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Nordic or North Atlantic Alliance?

The Postwar Scandinavian Security Debate

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Introduction

The decision to join the North Atlantic Pact constituted a major breakaway from traditional security policies in Denmark as well as in Norway. Even Sweden, which in the end decided to remain nonaligned, went through a period of considerable reevaluation of established trends of thought.

In all three countries, neutrality was traditionally regarded as almost an unwritten part of the constitution. Two world wars had reduced the notion of classical "neutrality" to a mere word, or to a euphemism for the most pragmatic techniques to avoid warlike complications. The basic idea of neutrality, however, retained its hold on politicians as well as on public opinion. Prevention of war must be the predominant purpose of foreign as well as of defense policies and, if prevention failed, avoiding involvement in other peoples' wars. After more than a year of examination and deliberation, Denmark and Norway opted for security under the North Atlantic umbrella, while Sweden saw more risk than reassurance in a NATO membership. The process was complicated, frequently painful to the main actors, and intricately involved with major powers' policies.

It is the purpose of this study to describe and analyze some major phases of the series of events that caused Norway to become a charter member of the North Atlantic Alliance, and directed Denmark to follow. The majority of the material consists of primary sources in the archives of the Norwegian Foreign Office, the Public Record Office in London, and the National Archives in Washington. I have benefitted from a number of scholarly studies on Swedish and Danish policies in the same period. However, my main purpose in this study has been to exploit the abundant material that is now available from British and American sources. This means that events and trends are frequently described the way they were known, or seen, or interpreted by these sources, and consequently apt to be both supplemented and modified by specialized studies based on more complete research in all Scandinavian countries. Hopefully, it may at least be possible to avoid major mistakes and misrepresentations.

December 1947 – a turning point?

Jens Christian Hauge, the Norwegian Minister of Defense in 1945, summed up the events in which he was himself a prominent policy-maker, in a confidential report a few years later. He discussed the difficulties he had in finding a suitable point of departure: "Easy as it is to ascertain that the present foreign and defense policies of Norway have their origin in the fate allotted to our country during the war, it is equally difficult to determine where the first chapter of "the inside story" begins, for it is evident that considerations had been made and provisional attitudes adopted in the innermost circle around the Cabinet long before the arrival of events that called for action."¹

Many commentators maintain that a clear and unbroken trend runs from the Norwegian decision to fight the German invader, on 9 April 1940, to the decision to join the North Atlantic Pact in 1949. The German invasion proved that neutrality was no longer a credible guarantee, that Norway needed what came to be called, after the war, an "umbrella". Doubts and objections en route were only such inevitable hesitations as are bound to appear when one is confronted with new policies.

Others see the decision to join NATO as a sudden and dramatic departure from the best established principles of Norwegian foreign policy.² Critical writers have in part been very bitter³ and some times strongly suspicious⁴ toward Norwegian policy-makers of the period. Occasionally these writers come close to outspoken conspiracy theories. The most severe critics have hinted that Norwegian politicians invited American pressure, organized scare campaigns, or manipulated public opinion, during the decisive months of 1948-49 or as far back as in the early years of the Second World War.⁵

Among historians, Nils Morten Udgaard is inclined to stress the continuing process theory.⁶ Olav Riste, writing later and with access to British material released under the 30-years rule, does not see an unbroken trend. Instead he finds, in his own imagery, a policy of "a snake in a tunnel". More specifically, Riste⁷ differs from Udgaard in his evaluation of Soviet-Norwegian relations during the war years. In a later work, Riste sees the problem of continuity or change in a

wider perspective: "On the level of unspoken assumptions, however, the parameters of Norwegian national security underwent no fundamental change. The traditional expectations of "in extremis" protection by the Western great powers had been and remained a necessary condition for any plausible Norwegian defence scenario".⁸ Thus, according to Riste, "... Norway's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 was more shadow than substance, and far from being a turning point".⁹ For the sake of clarity it should perhaps be added that Riste's analysis deals only with possible constants in Norway's strategic situation, not with explicit declarations of intent, or public opinion, or political considerations, domestic and international.

In this study the perspective is more limited. It is a case study in policy making. Therefore, it begins at the stage where the general situation in international relations had reached a point where the premises upon which Norwegian security policy rested no longer seemed valid, and new signals were called for. There are good reasons for placing this particular occurrence in December, 1947. The basic Norwegian tenet until 1947 had been that cooperation between the major victorious powers should continue in peacetime, and consequently, the Security Council of the United Nations would be able to harmonize controversial attitudes and fulfill its role in conflict resolution. Norway should do nothing that might in any way jeopardize this fragile system. This policy (the "bridgebuilding") must necessarily, in a small nation, be a policy mainly of omission and abstention. During 1947, however, even this low level of ambition became increasingly difficult to live up to. As the international situation deteriorated, Norway's foreign policy gradually called forth criticism from both superpowers. This became obvious during the second General Assembly of the United Nations. In the words of Foreign Minister Lange himself: "During the recent General Assembly, the Norwegian delegation has been criticized in the Norwegian press for behaving in such a way that Norway, in American public opinion, was counted as aligned with the Eastern Bloc. On the other hand, the delegation has - again in the Norwegian press - been praised for allegedly rallying around the line of the United States in the United Nations".¹⁰ "We have" he continued, "taken our stand on individual issues, without feeling attached to any group. The stand we have taken, has signified that we in certain

questions have voted against one party, in others against the other one. It has not been conclusive to us whom we voted against or whom we voted together with. In our judgment the decisive question was whether the stand we took, served to advance the purposes that the United Nations have aimed at through its charter, and to strengthen the organization itself and the principles of justice that we think have to be embodied in the coexistence of states, if small states like ours shall be able to endure at all.”¹¹

What he did not want to state bluntly, was that in his opinion the possibilities of bridge-building were almost exhausted. He did, however, signal a possible reevaluation: All states, big and small, will have to make up their minds as to whether the present development may bring with it a danger of war in the world in the next years. “The conclusion we, for our part, arrive at, will decide whether we shall have to redirect our policies in many areas”.¹² His concluding remark indicated a possible alternative, inasmuch as he vaguely suggested closer cooperation between nations that shared basic views on fundamental political values. He was careful not to discard the hope for continuing co-operation between all states. Everything possible must be done, he said, to prevent a division of the world into hostile blocs. There were still possibilities along those lines. He continued, however: “the efforts to strengthen these possibilities can only succeed in the degree that we are successful in entering into an ever closer collaboration, within the United Nations, with those member states, also outside the frontiers of Norden, that by their attitudes demonstrate that they share our views of which are the main tasks in international politics today.”¹³

This conclusion, when read carefully, lists the options that were to dominate Scandinavian discussions throughout 1948: to continue bridgebuilding as long as any hope remained; to enter in closer regional co-operation, within the general framework of the United Nations; to limit such co-operation to the Nordic states in the best of political traditions; to extend it to UN members “outside the frontiers of Norden”. The fact that he explicitly pointed to the latter possibility made it all the more interesting. What had made Lange feel that the time had come for such new perspectives to be explored?

General background, specific conclusion

The international situation toward the end of 1947 has been examined again and again by students of the cold war and the origins of NATO. There is no need to describe it here. The breakdown of the Foreign Ministers' conference convinced Western diplomats that the Council of Foreign Ministers must be adjourned *sine die* without reaching agreement on the peace treaties with Germany and Austria, and that the negotiations on these problems had reached a complete deadlock. Assessing the dangers involved, Lange applied his own criteria. In his analysis, the failure to reach agreement, and the violence of reactions on top levels, could no longer be explained as outbursts of accumulated impatience in the aftermath of war. Present difficulties were forerunners of new and lasting problems of a serious nature, first and foremost the problem of Germany. No small nation could bridge the gap that had opened. The concept of "bridgebuilding" had ceased to function. The time had come to look for possible guarantees of security in a world where bridges were being deliberately broken. The first alternative to be explored was some kind of Western co-operation – there is no other possible interpretation of Lange's conclusion in his address to the Storting. But what kind of co-operation did he have in mind? Some of his critics have suggested that he was already in favor of a military alliance, but, for tactical reasons, did not bring it out into the open. There is no support for this in the relevant sources. Documents in Foreign Office archives suggest that Lange's misgivings had begun during the second session of the General Assembly (December 1947). They also indicate that his new trends of thought did not venture beyond political co-ordination within the United Nations.

At the end of the General Assembly meeting, Lange approached the Minister of State at the British Foreign Office, Hector McNeil, and suggested "preliminary discussions among the Western European Powers before the next Assembly meeting, with a view to create a common front on important issues". Mc Neil did not make any note on the conversation, nor did Lange. The substance is only

known through this brief reference in an undated paper, now in the PRO¹⁴. After the meeting, Lange received "a friendly message" from Mc Neil, "as a result of the conversation which they had in New York about Anglo-Norwegian cooperation at UNO in the future".¹⁵ Although the information is indirect, it is very precise and refers only to issues that come up within the UN. The fact that neither made notes on the conversation also indicates that no dramatically new ideas were brought forward. But the conversation took place at a moment when Great Britain had already to some extent revised her Scandinavian policies, and there is a more specific British background that deserves attention.

British policy toward Scandinavia

The British Ambassadors to Denmark, Norway and Sweden met in Stockholm at the end of November 1947 to discuss, among other things, British trends of thought on Scandinavian security policies. They summed up as follows:

Scandinavian staff officers were discussing limited co-operation measures. The three Scandinavian cabinets approved, but were not otherwise involved. Among the topics discussed, was a possible standardization of arms and munitions. There seemed to be increasing awareness that efficient Nordic co-operation might imply standardization with the United Kingdom as well. For the time being, there was nothing much the British could do to influence and possibly accelerate this type of integration. The Ambassadors recommended discreet sounding of American attitudes towards Scandinavian defense co operation.¹⁶

This positive British interest bears witness to a general, and recent, change of attitude. Speaking very generally, Norway had proven slightly disappointing to the British. Sweden was attracting more attention, and Danish initiatives had seemed quite promising, from the point of view of British security policies in general.

Norway came out of the Second World War with strong functional and emotional ties to her British allies. Early postwar records show, however, that the "bridgebuilding" policy was interpreted in London as an unnecessary adjustment to Soviet interests. It was felt

that inter-war trends of thought had survived and persisted in influencing Norwegian foreign policy: neutralism in general, as well as pacifist, antimilitarist and isolationist tendencies. In 1946, British Minister of Foreign Affairs Bevin described the Norwegian Government as "completely preoccupied with its own affairs and out of touch with the foreign affairs situation".¹⁷ Nearly a year later the Oslo Embassy still reported in a general survey that the Government and the general population alike "showed an increasing tendency to bury their heads in the snow in the hope of avoiding entanglement in the struggle between the Great Powers".¹⁸ Practical and functional co-operation in military matters did not continue to develop the way British authorities may have felt reason to expect during the war. For instance, Norway expressed a clear wish to have British military advisers withdrawn simultaneously with the withdrawal of Soviet liberation troops in the extreme North-East. Robin Hankey, the head of the Foreign Office's Northern Department, saw it as "extremely annoying that the Norwegians are so pusillanimous" and, he continued: "I cannot conceive what business it is for the Russians that we should have military advisers in Norway".¹⁹

This should not be interpreted as a purely bilateral disagreement. It should rather be seen as a sign that while Great Britain, as always, had to frame her security policy within a global context, Norway was primarily concerned about her possible ability to avoid conflict, and therefore did not fit into the British favorite model of a more closely united Western Europe within the United Nations, permanently on its guard towards the Soviet Union.

