearly two decades old.

⁶ Moulton, "Northern Flank," Navy International, vol. 82, May 1977, pp. 4-9.
⁷ U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown stated this quite frankly in a letter to his Danish counterpart Poul Sørgaard in 1980: "Unless Denmark is able, and is seen to be able, to carry out these tasks, I will find it extremely difficult to justify to Congress and the American public commitments to reinforce Denmark and preposition equipment there." Quoted in The Economist, April 10, 1981.

Though it is being modernized with U.S.-designed F-16 aircraft, it will be unable to replace its aircraft on a one-for-one basis and thus will field fewer than 100 planes by the late 1980s. Under a 1976 agreement with the U.S., the air force has prepared four Jutland airfields to receive five U.S. Air Force squadrons in an emergency. Denmark also is permitting expansion of NATO depots on its soil to store considerable quantities of equipment for use by U.S. and German reinforcements.

West Germany

Germany's contribution to COMBALTAP (Command Baltic Approaches) is significant. It amounts to a total of 25,400 naval troops, 11,000 naval air force, and one heavy armored division stationed in Schleswig Holstein.

Of greatest value for COMBALTAP is the West German navy, configured for operations in the shallow waters surrounding Jutland and the Baltic straits. It consists of 24 small submarines with long-range wire-guided torpedos developed especially for the area's maritime characteristics. The submarines are extremely quiet and have an amagnetic hull. The German navy also deploys 7 destroyers and 7 frigates, with 6 more on order, armed with Exocets and Harpoon missiles. Its fleet of 39 fast patrol boats is armed with surface-to-surface missiles and 10 new vessels have been ordered. Mine warfare capabilities consist of 18 modern mine/counter-mine vessels with 21 minesweepers on order.

Even with the West German units, however, NATO's Nordic forces cannot sustain combat against the vastly superior Warsaw Pact. NATO's naval forces are outnumbered 4 to 1, its air force 5 to 1, and the ground forces 3 to 1. And this would be the case with only parts of the Warsaw Pact's northern front divisions committed to the Baltic theater. Only massive and rapid reinforcement will save NATO forces from collapse.

Norway

Norway is equally dependent on timely NATO reinforcements. But unlike the Danes, the Norwegians spend considerable sums on defense, devoting 3 percent of GNP to it. Oslo has resisted Soviet political pressures to alter the status of Svaalbaard, and has faced down Moscow on numerous issues involving the administration and Soviet militarization of the archipelago. Norway has rejected steadfastly Moscow's terms for a settlement of the dispute over the seaward extension of its boundary with the Soviet Union. It has also initiated important steps to improve its military posture in the North and in 1981 agreed to allow U.S. to preposition equipment in the Trondelag area to speed up effective deployment of U.S. reinforcements.⁸

⁸ Leonard Downie, Jr., "Norway Proposes Storing U.S. Military Equipment," Washington Post, September 11, 1980, pp. A29, A34.

Norway can mobilize 285,000 troops, including the Home Guard. Its 42,000 standing forces outnumber those of more populous Denmark. Three quarters of its 24,400 man army are conscripts. Its navy boasts 40 coastal artillery fortifications, 14 submarines, 5 missile carrying frigates, more than 40 fast attack craft fitted with antiship missiles and 12 mine/anti-mine vessels. The Norwegian Air Force deploys 114 combat aircraft and is being upgraded with F-5As and F-16s.

Norway's main line of defense is the heavily fortified Tromso area some 500 road miles from the border with the Soviet Union. East of Tromso, Norway maintains only a token presence of 500 men in a garrison at Sor-Varanger and some 1,000 men further West at Porsanger. No allied training exercises have ever been conducted in this sparsely populated and inhospitable area. Topographically, the whole Tromso region is a natural fortress.

Norway can deploy 80,000 troops in its northern regions on short notice. A Soviet combined amphibious assault south of Tromso in the Bodo area and an airborne assault on the Andoya region, however, could outflank the main Norwegian defenses near Tromso, disrupt Norwegian mobilization and seize strategic assets, such as airfields and fortifications.