Although, for reasons that do not belong here, Denmark had not had the same type of relationship with Britain during the war, similar considerations influenced British-Danish post-war relations. Denmark and Norway were not approached or even indirectly informed, when serious discussions on a Western European bloc were first initiated, in early 1947.

As for Sweden, there was considerable bitterness in London in the immediate post-war period, dissatisfaction with Swedish attitudes during the war, and fear that Swedish influence was pulling the Scandinavian neighbor states away from their inclination toward the West, and might keep them definitely away from a Western orientation. The firm commitment to neutrality that was still

axiomatic in Sweden, appeared to the British as sheer wishful thinking. In terms of military strength, Sweden was among the strongest smaller nations in Europe. Her defense had been continuously built up during the war, but had not been able to follow the enormous technological development of the belligerents. For instance, the impressive Swedish Air force was sadly lacking in radar. In terms of access to information on military research, purchase of equipment, exchange of personnel for training etc., Sweden was placed in the third category of priority, together with the Soviet Union and Eastern European states in general, although the restrictions may not have been rigorously applied. Denmark and Norway belonged in the more favored group, together with France and the Benelux countries. They had higher priority, but were not given access to strictly secret technology, which was reserved for the US and Commonwealth countries. This differentiation had already been adopted during the war: Sweden should not reap advantages from her neutrality, but Norway should be given special status in relation to the major Allies.²⁰ Denmark, although not formally an allied nation, was a former German-occupied territory, which brought her into the same category as Norway.

The British policy of restraint and reticence came up for revision during 1947. In June of that year, the Cabinet received evaluations that they had requested from their military advisers. Both the Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Planning Staff were emphatic in pointing out the advantages that British control of Scandinavia could offer for Great Britain:

"(a) We would have advanced air bases which would halve the distance to Moscow. We would also be very favourably placed for rocket and air attacks on Russian communications with Western Europe.

(b) Our early warning system would be greatly improved. We would, moreover, be well placed far forward on the direct air route between Western Russia and the industrial East of the North-American continent.

(c) We would be well placed to cover naval and air operations in northern waters and the Baltic

(d) Additional man-power and valuable raw materials would be available to assist our war effort."²¹

There is no reference here to a possible formal Scandinavian defense alliance. The Chiefs of Staff did conclude, however, that it would be almost as important to keep Scandinavia un-occupied as France, Belgium and the Netherlands. To this end, the British had an interest in fast and far-reaching co-ordination, including the important military resources of Sweden. Implicitly, such co-ordinated forces would have ties to Great Britain. For instance, the Chiefs of Staff presupposed a standardization of arms. They suggested "a full investigation of the potentialities of a Scandinavian and Western European bloc in war against Russia".

These trends of thought do not represent a sudden reversal; the new approach, and in particular the recognition of Sweden's strength and importance, had been maturing for some time already. Nor should they be interpreted as specific plans, or new military-political guidelines. The British Ambassadors to Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm were instructed to lie low, avoid publicity on related questions, and not to go beyond expressing British sympathy for Scandinavian co-ordination of arms.²²

Several reasons may be suggested for this circumspect attitude. It seemed advisable not to invite Soviet criticism and possible counter activity; progress towards a more comprehensive Western bloc was slow and difficult; the United Kingdom had little to offer in terms of what Denmark and Norway would need for armament; and last, but not least, the British had neither the motivation nor the ability to push forward in this area without having sounded opinions in the United States. They had not been strongly encouraged so far. The Americans were inclined to hold back. As late as October 1947, John Hickerson, head of the European desk in the State Department, saw a Scandinavian defense union as "unlikely".²³ Toward the end of 1947, the American attitude changed rather abruptly. The increasing American commitment in Europe was of course the underlying trend. The break-down of the Foreign Ministers' Council initiated a new interest in the Nordic neutrals.

Seen against this background, the contact between Lange and McNeil, in December 1947²⁴, appears not as a mere straw in the wind, but as a tentative approach to what was soon to become a new point of departure. However, it was still only the initial stages of a long process, and catalysts were needed. The first one came when Ernest Bevin felt ready to give official signals, toward the end of

January. The second came when events in Finland and Czechoslovakia led to serious re-examination of security policies in Scandinavia. In the meantime, exploratory movements of a more discreet kind had been undertaken from the Scandinavian side; from certain points of view, Denmark was in the vanguard.

Early Scandinavian initiatives

Danish naval officers were concerned about the entrance to the Baltic – a concern that has remained. They felt that it was vital to keep the narrow straits open. If, in a possible crisis, a major power wanted them closed, Denmark could not prevent this without assistance from Sweden and Norway. Admiral Vedel, Commander-in-Chief of the Danish Navy, held conversations with Swedish and Norwegian opposite numbers. His initiatives were silently and unofficially approved by the Danish cabinet, but dealt only with technical questions, and were practically limited to naval problems. However, there were obvious reasons why the two states on the Scandinavian peninsula should be interested in common army problems. Swedish-Norwegian contacts in this area were much more reticent. As viewed from London, the Danes actively promoted a closer relationship between the Scandinavian countries and the UK; Sweden had become an interesting possibility in a partnership; Norway was held back by what to the British seemed a traditional policy of appeasement, in spite of the fact that both tradition and prognosis made the UK a natural partner for her.

On lower, non policy-making levels, Swedish officers were likely to encourage informal contact with the British, but remained wary of extensive practical co-ordination. The Swedish military attaché in Oslo, talking to his British opposite number, agreed that standardization within Scandinavia was desirable, “but would not commit himself with regard to an extension of standardization with the Western Powers”. “We then spoke of the new contacts between the Swedish and British Armies. He said that Swedish officers who had attended courses in the United Kingdom had benefited greatly, but he did not know whether any British officers had attended courses in Sweden”.²⁵

It had already been suggested that prominent representatives of the Swedish armed forces should be invited to the Royal wedding in London. In due time, the question came in a different form, namely a suggestion that General Jung, the Swedish C-in-C, and General Douglas, C-in-C Army, should be invited "as soon as possible" as official guests of the British Minister of Defence and the Army Council respectively. The suggestion gave rise to a general discussion within the British Foreign Office, where the question was seen as a related part of a much more comprehensive policy. This is clearly reflected in the pros and cons of the commentators. On one hand, an invitation seemed "an important step in the right direction". The formation of a western bloc was now "an inevitable and essential object of [British] policy". "In relation to any such bloc Sweden occupies an important position as the leading Scandinavian power and one immediately confronting the Soviet-controlled area. It might therefore be argued, that we should aim at bringing Sweden, which is now inclined in some ways to linger on the fence, more expressly on to our side and, if possible, eventually bring her into some regional defence arrangement with the Americans and ourselves." On the other hand, nobody was prepared to answer questions that might easily be put, as to "what aid we could possibly give the Scandinavian countries". The same was probably true from an American perspective. Balancing these two sets of considerations against one another, Foreign Officials arrived at different conclusions, but when the papers reached Hankey's desk, he came out very clearly on the negative side: "I would expect the Scandinavians to be ready for military collaboration if and when they are assured of American as well as British backing in case of war. Would it not be better therefore to wait or at least to suggest a less official and spectacular visit?"²⁶ This serious and comprehensive discussion must be explained by the fact that we are here confronted with a problem that became permanent in the following months: how could one attract a hesitating partner without having substantial advantages to offer him. There were also the political risks involved:

"In short, we have two difficulties to contend with:

(a) that by bringing the Swedes (or others) here prematurely they find that we have no adequate plans to support them

(b) that by stalling them off too long they might come to the conclusions that we had no plans at all to help them, and make an arrangement with the Russians.

For the moment the first danger seems to us to be the greatest."

The revived American interest in Europe was to alter these premises too. In his concluding remark, Hankey took care to point it out:

"It has accordingly been agreed that we must look at the defence problems of Scandinavia on an even broader basis and that if discussions are held with the Americans regarding security the talks will include Scandinavia. After talking to the Americans we are more likely to know where we stand in all these matters and by then our own planning and thinking will have further adapted itself to the new circumstances."²⁷

Bevin's speech - the catalyst

There is no need here to describe the alacrity and the enthusiasm with which Bevin responded to the new American signals about Germany and, implicitly, about Western Europe as a whole.²⁸ The definite break-down of the Foreign Ministers' Council occurred on Dec 15 1947. On the 17th, Bevin had his proposal ready. The real issue, according to him, was "where power should rest in Germany and Europe".²⁹ The time had come to organize an association of Western democracies:

"This would not be a formal alliance, but an understanding backed by power, money and resolute action. It would be a sort of spiritual federation of the West. He knew that formal constitutions existed in the U.S. and France. He, however, preferred, especially for this purpose, the British conception of unwritten and informal understandings. If such a powerful consolidation of the West could be achieved it would then be clear to the Soviet Union that having gone so far they could not advance any further."

The idea - for it could hardly be called a plan - was immediately submitted to George Marshall,³⁰ who may not have found it as clear as he would have preferred to see it. There followed however, in rapid succession, a series of memoranda prepared by Bevin for his Cabinet.³¹ Taken together, they translate his "association" concept into more practical application. They may also indicate that his apparent vagueness in the conversation with Marshall may have been tactical, that he was temporizing while waiting for more specific information about American intentions. He did, however, remain undecided as to whether he envisaged a formal type of alliance. In his "First aims ..." he referred initially to an effort to "organize and consolidate the ethical and spiritual forces inherent in ... Western civilization ... by creating some form of union ... whether of a formal or informal character" but on the following page, left the door open by adding that the union need not take the shape of a formal alliance "though we have an alliance with France³² and may conclude one with other countries".³³ Inverchapel, the British Ambassador to Washington, was more explicit in a

personal letter to Marshall on January 13th. According to him, Bevin would suggest to Bidault "forthwith" that the British and French governments should make a joint effort towards a treaty with Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, along the lines of the treaty of Dunkirk.

There was no doubt that Denmark, Norway and Sweden should be included in the future system. In his "First aims..." Bevin outlined "a Western democratic system comprising of, if possible, Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, Portugal, Italy and Greece". Inverchapel, in his letter to Marshall, added to the outline: "Having thus created a solid core in Western Europe, consideration should then be given to the best means of developing the system which Mr. Bevin has in mind and to associating it with other states including Italy, other Mediterranean countries, and Scandinavia."³⁴ In other words, the scope was expanding rather than contracting, and the "formal alliance" concept emerged very clearly.

However, the Nordic states were not included when Bevin came forward with his first public announcement of the new policy. In his famous speech of January 22, 1948, he did not mention the Nordic countries at all. This should not be taken as an indication that he had now revised his concept of their possible role in his grand scheme. He only postponed the suggestion, biding his time. In his first listing of possible associates, or members of the alliance, he included a waiting list: Spain and Germany should be considered "as soon as circumstances permit".³⁵ Before the public version³⁶, however, Bevin seems to have moved Scandinavia into the same category as Spain and Germany, although for very different reasons. The "circumstances" that put Germany and Spain on the waiting list, had of course to do with their roles in the Second World war and the reluctance of public opinion to readmit them to good political company at this early stage. In the case of Norden, there must have been a clear feeling that the idea should be given time to mature, and that rushing in with public suggestions at this time would be premature and probably at this stage even counter-productive. The British Ambassador to Sweden paid a visit to the FO in early January, and saw the early reference to Scandinavia, but was instructed to keep it confidential.³⁷

Scandinavian reactions to Bevin

There was, indeed, considerable doubt among diplomatic observers about the varied attitudes in Nordic countries.

So far, Denmark was clearly the nation that had come forward most freely in requesting British advice and assistance, both on strategy and armament. In unusually outspoken phrasing, Hankey and the Copenhagen Embassy referred to Denmark as "a possible eastern projection of England".³⁸ Trade relations pointed in the same direction, and so did considerations of grand strategy. The defeat of Germany had put an end to the traditional Danish dilemma of having to tread warily in the danger zone of overlapping German and British interests. The nearest continental power was now the Soviet Union, whose zone of occupation reached a point few miles south of the Danish border. A modus vivendi with the new neighbor would clearly benefit from Western political backing. The Danish problem was to what degree, and how ostensibly, such backing should be sought, so as to function efficiently without generating additional security risks. The Foreign Office also favored a patient and cautious approach, or, at a minimum, was prepared to countenance it. They were particularly aware of Denmark's domestic difficulties. There was no solid public opinion behind the rearmament policy. The Radicals remained entrenched in traditional pacifist or anti militarist trends of thought. Defence forces had to be rebuilt almost from scratch, and their actual strength was disputed. Foreign Minister Rasmussen told the British Ambassador that General Görtz's figures of Denmark's fighting force "represented an aspiration rather than actual policy".³⁹ The best British contact had been with naval personell, mainly with Admiral Vedel; there was, however, considerable distance between him and Görtz, personally, professionally and politically. The admiral represented naval tradition, the general had his background in the militarily unorthodox Resistance and in its political left wing. Nevertheless, a parliamentary majority supported the rearmament effort, and the Parliamentary Defense Commission was to be reconvened shortly. Ambassador Randall did not hesitate to confirm the British "sympathetic interest" and added that "a united Northern will to resist aggression could be an important element in main-

taining peace". Mr. Rasmussen agreed, but warned of substantial political difficulties.⁴⁰ In short, neither party had gotten beyond a common wish to promote a vague concept of military co-operation in Scandinavia, with unspecified support from the United Kingdom, which again depended on still-to-be discussed American support that could hardly be expected to materialize forthwith.

Swedish attitudes were less ambiguous, and also less promising from a British point of view. If the British effort to improve relations with Sweden had, in general, been expected to create a more promising climate for official and determined co-operation in political and military matters, they had fallen short of fulfilling expectations so far. On the contrary, there were clear signs of Sweden entrenching herself safely in what was to critical British eyes an illusory neutralism. Reports from Stockholm were described as disclosing "a wide gulf between Swedish government's thinking and that of our own".⁴¹ The State Department received similar messages. The Swedish Prime Minister was primarily interested in domestic problems and "stated an inability to understand the interest of the American people in Europe's problems".⁴² In London, Hankey noted that Swedish cabinet members would be "most unlikely" to agree to anything in the nature of proper staff talks.⁴³ In other words, he saw no possibility of going beyond discussions of supplies and technicalities, interspersed with personal opinions of varying interest from Swedish officers. Foreign Minister Undén was inclined to make excuses for the Russians and dubious about Anglo-American policy in Europe.⁴⁴ There was a long way to go before serious discussions on common defense problems might become possible, to say nothing of mutual commitments. There were, however, other factors involved. In terms of British imports Sweden was Great Britain's most important trading partner in 1947. The Board of Trade intended to vigorously stimulate British exports to Sweden in 1948.⁴⁵ Boheman, the Director General of the Swedish Foreign Office, declared officially that Sweden wholeheartedly supported the Marshall program.⁴⁶ The initial qualms as to whether participation in the Marshall plan would be consistent with a policy of impartial neutrality seemed to be a thing of the past. Boheman himself had not refrained from revealing occasional disagreement with Undén in the past. But now, he said to a British diplomat, the Foreign Minister's attitude had changed somewhat "in the right

direction".⁴⁷ Another well placed source was quoted as having said that Undén was deeply shocked and antagonized by a Soviet demarche that went contrary to the principles of free speech.⁴⁸ Generally speaking, Sweden was doubtless the bastion of dogmatic neutrality in Norden. In addition, Sweden was most immediately concerned about how a more Western orientation would affect Finnish-Soviet relations. The traditional special relationship to Finland, as well as Swedish strategic interests in the Baltic spoke heavily for caution and forethought.

Later in 1948 Norway was to become the main mover in the direction of Western alignment. This seemed far from obvious at the beginning of that year. In his general survey for 1947, Ambassador Collier described the Norwegian attitude in the United Nations as "still one of excessive caution (not to say propitiation of the Soviet Union)".⁴⁹ In his academic way, Collier may have winced at "appeasement". Lange's replies to criticism on this count had been unconvincing. In a general impression, however, Collier saw much to suggest that the Norwegian people as a whole were ready for "a more positive "Western" policy".⁵⁰ Collier was no doubt aware of the contact between Lange and McNeil⁵¹, and added that Lange "had become convinced that it was hopeless to reason with the Soviet Union and her satellites". On his return to Norway, he had given several indications that he thought it was time for Norway "to abandon "bridge-building" once and for all and throw in her lot with the Western Powers." Quite another question was whether "the rank and file of the left" were as yet in a position to appreciate the full implications of recent events⁵² – in other words, whether the social democrats would subscribe to a possible new signal from cabinet members. In great secrecy, the British Air Attachè, Wing Commander Coward, had been approached by Norwegian Major Jörstad, who was at the time the equivalent of Director of Operations in Norwegian Air Force Headquarters. The Major, acting entirely without authority and on his own behalf, asked whether Coward would be prepared to discuss defense plans with him. He added that neither his senior officers nor the Minister of Defense "dared even to draw up any defense plans for the Norwegian Air Force".⁵³ From the context, it appears that what Jörstad had in mind, was such plans as might include the possibility of closer British-Norwegian co-operation. Coward replied evasi-

vely. He explained that "if Air ministry agreed to the preparation of Joint Defence Plans without both governments' approval - which was at the moment extremely unlikely" - he would prefer to talk to Jörstad's superiors. In his report to Ambassador Collier, he added that he did not think the Air Ministry would consider staff talks with the Norwegians alone "since the question forms part of the larger problem of Scandinavian Defence".⁵⁴ In general, he seems to have evaluated Jörstad's initiative as not much more than the serious worries of an individual with strong personal convictions. So did the Ambassador. In his comment, however, he stated that this gave additional confirmation that the question of military help was now definitely "on the *tapis*". He hoped British authorities had begun to consider this aspect of the situation. He also felt that if comprehensive defence plans had not as yet been finalized, it was in all probability because of "the desire to wait and see whether they can be co-ordinated with those of the Swedes and ultimately with our own and American plans".⁵⁵

In the months to come, Halvard Lange was to play an important role. In January 1948, however, to the extent that he turned away from "bridge-building" he was still mainly concerned about Norway's attitude in the United Nations, where he realized the policy of judging all cases on their merits was no longer viable. There was, however, a point where political decisions overlapped with military considerations. The Svalbard problem rested heavily on Norwegian minds, as long as Soviet intentions remained unclear. Arctic strategy might direct power interests in that direction.⁵⁶

The Norwegian position would be easier, he told Collier, "if we were sure that the American strategists did not intend to "write off" Scandinavia in the event of a conflict". There was reason to believe that they had, "and in general we know nothing of their military plans". Collier was as evasive as his Air Attaché had been a few days before, but he carefully reported to the FO, and Hankey noted in the margin: Voila! Hankey's exclamation point, and Colliers reticence, reveal the essential elements of the current situation: problems might possibly arise, where Western global strategy became of vital importance for Norway; and the Western powers, while they were moving towards the policy of the outstretched hand, could not commit themselves - the British because they could not speak from strength, the Americans because they had not made

up their minds. Hankey's comment, written out in longhand, might have been something like: at last, it is out in the open.

The functional ties created by the war were as important militarily as politically. A Norwegian brigade was part of the occupation forces in Germany, which means it was under the aegis of the British Army of the Rhine, worked with British equipment and followed British routine. The agreement that governed the arrangement was due to expire on March 1, 1949. In a personal letter to his British opposite number, Defense Minister Hauge approached the problem and pointed out that the absence of the Brigade constituted a weakening of Norway's own immediate preparedness. From this point of view, it seemed desirable to bring the Brigade home.⁵⁷ Alexander felt that this would be "little short of disastrous". What if Danish, Dutch and Belgian forces were to do the same? In that case, British occupation forces would be reduced by approximately one quarter. The issue did not cause any lasting problems, but reveals clearly to what extent scarcity of men and material was relevant to both parties, and worked against a realistic approach to problems of military assistance.

Inter-Nordic discussions

However, the situation was not as fluid as it might appear from public utterances on the official cabinet level. Contact and consultation on the service level had reached a point where more tangible results seemed within reach; defense ministers were becoming increasingly involved; confidential exchanges of opinion within Scandinavian cabinets led to similar inter-Scandinavian contacts between cabinet members.⁵⁸ At the end of January 1948, American and British diplomats reported reliable information that Swedish Norwegian staff talks were in progress in Oslo. The initiative was Swedish. The Swedish General Staff representatives were to move on to Copenhagen for similar discussions in early February. Heading the Swedish group was colonel Thunberg, a prominent Air Force officer with considerable international experience; as Stockholm reported to the FO, his background was not "entirely technical". There was considerable hope of rapid progress, such as

the establishment of a Scandinavian defense bloc within the next ninety days.⁵⁹

Since the initiative came from Sweden, the FO was likely to assume that the ultimate purpose would be a consolidation of Scandinavian defense forces on a platform of non-alignment. No doubt they were wary of such development.

The origin of this information is as interesting as its content. It came from the American military attachè in Oslo, who for the first time appeared to be definitely faster and better informed than his British colleagues. The reason is obvious: on January 28, he had a long interview with Defense Minister Hauge, at the latter's request. Hauge also summoned the American attachés for Air and Navy. Speaking quite openly, he wanted to find out how important Norway was in American strategic thinking, and what help could be expected from America in a critical situation. The attachés were further informed that Norway intended to approach the U.S. about assistance with military equipment. Two important elements in later discussions are now clearly evident: The vital importance of military assistance, and the Norwegian desire for some kind of an opening toward the West. To what extent these aims could be reconciled with basic Swedish premises remained to be seen.

The whole issue had now progressed to Cabinet level. Danish Minister of Defense, Rasmus Hansen, came to Oslo at the end of January to sound Norwegian opinions, and continued from there to Stockholm. This move foreshadows another long-term trend, the Danish wish to act as an intermediary, to harmonize and reconcile conflicting Swedish and Norwegian attitudes. Hansen left Norway with certain misgivings. He told Swedish cabinet members that certain leaders within Labour and in the cabinet aimed at Norwegian association with a Western bloc.⁶⁰ The only motive offered was "an outspoken apprehension of being excluded from Western association". This second-hand rendering of Hansen's impressions⁶¹ may not be complete; it does, however, bring out one more basic problem: a Norwegian desire to keep both options open, or more precisely, not to buy a Scandinavian military alliance at the price of foregoing Western support.