Soviet ground forces will advance at a slower pace given the rugged terrain and presumably would take the short-cut through Finland and northern Sweden. Despite their advanced capabilities, the two squadrons of F-16 warplanes stationed in the region will have trouble attacking advancing Soviet ground forces, as the Norwegian airfields are within striking range of Soviet aircraft. Air defense capabilities of the northern airfields are highly deficient and need immediate improvement.

Norway is allowing the U.S. to preposition entire aircraft servicing facilities on four Norwegian airbases for use by U.S. reinforcements. But one carrier task force in the Norwegian Sea may be necessary to ensure NATO air superiority in the area. Another carrier task force may be required to establish NATO sea control, a vital prerequisite for successful resupply of Norway by sea.

SWEDEN: FROM PROVIDER TO CONSUMER OF SECURITY

During the postwar era, Sweden's armed neutrality has been the linchpin of the nordic strategic balance. It permitted Denmark and Norway to enter NATO and assisted Finland in establishing some measure of independence from the Soviet Union. Sweden's role as a "buffer" however was based on a military capability to enforce its neutrality. In recent years, however, Sweden's arsenal has been shrinking so much that the country has been transformed from a provider of security for NATO into a

potential consumer of NATO resources in the event of a military conflict.⁹

This imposes new mission and force requirements on NATO's Command Baltic Approaches (BALTAP) and Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH) as it can no longer be assumed that Sweden will be able to deny the use of its territory to the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to do this, Sweden has maintained a standing force of 66,000 men based on universal conscription and the concept of total defense. It can mobilize over 700,000 army and home guard forces in less than two weeks. Sweden produces about 80 percent of its weaponry and military equipment needs. Despite horrendous costs, Sweden is developing a new generation multipurpose supersonic aircraft, rather than buying U.S. F-16s or Western European-made planes. The reason for this is that the country wants to maintain its independence from foreign suppliers and support advanced airplane and electronics industries. Yet Stockholm's reliance on foreign suppliers for advanced technology and electronic warfare components is bound to grow.

In the past, Sweden's air force of 400-plus planes has allowed NATO to concentrate its air assets on the central front. The capabilities of the Swedish ground forces, meanwhile, reduced the need for massive NATO reinforcements of Norway and Denmark. But the gradual decline of Sweden's military prowess is changing this calculus dramatically. Together, the Soviet military buildup and the hemorrhage of Sweden's defense forces undermine NATO northern flank strategy.

The Swedish force posture has suffered from years of underfunding. As a savings measure, conscript military service was shortened step by step to 7½ months in the mid-1970s and length and scope of reserve training was cut in half.

Between 1950 and 1982, defense spending was slashed from 5.0 percent to 3.2 percent of GNP. As a percentage of total government expenditures, defense outlays dropped from 18 percent in 1962 to about 7 percent in 1982, while welfare spending ballooned. The size of Sweden's territory requires heavy reliance on expensive high technology weapons, but rising personnel costs have reduced further the procurement component of the defense budget. Political constraints on foreign military sales preclude larger production runs and cause prohibitive unit costs for domestically produced weaponry.¹⁰

⁹ William J. Taylor, Jr., "The Defense Policy of Sweden," in: Douglas J. Murray, Paul R. Viotti (eds.), The Defense Policies of Nations (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 299-332.

¹⁰ "Sweden Upgrading Its Defense Force Despite Funds Shortage," Aviation Week & Space Technology, December 12, 1983, pp. 83-87.

Nowhere has the effect of declining defense resources been more debilitating than in the Swedish navy; its capabilities and size have shrunk and its mission has changed from perimeter defense based on the ability to destroy hostile forces to coastal defense aimed at merely disabling enemy combatants. The size of the navy has been halved during the past two decades. Today, it boasts merely 2 destroyers/frigates compared to 17 in 1966. This means that Sweden no longer will attempt to engage enemy forces before they reach Swedish waters but rather will rely on hit-and-run raids with fast torpedo/missile patrol boats near the Swedish coast. The weaknesses of Sweden's anti-submarine warfare capabilities were starkly revealed when the Soviet Whiskey-class submarine ran aground near the restricted naval base of Karlskrona in October 1981, during the April 1983 submarine hunts near Harsfjärden, and the recent hunt near Stockholm. The Anderson commission,¹¹ investigating "Whiskey on the rocks" and a string of other Soviet submarine intrusions recommended major improvements of the submarine hunting capabilities. Yet little "new" money has been allocated and most will come from reprogramming of already committed funds. The trend of confining the navy's mission to close-in coastal defense thus will continue.