Thus, in early February 1948, a number of themes had emerged that were to remain central in further discussions throughout the year.

Western views

Such was the general situation around the time when Bevin launched his appeal for "the free nations of Europe" to "draw closer together" and stated that "the time is ripe for a consolidation of Western Europe".⁶² Given the fluidity of the situation, it is not difficult to explain why he refrained from any allusion to Scandinavia. Answering a direct question by Norwegian Ambassador Prebensen, he said that he did not want to embarrass the Scandinavians at a stage where there was so little to offer them in terms of security.⁶³ Considering the many signs of rapid development, it is equally easy to see why the British watched the Scandinavian scene carefully. Bevin directed that "a thorough study should be made of the Scandinavian position in the light of our new Western Union policy rising".⁶⁴

Until the last days of January 1948, both British and American analyses and situation reports were frequently vague and couched in loose and general terms. They assessed public opinion about the Soviet Union, and used that as an indication of Western sympathies. Not until this juncture did they seriously seek, or receive, information on high levels of policy-making. They were, however, clearly aware of the trend towards Scandinavian co-ordination in military affairs, and viewed it with sympathy, which was also the best part of what they had to offer at the time. The Foreign Office was already thinking farther ahead, and definitely had the political will to move forward in the direction of a Scandinavian defence arrangement with efficient support from the West. Foreign Minister Bevin himself was the strongest advocate of this course. But in practice, Western support of this kind was synonymous with American support and commitment. There was still considerable doubt as to how strongly the U.S. would back up the Western Union which was now in the making. With the Scandinavians themselves so reticent, Bevin let sleeping dogs lie, and waited for developments. Hankey echoed Bevin's opinion: the Danish hesitations, for instance, demonstrated "how very wise our tentative approach to the Scandinavians ... has been ... We shall clearly have to handle the Scandinavians most carefully".⁶⁵ The immediate reference here is to Bevin's January 22 speech. "It was much better that the Scandinavi-

ans should come around and enquire” than that they should be embarrassed by a reference to them. However, the same reasoning prevailed one month later.

The American attitude was somewhat clarified during January 1948, but not as fast and as forcefully as Bevin would have wished for. Secretary of State Marshall had affirmed, in reply to advances from the eager Belgian Prime Minister Spaak, that the U.S. was mainly concerned about European efforts to increase production and trade, balance budgets and stabilize currencies.⁶⁶ As for security, that was intimately connected with the German problem, which involved questions as to “what three Western Powers can do to increase security in Western Europe.” Participation by other Western European Powers might be possible if a satisfactory form could be found, but Spaak was told that this should be kept confidential “as we have not yet discussed this with the British and the French”.⁶⁷ The diplomatic correspondence between London and Washington in January 1948 clearly reveals to what extent the American attitude remained receptive and temporizing.⁶⁸

At this point (January 10, 1948) Bevin had outlined his master plan⁶⁹ and was ready to approach Marshall in more explicit terms. He set out his views in the memorandum of January 13,⁷⁰ which includes the programmatic passage: “I believe therefore that we should seek to form with the backing of the Americas and the Dominions a Western Democratic system comprising Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, Italy, Greece and possibly Portugal.” Marshall responded with considerable sympathy and with qualified commitment: Bevin’s initiative was of fundamental importance and deserved “his continuing study and that of his European colleagues.” The United States would do “everything which it properly can” to assist them.⁷¹ Among Marshall’s advisers, there was considerable reserve as to what could properly be done. George F. Kennan welcomed the undertaking warmly, but warned against a treaty modeled on the British-French Treaty of Dunkirk. “Military union should not be the starting point. It should flow from the political, economic and spiritual union – not vice versa.” He also pointed out that the military note might frighten some, “notably the Scandinavians”. This remained Kennan’s basic view throughout the following events. The same trend of thought is set forth clearly and concisely in a memo from the State Department’s Division of

Western European Affairs on the same day. "The security problem seems primarily economic, secondly, political, and thirdly, military". These three problem areas were not seen as separate and unconnected, but the economy was fundamental. "A healthy economy is the basic essential, both for the well-being of the individual and his resistance to ideological infection, and for the development of the fundamental industrial and agricultural factors in military potential".⁷² Hickerson, who as Director of the Office of European Affairs was to play a prominent role in further development, also voiced his reservations over common security arrangements. The U.S. would carry out the obligations it had under the Charter of the U.N.

However, any plan developed by European nations in the direction of U.S. participation in defense arrangements beyond this, would require careful study. There were arguments on both sides with respect to direct U.S. participation in defense schemes.⁷³

The State Department also maintained its cautious attitude after Bevin's speech. As Under Secretary of State Lovett carefully pointed out in a letter to Inverchapel: The U.S. would "carefully consider the part it might appropriately play in support of such a Western European Union, established presumably in harmony with the Charter of the United Nations".⁷⁴

At the time, the third-force theme was very much present, in the U.S. as well as in Europe, the concept of a Western Union relatively independent of the United States. In conversation with Ambassador Inverchapel Hickerson adopted the formula. He had envisaged "the creation of a third force which was not merely the extension of US influence but a real European organization strong enough to say "no" both to the Soviet Union and to the United States, if our actions should seem so to require".⁷⁵ The strongest warning against a third force policy came from Europe, from Bidault. He should know, he stated, nobody had tried so hard as he, without success.⁷⁶ No doubt he referred to his own form of bridge-building, which broke down when he was unable to win Soviet support for French views on the future of the Saar, and he remained wary when the concept of third force formations in French domestic policies came to the foreground in January 1948.

Nordic discordance

Scandinavian reactions to Bevin's speech were not unanimous. In Sweden, Undén was very clear. Sweden remained non-aligned, and would join no bloc.⁷⁷ His words were widely interpreted as a "no to Bevin"-statement,⁷⁸ an impression that Undén himself tried to modify, without altering his trend of thought. In Denmark, Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft stated emphatically that Denmark would not be placed in any bloc. "We are members of the United Nations, and shall do our duty there as a Nordic country."⁷⁹ His clear refusal of alignment as well as his declaration of faith in a Nordic approach and in the UN, were obviously intended to quell rumors that arose from Bevin's speech. In Norway alone, a more positive response could be registered. The board ("representantskap") of the Labor Party's Oslo branch passed a resolution on the Marshall plan, which invited the Cabinet to support all efforts to co-ordinate economic reconstruction and political co-operation between all democratic countries. It added: "The initiative that the British Labour government has taken, must also have our support." Among those in favor were Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen, chairman of The Confederation of Trade Unions Konrad Nordahl, and the powerful and dynamic secretary general of the Labour party, Haakon Lie. In view of what happened later, the resolution should not be interpreted as a decision to go all out for Bevin, and far less for possible military implications. Lie was to become a dedicated and determined supporter of NATO; Gerhardsen did not really commit himself until almost a year later. The resolution, likely as not, was a rather vague common denominator for fairly different attitudes. To Prime Minister Gerhardsen, the accent was on economic and, to use Bevin's words, "spiritual" solidarity. He was very much aware of the fact that the United Kingdom, as well as Denmark, Sweden and Norway, had a Labour government.⁸⁰ The resolution also included a third force trend of thought: "... détente and peace can best be created by the Western European countries, dedicated to democratic government and an increasing degree of planned economy, growing strong enough to stand on their own legs - independent of the two superpowers."

Lange, however, had not seen the draft, did not wish such a

resolution, and disapproved of it when it came. In his public comments, he remained receptive to Bevin's suggestions – only at a later stage did he use the word “plan” – but was not determined to follow up on it. His interest and sympathy transpired, however, as far as the desire for more trustful political consultation was concerned.

The situation was somewhat clarified during the traditional parliamentary debate following the “speech from the throne” that began on February 11, 1948. A prominent conservative⁸¹ invited the cabinet to declare a policy in support of the co-operation that Bevin had suggested. He felt there was strong popular support for this, except among those “who had manifestly chosen the East.” The Prime Minister answered that Norway had received no invitation to discuss possible participation in a Western bloc, nor in a Nordic one. Bevin's trend of thought was entitled to every attention among all those who took an interest in the future of Europe. But Bevin had not put forward any plan. The Foreign Minister again reviewed the international situation. Only the most grave dangers could force Norway to take a side in a possible bloc-building, only a real threat of war. For the moment, he saw no such danger. He remained concerned, however, that the leading powers might “slide apart”. Even this could not compel Norway to choose. There were other possibilities, such as reform of the UN, or as a minimum, a new style and new procedures for conflict resolution. Economic and political reform might also enable Western Europe to play a more important role and to exert more influence in international politics. He did not have in mind a neutralist or anti-American bloc. He emphasized the hope that a stronger Western Europe might play the role of a mediator and conciliator between the superpowers. It is worth noting that Lange now deliberately disassociated himself from neutralism. On the other hand, he probably never came closer to speaking for a third-force philosophy, at least not in public. From this point of view, he remained faithful to bridge-building, on a higher level, and recognizing the necessity of being able to speak from strength.

There was a general trend in the debate to focus on economic and political aspects, and to include both Nordic and Western European perspectives.

Lange's public commitment to a more Western orientation did

not come until weeks later :“We do not want to exclude ourselves from the possibility of discussing a closer co-operation from our side, in the direction of the West ... We have felt that a closer Western European co-operation offered possibilities for creating a real foundation for an independent democratic policy of peace for Western European countries, and it has been clear to us throughout that such a co-operation between the countries in our part of Europe is in no way against the Charter of the UN.”⁸²

By then, an entirely new situation had arisen. The events in Czechoslovakia and in Finland called for fundamental examination of security concepts and policies.

Finland, the second catalyst

The disturbing reports from Czechoslovakia that began coming in the following week, and the crisis and coup d'état that followed, need not be described here. Suffice it to say, that while the events disturbed Lange personally - he was a personal friend of Jan Masaryk, and had recently had him as his guest in Oslo - they did not seriously affect Norway's strategic situation. The shock was a political and moral one. If this could happen, worse could follow. If Czechoslovakia, traditionally facing both East and West, with its strong social democratic tradition and its bridge-building potential, could be politically bulldozed so ruthlessly, who could feel safe unless well protected? The situation in Finland, however, led to more drastic Norwegian initiatives than anybody could have imagined before, and to positive British/American response. It also set the stage for serious discussions on a Nordic military alliance, at cabinet level.

The Fenno-Soviet negotiations became publicly known when Stalin's letter to Paasikivi was published on February 28, 1948. In relation to the possible Scandinavian defense union, they brought another two vital questions to the foreground: Was a similar Soviet approach to Norway to be expected? and how would a Fenno-Soviet treaty affect Scandinavian political relations and defense planning in general? The former problem immediately became a grave concern to Norway. The latter affected all of the Northern nations, but was, as a matter of course, especially important to Sweden.

While Western European statesmen, led by Bevin, Spaak, and, on his own terms, Bidault, were striving to establish foundations for a Western Union, the European nations in the Soviet zone of influence had been brought into a system based on different principles, a network of bilateral treaties with the Soviet Union.⁸³ With Finland added to the list, Norway would be the only remaining European nation facing the Soviets' western frontier that did not have a similar treaty calling for friendship, assistance and consultation. The problem came to a head during the critical days around March 8, 1948. Warnings, signals and indications, however, had been abundant for some time already. The strong Norwegian

reaction during the crisis must be seen against this background of suspense and apprehension.

Diplomatic circles in Helsinki had long been speculating about "the current volume of rumors about Russian pressures on Finland". The French Minister even reported that Finnish Foreign Minister Enckell, off the record and in private, had asked a prominent Swedish guest on February 16th what the Swedes would do if the Russians came across North Finland and demanded transit through Swedish Lapland.⁸⁴ The French military attachè to Helsinki also said he had reported on the Fenno-Russian pact as early as the middle of February, and, he added, the Soviets would not stop at the Fenno-Norwegian border.⁸⁵ First-hand reliable information, however, is not likely to be found outside confidential and partly private documents on Finnish-Swedish relations.

The Finnish Minister to London kept in touch with the Foreign Office, and was informed, unofficially, that the phrasing of the draft seemed "dangerously vague" and there was some concern as to whether it might leave the way open for Finnish independence to be undermined, "and also for Soviet pressure to be exerted on Norway and Sweden".⁸⁶

The pact's impact on Sweden and Norway was no doubt the major British concern. In a comment on the situation in Czechoslovakia, Bevin fully accepted the opinion of his representatives in Prague, that there was not much that the Western powers could do except to give signals that this must be the last coup of its kind against "the forces of Democracy". Bevin found this last paragraph "of particular interest".⁸⁷ The British Chiefs of Staff were consulted about the military aspects of what advice the UK could give to the Finns about accepting or refusing the Soviet offer of a mutual assistance pact. They stated, on February 28th 1948, that the Soviet Union was able to dominate Finland completely, if determined to do so. Strategically, the position of Finland was not a major British concern. The line to take must be decided "in the light of the effect it will have on the other Scandinavian countries." The immediate purpose must be to stiffen the morale of the Nordics. The only possible military means to that end would be naval exercises in the vicinity of Scandinavia, and American participation was "most desirable". The Air Force might also speed up the departure of a visit to Sweden by R.A.F planes, planned for the near future. The

Foreign Office held back. Such gestures might lead to increased Soviet pressure on Finland, and the exact implications of the Soviet move were not yet known.⁸⁸

At this juncture, the Foreign Office had clarified its position on Scandinavia in two documents of major importance. The Northern department had delivered the analysis that was requested earlier,⁸⁹ and Bevin had personally included Scandinavia in a *tour d'horizon* included in a comprehensive memorandum for the Cabinet.⁹⁰ The Northern department delivered a historical retrospect that led to an analysis of the current situation. The conclusion was, as before, that, above all, "Scandinavia" would want to know what degree of British assistance could be expected to a Scandinavian common defense policy; that Britain could only frame obviously evasive replies; that this was likely to remain so until more was known about American plans in the event of an emergency. Bevin gave an assessment of the present situation: after Czechoslovakia, the next step for the Soviets might well be in the direction of Italy and/or France, with possibly a threat to the independence of the Scandinavian countries. The Finnish treaty might point towards further "consolidation of their security in that part of Europe". Once their situation in Finland had been fully assured they might find the time ripe for "further progress".⁹¹ He pointed out that this could only be a tentative estimate of Soviet intentions, but "when they reach the point of being put into action, Soviet plans mature very quickly and they are, moreover, very flexible"⁹² - in other words, one must be prepared for sudden and perhaps dramatic events.

Such, then, was the general background. On the regional, Norwegian stage, rumors and speculations abounded; the Utenriksdepartement (the Norwegian Foreign Office) monitored them carefully, discarded most of them, and was left with a handful that carried enough weight to be taken very seriously, and some that called for rapid and dramatic action. Among the more irresponsible news mongers was for instance the columnist Ralph Hewins. According to him, the Soviets were likely to advance into Northern Norway any time. His words did not carry much weight in the Norwegian Foreign Office. Alistair Cooke, however, created considerable anxiety. In his Washington correspondence to the Manchester Guardian, he stated that "some members of the State Department ... and some members of the Army ... have to face

some ugly presumptions that Czechoslovakia and Scandinavia were probably lost to Western Europe ...".⁹³ Beginning on March 5th, even more alarming messages came in to the Utenriksdepartement. They have played a considerable role in later discussions, and there has been a tendency to assume a direct causal relationship between the "warnings" and the strong reactions of the Norwegian Government. Before turning to the documents, however, it seems imperative to survey the general international situation in which they belong.

As British and American foreign-policy-makers saw it, there was a real possibility of communist majority in the imminent Italian elections, and of vigorous communist action and perhaps decisive influence in France. Czechoslovakia was lost to Western democracy. Finland was facing an uncertain future, and might be sliding in the same direction. The six-power conference in London, in its final communiqué on March 5 inaugurated a German policy that strongly antagonized the Soviet Union. The danger of pro-Soviet communist factions undermining governments from within was evoked throughout Western Europe. In deep secrecy, leading Western statesmen considered the military aspect of the Western Union. There was no general fear of war in a near future, but a strong and widespread feeling that Soviet challenges might have to be met, and that they should be met with determination, and backed up by military strength. In hindsight, there may be strong indications that both Soviet military capability and political aggressiveness were overestimated at the time. On the other hand, so much hinged upon Stalin himself, and how far he was gone in his transformation from policies of ruthless but rational calculation to uninhibited and unpredictable spontaneity.

In the Nordic nations, three main trends were obvious in the first days of March 1948. Denmark, Sweden and Norway were equally anxious to strengthen their defense forces. Attempts to organize a Scandinavian defense co-operation had reached cabinet level, but met with serious political difficulties there. The main problem was that Norway wanted what could still only be vaguely described as an opening toward the West, Sweden presupposed non alignment in peacetime, Denmark was hesitant.

In terms of military strength, Sweden was the only force worth mentioning. As a neutral during the Second World War, she had

built up an army, navy and air force that no grand strategist could afford to neglect. Norway and Denmark could only be a liability to any partner in any alliance. To Sweden a Nordic alliance could only be a military burden, until the two neighbors had considerably strengthened their forces. For Sweden to join a Scandinavian alliance would imply a calculated risk, but also, seen in a wider scope, clear advantages, if the alliance were committed to non-alignment. With Norway in a Western alliance, Sweden would be in an uncomfortable strategic position, to say the least, in case of a confrontation between the superpowers. Western bases in Norway would bring advanced British, American and Soviet positions within hours of Sweden's frontiers, if not nearer; and there was almost a conviction in the Swedish cabinet that bases in Norway, probably American ones,⁹⁴ was the price Norway would have to pay for being taken under the Western umbrella. Undén had no faith in the deterrence concept, and was almost exclusively concerned about the possible consequences of a Western alliance at the outbreak of a war. He was convinced that traditional neutrality must be a better protection. Some prominent writers from his political entourage went farther: "Neutrality means that whoever attacks, becomes our enemy. At lesser cost, neutrality cannot be bought."⁹⁵ Strictly speaking, even an alliance with Norway and/or Denmark would be a deviation from absolute non-alignment. But they were not major powers. The guidelines of foreign policy set out in a programmatic declaration in October 1945⁹⁶ referred only to major powers as possible bloc-builders.

Undén's position was emphatically clear, but not universally accepted as representing the one and only Swedish policy. Both British and American diplomats and observers repeatedly reported on dissenting opinions within the Swedish armed forces⁹⁷ and even within the Swedish Foreign Office itself⁹⁸. There were also suggestions that the elections in the fall of 1948 might bring changes. In the meantime, Western comment tended to zero in on Undén personally, as the embodiment of obstinate illusion. There is no doubt that by the beginning of March, 1948, he was deeply worried about Norway turning toward the West. For this reason he felt that discussions of common Scandinavian defense measures should not be carried much farther forward until the political premises had been set out clearly and unequivocally.

This may well explain, at least in part, why the technical discussions on service level did not ascend to government level, as they had been expected to do in the last days of January 1948⁹⁹. According to plan, the Swedish General Staff representatives were to continue from Oslo to Copenhagen for similar discussions there. No Danish service representatives had come to Oslo. Politically more important, however, was a visit by the Danish Minister of Defense, Mr. Hansen. Officially, he came to address a meeting of the Oslo Arbeidersamfund, in reality as much for private conversations with Hauge and others. It was rumored, at the time, that the Swedish Minister of Defense, Mr. Vougt, might be expected in Oslo a little later.¹⁰⁰ No deductions should be made from mere chronology. But three facts remain to accent the importance of these few days; Hauge's frank discussions with the Americans; the high-level Scandinavian service discussions that ran parallel; and the possibility of continued talks between the Nordic Ministers of Defense. Hauge was working hard to weigh the pros and cons of the two options, Scandinavian and North Atlantic; he had to relate his conclusions to trends of thought among his closest advisers, in parliamentary circles and particularly in the Commission on Defense;¹⁰¹ and this was going on at the time when Minister Hansen's visit brought the difficulties of the choice out into the open, at Cabinet level.¹⁰² Hansen continued his mission in Stockholm.¹⁰³ In his talks in Oslo, Hansen could not fail to note how strongly many political leaders felt that any alliance would need solid support from the West, and that general assumptions or tacit understandings to that effect did not seem tangible enough. He learned about Lange's contact with McNeil,¹⁰⁴ and became aware that public manifestations of these new signals was only a matter of time. He brought along with him Haakon Lie's draft resolution¹⁰⁵. Above all, he may have been impressed by Hauge's summation.¹⁰⁶ The Danish cabinet continued to sit on the fence. While Prime Minister Hansen, on January 30th, reaffirmed Danish non-alignment, Foreign Minister Rasmussen on February 1st explored the possibilities of an American military guarantee.¹⁰⁷ The Swedish attitude remained unchanged. A programmatic government declaration ("regeringsmeddelande") on February 4, backed up by Undén's statement in the Riksdag on the same day, reaffirmed that Sweden had no intention whatsoever of associating itself with any bloc, "be it an

explicit pact of alliance or but silent understanding of common military action in the case of a conflict".¹⁰⁸ To Swedish statements of the kind, there was at the time an omnipresent but officially unspoken qualification, succinctly put by Defense Minister Vougt in a private conversation with the outspoken American diplomat, "Doc" Matthews, the Counselor of the American Embassy, on January 26, and quoted by Matthews as follows: "(1) if the time ever comes when Sweden "must definitely choose sides" there is no doubt that Sweden will join the West (2) until it is finally compelled to choose sides Sweden will avoid associating itself with either East or West". Matthews, not a man to mince words, added, in parentheses: "(Incidentally I find that this dunk position is a favorite one here. It has become a basic specious tenet in the creed of Swedish self-deception)".¹⁰⁹

During this impasse, Scandinavian defense negotiations remained in abeyance. The Swedish Minister of Defense did not go to Oslo. His Norwegian opposite number contemplated going to Stockholm, but decided against it.¹¹⁰ Routine Scandinavian meetings in the following weeks (Prime Ministers 9 February, Nordic social-democrat co-operation committee) dealt mostly with economic issues, the Marshall plan etc., while marking time on defense problems. During the conventional meeting of Nordic Foreign Ministers in Oslo, February 23-24, Lange proposed discussion on a joint defense program.¹¹¹ The outcome only confirmed what was already known, positions remained entrenched. According to a high official in the Norwegian Utenriksdepartement,¹¹² as quoted in an American report, "Norwegians (backed by Icelanders) had hard time endeavouring to persuade Swedes and Danes to modify their neutrality stand".¹¹³ This may possibly overstate the Icelandic position. Icelandic Foreign Minister Benediktsson usually preferred to stay out of such discussions, on the grounds that they involved a Western Union, whereas Iceland was definitely an Atlantic nation.¹¹⁴