Given its multiple mission requirements, Sweden's air force is the backbone of the country's armed neutrality policy.¹² Yet modernization has been postponed repeatedly. Procurement figures in the 1984-1989 defense plan will not allow a one-for-one replacement and full scope upgrading of the existing fleet. Instead the Swedes are trying to maximize aircraft availability through shorter turnaround times and to avoid aircraft destruction on the ground or their incapacitation due to the loss of operating bases. The objective of its long-term defensive program (Plan 90) is to maintain a fleet of high technology aircraft with minimal service requirements that would remain combat ready even when operating from the emergency auxiliary airfields where service would be limited to minor repairs, refueling, and rearming. Since Sweden would have only a one minute warning of low-altitude Soviet air attacks, its air squadrons have been trained to operate independently of one another and to rely on relatively few hardened bases for extensive repair and maintenance.

Budgetary constraints also are hurting the army. Its active duty strength of 44,500 which includes 36,000 conscripts. Savings will be effected by reducing the number of conscripts and stretch-

¹¹ Swedish Ministry of Defense, Countering the Submarine Threat, Submarine Violations and Swedish Security Policy, Report by the Submarine Defense Commission, Stockholm 1983, SON 1983:13; Lt. Gen. Stig Löfgren, "Soviet Submarines Against Sweden," Strategic Review, Vol. 12(1), Winter 1984, pp. 36-42.

¹² David A. Brown, "Sweden Adjusts to Military Reductions," Aviation Week & Space Technology, January 23, 1984, pp. 101-112.

ing out the frequency of periodic refresher training. Readiness will be shortchanged.

The army's southern mission is to contain, repel, and destroy invading forces in a static defense in cooperation with the navy's coastal artillery units; and armored counterattacks to dislodge enemy formations and to smash advancing columns in the open plains of south Sweden. For this purpose, Sweden's army has always maintained in southern Sweden large ground forces modelled on NATO's forces on the Central Front. But current and projected funding levels are insufficient to modernize the army's increasingly obsolescent equipment. As a result, decisions on force structure changes will have to be made in the near future.¹³

A downsized Swedish army can do little more than play for time before succumbing to attrition and shrinking supplies. Such a strategy makes sense only if reinforcements can be expected to drive back the invader. These reinforcements could come only from NATO, thus increasing Sweden's dependence on NATO's already thinly stretched resources in the Baltic theater.

The same applies to the defense of vulnerable Northern Sweden, the transit area for any Soviet overland offensive against Northern Norway, where about 20 percent of Sweden's ground forces are deployed. While the region's topography makes armored assaults extremely difficult, a helicopter-borne Soviet attack today could outflank natural obstacles that have traditionally favored defending forces. Swedish ground forces cannot contain a reinforced Soviet combined arms attack and thus contribute little to the security of Norway's exposed counties of Finnmark, Norland, and Tromso. Equally questionable is the ability of the Swedish air force to deny the Soviets the use of its northern airspace in operations against Norway.

REINFORCING THE NORTHERN FLANK

NATO strategy calls for reinforcement of Norway and Denmark before their resistance collapses. On land, NATO defense of the northern flank is coordinated by the CINCNORTH (Commander-in-Chief North), by tradition a British General, who reports to SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe) and has command responsibility for the entire AFNORTH (Allied Forces North) area stretching 1,750 miles from the North Cape to the Elbe. His headquarters is located at Kolsas, outside Oslo. Reinforcement of the Northern Flank would require help from the U.S. Second Fleet.

If the Norwegians and Danes request it, NATO can dispatch reinforcements to the North. Available is the Allied Command

¹³ Steven Canby, "Swedish Defense," Survival, May/June 1981, pp. 116-123.

Europe (ACE) Mobile Force consisting of eight light infantry battalion groups drawn from eight countries and totalling 4,000 men. But since it is committed to both NATO flanks, only half would be available for combat on the northern flank. These units could be deployed in two to six days. They have held exercises in northern Norway at least every other year and are familiar with the terrain and equipped for mountain warfare.

Additional reinforcements would come from British and Dutch commando groups, the U.S. Marine Corps Amphibious Force and a Canadian Brigade Group. The British and Dutch units have trained in northern Norway since 1973, while the Canadian Brigade is equipped for arctic operations and has held annual three-month arctic warfare maneuvers. Some 50,000 U.S. marines are equipped with tanks, artillery, landing ships, over 200 aircraft and almost as many helicopter and Hawk air defense systems. Yet only one Mobile Amphibious Brigade is actually dedicated to Norway and most of its equipment is being prepositioned in the Trondheim area of central Norway. Its 15,000 men could be airlifted from the U.S. in less than a week. Due to its own tactical air support and heliborne mobility this brigade would almost double NATO's combat strength in northern Norway.

The principal obstacle to reinforcements is the judicious use of warning time by Norway and Denmark. Except in the worst case scenario, it is generally assumed that mounting tensions will precede military conflict, thus affording NATO the opportunity to augment its defense before hostilities erupt. Yet reinforcements can be dispatched by NATO to the North only when requested by Oslo and Copenhagen. These are likely to hesitate for fear of escalating a crisis and precipitating Soviet attack. The trouble is that NATO cannot afford to deploy massive reinforcements under hostile fire. NATO's military success on the northern flank thus hinges on the political courage of the nordic leaders.

COUNTERING THE SOVIET THREAT

Moscow's buildup in the Arctic and Baltic theaters of NATO's Northern Flank is mutually reinforcing. Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces have acquired a "smash-and-grab" capability of enveloping the entire Scandinavian region with superior military forces.

The Soviet buildup on NATO's northern flank not only has significant military implications for NATO. It also threatens alliance cohesion by potentially eroding Danish and Norwegian political support for the alliance in the face of overwhelming Soviet power and doubts about NATO's ability to safeguard security in the region. There are a number of sound reasons for these doubts. Among them:

- 1) Moscow is increasingly in a position to disrupt NATO anti-submarine missions along the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap which impedes NATO's ability to monitor the movement of Soviet submarines into the North Atlantic.

2) Passage of Soviet submarines undetected by the layers of NATO hydroplanes and sonar surveillance devices or aerial surveillance threatens the sealanes of communications upon whose safety NATO reinforcement of Western Europe depends. Extensive convoying would be required for which resources are unavailable and thus Soviet submarines could attrite rapidly dwindling Western sealift assets.

3) Moscow's growing sea denial capability poses serious obstacles to NATO reinforcement of Norway. Soviet ships and long-range bombers can hold at bay U.S. carrier task forces entering the Norwegian Sea so as to provide air cover for NATO seaborne reinforcements and lend combat support to ground operations.

4) Through an unreinforced attack, Moscow can seize quickly Norwegian airfields and thereby extend the range of its coastal aviation even further into the North Atlantic. This reinforces doubts that timely reinforcement of Norway will be possible.

5) NATO control of the Danish straits is no longer assured because of Moscow's new ability to insert quickly amphibious and airborne forces in southern Sweden, the Danish Isles and the Jutland peninsula. Thus, elements of the Soviet Baltic Fleet might gain unimpeded access to the North Sea if Soviet air strikes disable NATO defenses and Pact forces succeed in occupying the critical choke points.

6) Such an attack can secure the exposed flank of Warsaw Pact troops advancing in northern Germany and divide NATO's operational theater on the central front.

7) Warsaw Pact aircraft operating from airfields in southern Sweden and Denmark offer flexible tactical air support for operations against southern Norway as well as on the central front, posing a dual threat to NATO defense efforts.