The events of early March broke the deadlock. More precise indications of a possible Soviet move reached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and seemed to carry more weight than previous rumors and speculations.¹¹⁵ Reports from Norwegian representatives in Moscow, Warsaw and Helsinki all indicated that Norway must be prepared to receive a Soviet approach similar to Stalin's

letter to Paasikivi.¹¹⁶ Considering the negotiations Norway had conducted in the fall of 1946 on Soviet desiderata in Svalbard – including common defense measures – the cabinet felt that such an offer might be coming, and that it might be “accompanied by some kind of pressure.”¹¹⁷

Ambassador Berg’s message from Moscow, March 5, recommended that the Utenriksdepartement reexamine notes and correspondence related to plans for a contemplated Soviet-Norwegian non aggression treaty “in 1930 or 1931”.¹¹⁸ In a supplementary message, Berg reported that “one of his Soviet contacts” had referred to this in a discussion of recent events in Finland.¹¹⁹ The name of the “Soviet contact” was kept strictly secret at the time. It transpired later that it was none other than Madame Kollontay, a veteran in Soviet Scandinavian relations, and widely thought of as a friend of Norway. Ambassador Berg did not exclude the possibility that her remark might contain a discreet warning. It may also have been mere conversational fencing on her part, something along the line of: what is wrong about non-aggression treaties? You almost concluded one with us once. This was the general feeling among leading Swedish personalities.¹²⁰ One primary source is missing. Lange received at the time a personal letter from Kollontay, “in a little blue envelope”.¹²¹ The note was not included in the archives of the Utenriksdepartement, nor was it found among his private papers after his death. At the time, he felt that Berg’s theory could not be ignored. There is no evidence, however, that Kollontay offered any conclusions concerning the current Norwegian position.¹²² Lange ordered a thorough review of the relevant negotiations during 1928-1930.

On March 6, a Saturday, Swedish Minister to Warzaw, Clas Westring, called upon his Norwegian colleague, minister Danielsen, and informed him that “a Polish socialist, who did not himself belong to the Government, but was close to it, had told him that when the Soviet Union had had its way in Finland, it would turn to Norway. Norway was to be occupied, but not Sweden. Once the Soviets were established in Norway, they would be in a position to direct Sweden as they wished to.” There would be no British or American help readily available. Both powers would have to concentrate on the Mediterranean area. Westring added that his source, whose name he of course withheld, was very well informed.

For instance, he had known about the impending events in Czechoslovakia as early as a week in advance. Danielsen offered a somewhat skeptical comment of his own, to the effect that decisions of such importance were made in Moscow, not in Warsaw, and that Stalin was not apt to reveal his plans outside a very limited group of confidants.¹²³

A third message came from Helsinki, by way of Washington. On March 6th, American counselor Huston told Andvord that American sources in Helsingfors expected a Soviet move to offer Norway a pact on the Soviet-Finnish model. The report had gone to the State Department, and was relayed from there to the Oslo Embassy. Shortly after the same information, from the same source, came in through Norwegian press attaché Hedemann in Helsingfors. A Norwegian evaluation of the source was not unequivocally positive.¹²⁴ Ambassador Bay followed up Huston's demarche on Monday, March 8th. He pointed out that he had received the report from Washington without any further instruction, but deemed it advisable to let the Utenriksdepartement know, and hoped it would be useful. As to the value of the information, he said that he was not in a position to judge about that.¹²⁵

These are the three so called "warnings" that were considered most seriously by Lange and his staff.¹²⁶ Their importance and impact have been evaluated in various ways: Huston's communication as American intervention, pressure, or bulldozing, allegedly supported by underhand suasion; all of them as excuses for the "Westerners" ("vestorienterte") to push forward in a policy they were already dedicated to; or, seen from the opposite side in frequently polemical debate, as indications of sinister Soviet intentions, too serious to be neglected, whether they were absolutely accurate or not. Lange had his own interpretation. The various signals seemed to him to be deliberate leaks; as Norway was not expected to accept a treaty of the kind, the purpose could be to provoke a statement to the effect that Norway did not intend to conclude any such treaty whatsoever. This would effectively bar Norway from accession to any formalized Western alliance. At this juncture, Lange was convinced that the Western option must be preserved be it in combination with a Northern alliance, a third force policy in Western Europe, or in a North Atlantic context; the

latter possibility, however, was the farthest from his mind, or rather, had not yet appeared as a practical alternative at all.

Drastic Norwegian initiatives followed. On March 8th, after consultations in an extraordinary cabinet session, Lange asked the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and the United States what assistance Norway could expect in case of aggression. He made it clear that Norway was determined to turn down a possible Soviet invitation to negotiate a pact, regardless of the answers he might receive from the Western powers, but he was anxious "to learn as much as possible on how these matters were evaluated in London and Washington".¹²⁷ During the day he also consulted his closest advisers in the Ministry as well as leading parliamentarians.

Seen against the general background, as outlined above, it seems rather simplistic to explain all this merely as a reaction on information received over the last few days. The "warnings" arrived at a crucial moment, and provided the impulse that tipped the scales that had long been in a state of precarious balance. On March 5th, Labor members of the "preparedness committee"¹²⁸ decided to support an additional grant of 100 million kroner for military purposes. The Ministry of Defense had already initiated measures to increase general preparedness. In Sweden, Commander-in-Chief Jung reportedly advocated further strengthening of Swedish forces in a meeting with defense Minister Vougt on March 5th.

Another serious sign of alarm in Norway was Defense Minister Hauge's visit to London on 5th and 6th March. There was no secrecy about it. Hauge had been inspecting Norwegian troops in Germany, and it seemed natural that he should continue to London.¹²⁹ However, he also came to conduct important conversations of a more specific nature.

Only 30 at the time - just barely the minimum age for cabinet members - Hauge had an impressive record. Abandoning a promising career in Law School, University of Oslo, he became prominent in military resistance from a very early date, and was its leader from the end of 1942 throughout the war, which may well be the European record, all the more so, since Norwegian military resistance was tightly unified, consolidated and remarkably faction-free. He had himself travelled clandestinely between occupied Norway and London headquarters several times, and was listened to on high hush-hush levels in London. Many doors remained open to

him in the United Kingdom. On this visit, he saw his opposite number, A. V. Alexander, who as First Lord of the Admiralty in the Second World War had ample opportunity to turn his eyes towards Norway, and took considerable interest in intelligence from Stockholm, also a center of Norwegian intelligence activities.¹³⁰ Hauge submitted to him a questionnaire including a series of questions as to the British attitude in the event of a Russian attack on Scandinavia.¹³¹ As a result of this, the British Chiefs of Staff prepared an outline of their views. However, events now moved so rapidly that the problem had to be reviewed in an entirely different political context.¹³² The case of Norway became an important consideration in the British American consultations that were now moving rapidly forward towards a common security policy in the Atlantic and Western European areas. Important conversations were scheduled for the Paris meeting in the middle of March. As a result of the Norwegian demarche on March 8th, Lange was immediately brought in, and on the highest level. In Paris, he was invited to discuss Norway's security problems with Bevin, Bidault and Marshall, personally and confidentially.

The Norwegian initiative

The ten days following March 8 1948 were a period of rapid change and dramatic events which went far toward clarifying American and British attitudes toward Norway, and revealed Western readiness to strengthen the Norwegian position in case of a Russian demarche. The following weeks became, from the Norwegian point of view, a period of waiting for more specific information. Norwegians gave more open signals of their determination not to close the opening toward the West. The Danes continued to mark time. The Swedes were increasingly worried that Norwegian policy would break away from traditional neutrality, and thereby jeopardize Sweden's position as well. In the meantime, the British made concentrated efforts to strengthen the new-born Western Union, economically as well as militarily. They were, however, petitioners themselves. A rapid military build-up in Western Europe was only possible with the active support of the United States. Such

momentous new departures in American security policy were only possible after the long and laborious procedures required in representative democracy. Congressional approval of mutual military commitments became definite through the passing of the Vandenberg resolution, on June 11. Not until then could the necessary, complex and multilateral negotiations get under way. It was a period of energetic activity in the United States, and of not quite patient expectancy in Western Europe. As for Scandinavia, the next landmark was to be a Swedish initiative in early May.

Lange's démarche

Lange's words to the Western Ambassadors were cautious and low-tuned in the sense that they did not unnecessarily enlarge upon any worst case scenario, although they were laconically emphatic. His action, however, was unusual, and by Norwegian standards quite unprecedented. It had strong backing from constitutional authorities. In the early hours of the March 8, Lange conferred with Prime Minister Gerhardsen. Immediately after, the two met with the Presidents of the Storting. All approved of the suggested sounding.

The contents of his conversations with the Ambassadors are known from numerous documents.¹³³ He seems to have used similar phrasing in both conversations.¹³⁴ "I told ... that what one could say with certitude at the present stage, was that an efficient war of nerves had been initiated against Norway. With verisimilitude one could say that we in a near or possibly distant future, and most likely in a near future, would be confronted in one form or another, with the question of a pact or an agreement with the Soviet Union. I further said that in this situation I was going to ask the Cabinet for authorization to ascertain, in a non-committal way, how one in London and Washington, on the highest political and military level, looked at our strategic position, and whether it would be at all possible to assist us militarily in case of an aggression. I further said that regardless of what answer we got, it was my meaning, and, I believed, the attitude of the entire Cabinet, that Norway must answer "no" to any proposal of agreement or pact, and face all consequences. For the time being we were aware that we were,

militarily, practically speaking, powerless, but in the worst possible case we must engage in a desperate struggle which could not last long militarily, but would lay the foundations for resistance from the whole people during a possible occupation. I further said that I expected, after having conferred with my colleagues in the Cabinet, to come back to the question of officially, but not in a binding manner, to ascertain the United States Government's view on and evaluation of the possibilities of assistance to Norway in case of aggression."

Western response

Ambassador Bay did not trust his experience as a diplomat and remained mainly receptive to Lange's approach.¹³⁵ In fact he did not make a more extensive report until a few days later. Collier, a diplomat of considerable experience, had behind him a long career in the Foreign Office and a wide experience in dealing with British Norwegian relations. He felt more free to discuss political problems with Norwegians, was better informed by his superiors, and more apt to be consulted by them.

Taken together, these first conversations reviewed a series of possibilities: a closer relationship with the Western Union; some kind of less definite form of support for the Bevin plan; a possible naval demonstration off Norway; a "training flight" by American planes over Norway and possibly other parts of Northern Europe; a Norwegian declaration that Norway had no plans of concluding any pact whatsoever.

As we have seen,¹³⁶ the idea of a naval demonstration had been introduced before in London, and rapidly whittled down, for practical as well as political reasons. The idea was reviewed on March 9, after Collier had reported on Norwegian anxieties. The Admiralty maintained that the leave period for the Navy was to begin on March 20 and continue for more than a month. Any cancellation of leave might give the impression of "some kind of mobilization". The Admiralty felt that this question should be considered by the Chiefs of Staff, not by the Admiralty alone. In a meeting with Bevin and Alexander (FO and Defence) on March 12,

representatives of the Admiralty stated that mounting a task force would dislocate all plans for training and leave, and "reveal the fact that the Admiralty was only able to undertake this exercise by sacrificing the general efficiency of the Navy." Routine exercises in the North Sea by the beginning of May would to some extent avoid these difficulties. The question was referred to the Prime Minister for decision.¹³⁷ He took the view that regular training operations, located in "northern waters" should be sufficient.¹³⁸ In the end, nothing much came out of it, except routine movements, including visits to Kiel with small ships. There was, throughout, a clear political inclination toward a demonstration of naval strength. The practical difficulties, however, were decisive - in other words, there was no sufficient strength immediately available. The Chiefs of Staff shared this opinion.¹³⁹ As a result, the matter was never thoroughly discussed with Norwegian authorities. As for Bay's suggestion of a "training flight" with B-29 bombers, Bay himself was not overly enthusiastic. He could well imagine that it might cause nothing but irritation, but also that there might be situations where, on the contrary, it might contribute to a Norwegian feeling of security. Lange replied off-hand that he would not consider such a step "fortunate" at this juncture, although situations might arise where it could have to be reconsidered.¹⁴⁰

In a larger perspective, both Ambassadors made allusions to the Western Union. Bay asked Lange point-blank about Norwegian views on participation. Collier chose a more indirect approach, by pointing out that rapid decisions now, if not carefully considered, might preclude later accession to "the Bevin plan". Lange set forth his reservations. In the first place, neither Denmark nor Sweden were prepared to take such a step, and it was a serious matter for Norway to move in a different direction. Secondly, many Norwegians would be opposed because the tradition of neutrality still had a strong grip on people. He could easily imagine that future developments might lead to revisions of opinions. However, a Western Union that included military agreements would meet with even more important inhibitions than would a merely political union. Bay said the United States considered that military aspects should not, for the time being, be brought into discussions on the Western Union. In other words, no immediate military backing could be expected from that quarter. Collier was more explicit on

military assistance, and possibly better informed. He stated that one could hardly expect independent military appreciations from London, since the Joint Chiefs of Staff were still in function, and such questions would be referred to them.¹⁴¹ Lange found this particularly interesting.¹⁴² He was not aware that preliminary appreciations had already been made, but was soon to be informed that his appeal had added a sense of urgency to British and American considerations.

In America, the Norwegian question was placed before the Combined Chiefs of Staff on March 1, as a result of the conversations between Hauge and the attachés.¹⁴³ The alarming report from Oslo was immediately forwarded to the Secretaries of Army, Navy and Air Force.¹⁴⁴ The CIA's Review of the world situation as of March 6 had, apparently for the first time, included a paragraph on Scandinavia.¹⁴⁵ More of them were to follow. London, however, again put a strong shoulder to the wheel. Collier reflected that there might be something to be said for inviting Norway immediately to "join the Bevin pact". (This had indeed been suggested by the head of Norwegian military intelligence "to his contact in the Embassy". Collier did not approve, mainly on the grounds that he did not think Lange would welcome a formal invitation just yet.¹⁴⁶ In London, Alexander was about to send Bevin a memo about conversations with the Chiefs of Staff, concerning military implications of British foreign policy in general. He immediately added a separate note about his talks with Hauge.¹⁴⁷ Bevin gave considerable emphasis to the news from Norway. A possible Soviet threat to that country would of course immediately concern the British. In addition, however, it provided a fresh argument for Bevin to use in his untiring efforts to engage the United States in military co-operation. He dispatched a long message to his Washington Embassy. Two serious threats, he stated, might arise shortly: a political threat against the Western Union, and now, in addition, "an extension of the Russian sphere of influence to the Atlantic". A bold move was needed, and there was no time to lose. Bevin considered that the most effective course would be "to take very early steps, before Norway goes under" to conclude "a regional Atlantic Approaches Pact of Mutual Assistance". The Western Union could not defend Scandinavia against Soviet pressure, and its member states were not

all equally interested in Scandinavia. Bevin suggested to work for three separate systems:

- “(i) The United Kingdom - France - Benelux system with United States backing;*
- (ii) A scheme of Atlantic security, with which the United States would be even more closely concerned;*
- (iii) A Mediterranean security system, which could particularly effect Italy.”¹⁴⁸*

Bevin added that “in view of the threat to Norway, the Atlantic security system has become even more important and urgent”.¹⁴⁹ It seems futile to discuss which was his primary motif: sympathy for Norway, British strategic interest, or the desire to prod the US into more vigorous support for the extended Bevin plan. They all worked together.

Washington did indeed respond quickly and firmly. Marshall immediately forwarded Bevin's suggestions to Forrestal as a “top secret, personal, eyes only” message;¹⁵⁰ he informed British Ambassador Inverchapel that the US was prepared to “proceed at once in the joint discussions on the establishment of an Atlantic security system” and invited British representatives to Washington “early next week”;¹⁵¹ he sent a message to Lange, through the Oslo Embassy, that the US was giving “most urgent consideration to question of Norwegian security” and was in communication with the British Government about the Norwegian situation”.¹⁵² Lange had already left for Paris, to attend a meeting on the Marshall plan. Bay delivered the message to Prime Minister Gerhardsen, who was very pleased and immediately informed Lange in Paris.¹⁵³

As soon as the American response was known, the Foreign Office instructed Ambassador Collier to bring the Norwegian Government a message along the same lines, and informed him that the American Ambassador had been instructed to concert his action with Collier.

In short: Both the US and the UK had given strong and immediate support to Norway. The US had definitely taken the lead. In British eyes, this had been an end in itself, and the UK was more than happy to follow up. The practical handling of affairs in Oslo was to be in the hands of the British Ambassador, as the more experienced

diplomat. Both London and Washington felt that further conversations should be held at the Marshall plan meeting in Paris, where both Bevin and Marshall were to attend, together with the Nordic Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Alternatives: non-aligned or Nordic

There were, however, more options open. If the Soviet Union did invite Norway to sign a treaty on the Finnish model, a possible answer could be that Norway had no intention of signing any pact whatsoever.

In fact, members of the government had discussed that possibility at a very early stage. There were two main arguments in favor of this policy. In the first place, it was consistent with the strongly embedded desire to stay out of foreign entanglements. From this point of view, such an answer would satisfy both left-wingers and traditionalists. In addition, it would leave doors open for a Swedish-Norwegian understanding. Whether such widely different motifs could be reconciled, remained to be seen. The quest for Nordic unity, however, was bound to make itself strongly felt. Secondly, leading politicians were acutely aware of the importance of public opinion. According to Lange,¹⁵⁴ those members of the Government who were best informed on trends of thought among Norwegian workers in general, considered that an answer along those lines would have widespread support, if it was given on the grounds that Norway was not going to associate herself with either side in the East-West controversy, but remained committed to the charter of the United Nations. On the other hand, a possible Soviet move might be made for the very purpose of eliciting such an answer, so as to have Norway proclaim herself, at least implicitly, committed to non-alignment.¹⁵⁵ This would go contrary to Lange's thinking at the time, to say nothing of Hauge's. Other cabinet members had been less opposed to such a declaration. On March 15, however, a unanimous cabinet approved of Lange's *démarche*,¹⁵⁶ and so far, at least, opted for the opening toward the West. The British immediately made their attitude clear. Without specific instructions, Collier warned against commitment to a policy of "no pacts of any

kind".¹⁵⁷ The warning was emphatically repeated from London on March 16: any Norwegian concession to "the East" would be the first step on a slippery slope, and inevitably lead to dependence. Bevin was going to stress this point when he saw Lange in Paris. When they met, however, the Norwegian decision was, for all practical purposes, already made. On March 13, Lange had been authorized by the Prime Minister to inform the Soviet Ambassador to Paris about general feelings among Norwegians toward a possible Soviet approach - if he happened to find a suitable occasion.¹⁵⁸ Alternatively, Norway might have approached Sweden too, asking for a preview of Swedish attitudes in case of a Soviet-Norwegian crisis. This would have emphasized the Norwegian desire to keep the Nordic option as open as the Western one. Since no such initiative was taken, this remains hypothetical. It might be argued that not even Sweden had sufficient potential for efficient aid in an acute crisis; that a long-term, sustained Norwegian rearmament would equally have to rely on American supplies; that a formal request for Swedish appreciations might embarrass Sweden in a delicate situation; that consultations on service level had already failed to convince policy-makers that a common platform could be found. Nevertheless, staff conversations continued.¹⁵⁹ According to American reports, Hauge and Lange, on March 11, had explicitly agreed to the continuation of common defense talks "on highest level".¹⁶⁰ This should probably be read as "on the highest military level". Norwegian Lieutenant General Ole Berg went to Stockholm to confer with General Jung, the Swedish Commander-in-Chief.¹⁶¹ Berg had organized the Norwegian "police forces" in Sweden during World War II, and was very well connected in Swedish circles. This included General Jung. A common Swedish-Norwegian stand, if supported by high level technical co-ordination, might prove to be a stronger deterrent than a general, but unspecified, promise of Western aid, contingent upon arrangements that remained to be studied and were unlikely to materialize swiftly.

Parallel to this, Hauge invited the American Attachés to another round of conversations, on March 19.¹⁶²

By this time, an additional question was drawing near and apt to be asked openly soon: Would the Western powers, in their own interest, deem it necessary to support a Nordic or Scandinavian

alliance, even if it proclaimed itself strictly non-aligned? In Sweden, this was already a strong assumption, and became a weighty argument in later debates. It also fitted in well in Danish thinking at the time.

The special relationship between Danish Naval intelligence and its British opposite numbers continued, and seems to have been intensified by the events of early March. It was also extended so as to involve members of the American Embassy in Copenhagen. On the morning of March 8, Captain Mörch told Naval Attaché Captain Derek Wyburd about recent developments in Nordic defense negotiation on service level, and Wyburd learned that the same information was given to the Americans, although in deep secrecy. Up to that point, the Danes had been "most chary" in informing Americans. Mörch said that there was now agreement in principle on training methods and standardization of arms and equipment. Politically, however, Norway appeared to feel more attached to a link with Great Britain than with the other Scandinavian countries. The Danish Minister of Defense, Rasmus Hansen, was very much in favor of a Scandinavian bloc, but the Danish Foreign Office held back, for fear of political repercussions.¹⁶³ It soon transpired that the Danish Navy might be prepared to commence "unofficial staff talks" on possible British assistance in case Scandinavia became a victim of aggression. For the first time it was cautiously suggested that Army representatives might also come in. Mörch also hinted that the subject might be taken up "on a higher level". Ambassador Randall asked for instructions. He was not personally prepared to encourage such discussions.¹⁶⁴ The Foreign Office was inclined to find the time ripe for more open talks, but advised to wait for the outcome of the conversations to be held in Paris. Hankey warned that Mörch was "always ahead of his Government on this."¹⁶⁵

However, the British Naval attaché, Captain Quistgaard, was called to London, and brought back to Admiral Vedel what the Danes had requested, an informal paper on the strategic position of the Danish Navy, including defense planning. The paper was also shown to Defense Minister Hansen.¹⁶⁶

The Danish Government may not have known exactly how far ahead of them Captain Mörch was likely to be, and may not even have wanted to know. It is evident from the context that Admiral

Vedel was behind his Chief of Intelligence. The American Embassy estimated, at the time, that the Government was "not completely unaware of these activities, but [was] not participating in them."¹⁶⁷ It seems a sound assumption. As far as Foreign Minister Rasmussen is concerned, he had the reputation of being an official rather than a policy maker. Within the Cabinet there seems to have been a general feeling that important decisions about Danish security policy were contingent on decisions that had to be made elsewhere, to the extent that the best attitude would be to wait and see.