To counter the shifting military balance on its Northern Flank, NATO must take concrete steps:

1) NATO must increase the visibility of its naval presence in the Norwegian Sea through regular patrols of the Standing Naval Forces Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT) task force and visits in the region by U.S. carrier task forces and other allied units.

2) Anti-submarine warfare capabilities along the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap need upgrading in order to handle simultaneously multiple Soviet submarines. Currently, NATO can track only two enemy submarines at a time. This is woefully inadequate as was demonstrated in early April when some 20 Soviet submarines entered the Norwegian Sea during large-scale Red Fleet maneuvers.

3) As seaborne reinforcement becomes more difficult, NATO will have to airlift troops. Given its limited airlift capabilities and the need to insert forces quickly, more equipment and supplies thus must be prepositioned in the North than currently planned if NATO reinforcements are to mount a successful defense. At a minimum, all NATO airfield rapid reinforcements should have their equipment prepositioned near their deployment areas. NATO must continuously reassess its requirements to counter the mounting Soviet threat.

4) The Norwegian and Danish airbase infrastructure must be expanded and equipped to accommodate allied troops. There is a critical shortage of facilities to service and protect aircraft that would be deployed to augment indigenous airpower.

5) Norway and Denmark must improve air defense capabilities. More joint air defense exercises must be conducted and reinforcements must be trained to use the great diversity of equipment in service with their national forces.

6) Troops designated for reinforcement of Norway and Denmark need to train more frequently in the North to familiarize themselves with the local terrain and to use equipment under realistic combat conditions.

7) Improvement of NATO command-control-communications capabilities is needed to integrate and coordinate more closely individual defense missions and overall battlefield management of foreign and indigenous forces. At present, there remain serious impediments to communication due to incompatible equipment even among the services of national forces.

8) NATO must streamline the overlapping command structures in the North. The high degree of coordination currently required would be difficult to maintain under wartime conditions. A more unified and centralized command could allow NATO to operate more effectively.

9) NATO should urge Sweden to pay more attention to its military capabilities. NATO and Sweden should consult on mutual security issues and construct ways of supporting Swedish defense efforts by granting selective access to Western defense technology and sharing of pertinent intelligence. NATO should stress Sweden's vital role as a balancing force in the Nordic region and convince Swedish leaders that a viable defense posture will lessen pressures on NATO to counter the Soviet threat. Swedish support of schemes like a nuclear free zone or various forms of disengagement of NATO and the Warsaw Pact should be discouraged.

10) The United States must assess the implications for U.S. security of the changing geostrategic balance in the Arctic region. It must counter the emerging threats to U.S. sea control in the North Atlantic, the U.S. seabased nuclear deterrent and the defense of U.S. airspace against Soviet aircraft. Although

it is imperative to exact a larger contribution to the common defense from the European allies, the U.S. must not risk its own security by relying excessively on greater European defense efforts.

There are a number of constructive steps the U.S. can take alone to counter the Soviet threat in the arctic region:

1) Accelerate upgrading of the chain of ASW sonar listening devices in the GIUK gap and establish a real time detection/attack capability.

2) Procure more nuclear powered attack submarines for deployment in the North Atlantic and improve U.S. close-in anti-submarine capabilities. Consideration should be given to purchasing some diesel-electric submarines for that task.

3) Strengthen U.S. distant early warning assets and upgrade aerial surveillance off the North Atlantic coast.

4) Establish a dedicated arctic warfare force to supplement the capabilities of the Marine Corps that currently are overcommitted. Possibly one light Army division could be assigned and equipped for arctic warfare missions.

Finally, the U.S. and the other NATO allies must press Denmark and Sweden to increase their defense efforts. Norway should be encouraged to maintain its current level of commitment and lift political obstacles to NATO's defense preparations in the Nordic theater such as restrictions on exercises by NATO forces and exclusion zones for foreign troops.

These steps do not necessarily require additional resources and could be financed through the reallocation of existing funds. As has been argued throughout, the Soviet threat to the arctic region and northern Europe has extensive implications for NATO and U.S. security. All preparations to deter conventional warfare in Europe will have been in vain if the U.S. fails to check Soviet power in the arctic. This then should be given the priority it deserves.

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