However, the events of February and March gave rise to considerable anxiety in Denmark as well as in Norway. Counselor Poul Bang-Jensen of the Danish Embassy to Washington played an important role in this connection. By the beginning of March he felt deeply worried about the immediate future,¹⁶⁸ and was sent to Copenhagen by his superior, Ambassador Kaufmann, to report extensively. He arrived there on March 15, and his reports gave rise to serious concern as well as to irresponsible rumors. Events culminated in the so-called Easter crisis, "påskekrisen". The circumstances accompanying his report are still being discussed in Denmark.¹⁶⁹ Bang-Jensen had formed the impression that there was danger of "Soviet action on Denmark and possibly Norway in the immediate future" and that the five-day Easter holiday might be an opportune time.¹⁷⁰ He recommended joining the West as soon as possible, and said the U.S. was annoyed at Denmark's lack of initiative in that direction.¹⁷¹ In addition he pointed out that American Air forces needed Denmark as a place from where Moscow could be attacked. When the Danish Foreign Office let Ambassador Marvel know, he immediately reported,¹⁷² and received instructions to tell his informant that the story was "of course, without foundation". The State Department, however, had "no desire [to] throw cold water on Danish awakening to realities or Danish attempts [to] think out own plans to resist aggression."¹⁷³ Doubtless, the Easter crisis added momentum to the re-examinations of security policies that were now going on in the three Nordic countries.¹⁷⁴ Incidentally, it also put an end to the tenuous solidarity between Danish communists and other Resistance veterans. On March 23, Danish Foreign Minister Rasmussen sent for Ambassador Marvel and "openly disclosed acute nervousness of Danish Government". He was reluctant to break up Scandinavian solidarity,

but expected Sweden to maintain its neutral attitude, "and therefore Denmark must determine independently its own course". The Danish course, however, had not been determined yet, and was to be discussed in Cabinet and in Foreign Affairs committee meetings later in the day.¹⁷⁵ The outcome was that Denmark's ultimate course of action was unlikely to be determined until after the results of the Italian elections, and the terms of the Finnish-Soviet agreement were known.¹⁷⁶ In the meantime, to quote Captain Mörch again, "everything had to be done so secretly that nothing was ever put in writing".¹⁷⁷

On that very day, the third meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations approved a draft paper including the following recommendation:

"After obtaining the approval of all the Brussels signatories approaches would be made to the Scandinavian states to obtain their adherence to Brussels, the quid pro quo being the promise that the US would immediately issue security guarantees to all Brussels signatories pending the conclusion of a wider North Atlantic Pact. (Action would go forward thereafter whether Sweden acquiesced or not.)"

The Pact would comprise the US along with "all nations bordering the North Atlantic" including Iceland and Italy, with the exception of Spain.¹⁷⁸ The Policy Planning Staff had delivered a report on the previous day, recommending that the U.S. should press for "the immediate inclusion in Western Union of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland ...".¹⁷⁹ Although these documents are far from being blue-prints of American policy, they would have been very illuminating, had they been known in Norden at the time - which they were not. The vital information available at the time was derived from the conversations of Foreign Ministers at the Paris meeting.

The Paris "summit"

The conversations that took place in Paris were a by-product of the meeting on the Marshall Plan, with representatives of all sixteen "Marshall aid countries" present. Among the participants were the

Foreign Affairs Ministers of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. This provided a useful and non-ostensive opportunity for bilateral talks.

As a matter of protocol, all attending Foreign Ministers paid formal visits to M. Bidault. In Lange's case, the conversation went far beyond protocol. Bidault told Lange that the Western Union pact, to be signed in Brussels immediately after the Paris meeting, contained a clause that allowed for additional members to join, assuming all mutual obligations, or only part of them. Lange warned against urging such matters, so as to avoid misgivings concerning economic co operation in Europe.¹⁸⁰ Doubtlessly, he had his Scandinavian neighbors in mind. By this time, Sweden wholeheartedly supported the European recovery program, and with equal determination insisted that it be kept separate from any type of military assistance. The Danes felt the same way,¹⁸¹ and Lange himself took care to distinguish between economic and military aspects of international co operation.¹⁸² As the conversation turned to recent events in Finland, Bidault stated, rather abruptly, that to France, an attack on Norway would be a *casus belli*. Lange did not invite him to elaborate on that.¹⁸³

The significant conversations took place between Bevin and Lange, and Bevin and Rasmussen, on March 15 and 16 respectively. Bevin had been briefed by an aide-mémoire from the Ministry of Defence.¹⁸⁴ The Chiefs of Staff stressed the importance of controlling the entrances to the Baltic, in case of war, and expressed their belief that in case of military conflict, Scandinavia would become "a main combat area". Norwegian ports were also important to Atlantic communications. Swedish industry and raw materials might be of importance. The aide-memoire went on to sketch possible scenarios and stated that the Chiefs of Staff were "prepared to share any information [they had] about this with the Norwegians".¹⁸⁵ In Paris, Bevin did not discuss military aspects at all. On political and security problems he was both frank and explicit, and gave Lange the gist of his recent confidential exchange of opinions with Marshall, including the proposal for three related security systems.¹⁸⁶ He also said that if the question of British assistance did arise, it would be necessary to know in advance what facilities would be available.¹⁸⁷ On the following day, Denmark's Rasmussen got the same information. Bevin also saw Undén for a

diplomatic *tour d'horizon*, where he warned against Soviet pressure. The three Scandinavian Foreign Ministers had met in Copenhagen on their way to Paris, and Lange had briefed them on his conversations on March 8. They also exchanged information after their talks with Bevin.

Bevin's short but significant message influenced Scandinavian security policies in several ways. It transformed declarations of sympathy into practical arrangements for security; it dealt separately with Western European and Atlantic security problems; it forecast formal and close participation by the U.S. in an Atlantic system; it included Spitzbergen and therefore, by implication, all of Northern Norway and, last but not least, it took Norway's security problems straight up to government level. In the case of Denmark, it meant that the possibility of understanding on lower levels, without official political commitment, became a more remote possibility, and that more decisive steps might have to be taken. To Sweden it meant that a Scandinavian alliance must be proved to be more reliable than an Atlantic one, i.e. more likely to keep its members out of future conflicts.

These options had been considered for some time already in leading Norwegian circles.

Three Norwegian leaders

Defense Minister Hauge was primarily concerned about military supplies. He had long been aware that they could only be gained, in quantity, from the U.S. – hence his talks with the attachés in February. Lange's preoccupations were political, and traditions of long standing made him focus on the United Kingdom. One lasting effect of the March crisis was to bring it home to all Norwegian cabinet members that political and military aspects were definitely intertwined, and that, politically as well as militarily, the important decisions were now being made in America.

However, while Hauge was convinced that openly organized co-operation with the U.S. would provide the best solution to Norway's security problems, Lange had not entirely discarded his "third-force" philosophy. Bay asked him quite frankly whether Norwegians, and more specifically those surrounding the government, thought about Western European co-operation as a possibility to create "a third bloc" confronting both the Soviet Union and the United States. Lange replied that he did not think any responsible Norwegian could envisage a Western European co-operation as directed against the U.S., "but I definitely thought that many Norwegians, among them myself, looked at closer association in Western Europe as the only possibility to create new self-confidence in this part of the world, as well as ability and determination to manifest its own characteristics and its specific thinking with energy in international debate. To me, as a social-democrat, this point of view held particular importance. We share our views on democracy with the United States of America, but our ideas on how best to solve our economic problems were, as the Ambassador was aware, different from those that prevailed in the U.S.A."¹⁸⁸ During the waiting period in April 1948, he may well have carried this trend of thought further, accepting a high degree of military co-operation as an inevitable fact of political life, recognizing the omni-presence of America in security problems, and pared his third force leanings accordingly. At the end of the process, he was prepared to accept the United States, not only as a desirable support in critical situations, but as a permanent partner in a formal and open arrangement. This did not imply turning away from Nordic

co-operation. It only strengthened his conviction that Norway could not afford to shut herself off from the Western integration process that was rapidly gaining momentum. The administration of the European Recovery Program in Norway also seemed to prove that on principles of national economy, one could easily agree to disagree.¹⁸⁹ In 1942, the Norwegian government in London submitted a resume of its main thinking to leaders of the underground Home Front, including a preview of post-war Atlantic co-operation. The answer, drafted by Lange, warned against abandoning traditional "Nordism".¹⁹⁰ April 1948, to him, was a definite turning point, after a maturing process that had begun in 1947 and crystallized in December of that year, as revealed in his momentous conversation with McNeil.¹⁹¹

In Defense Minister Hauge's thinking there had been more continuity and less change. He took office in the fall of 1945 after years of leadership in military resistance. It fell upon him to rebuild Norwegian defense at a time when it was, in his own words "lying with a broken back" except for the army in exile. To him, Norwegian security policies were part and parcel of international relations generally. He was convinced that Norwegian rearmament should seek maximal benefit from the experiences of the Second World War and from the intimate relationship with the Allies. Starting from scratch made this even easier. He refused to be bound by traditional patterns and relics of pre-war organization. This attitude led to considerable turbulence within the military establishment, which only strengthened Hauge's determination to pursue his goal and, not less important, to assure the supremacy of political authority over the military, which to him was a basic principle of democracy. A strong man, he did not flinch from controversy. He had a clear concept of co-operation with other nations. With her limited resources, Norway could not defend herself for long against attack from a superior power. His first outline for the rebuilding of defense contained a programmatic statement: it must be the aim of Norwegian forces to hold its own "until we get efficient help from those who might become our allies".¹⁹² The statement was deliberately general. The unspecified helper might be the contemplated armed force of the United Nations, a near neighbor, or some nation acting in its own interest, contingent upon circumstances. There can be little doubt, however, that Hauge, with his background from

Resistance, saw several closer possibilities. Now, when military preparedness again seemed urgently required, the question of the possible ally needs must arise with top priority.

In the meantime, another principle had been added to his doctrine. A parliamentary commission on defense¹⁹³ found in early 1947 that there was general approval of Hauge's guidelines. An inner circle of close advisers in the Defense Ministry spelled out the conclusions more clearly in September 1947: In a worst-case scenario, the only efficient assistance could come from Western powers, and it could only be relied upon if it had been prepared in peacetime. Isolated Norwegian neutrality was unrealistic. Even a Swedish-Norwegian neutrality lacked credibility. The Scandinavian peninsula, however, remained one strategic area. Swedish attitude and Swedish military strength remained a factor of very considerable significance to a common allied effort on Norwegian territory.¹⁹⁴ In April 1948, Hauge's thinking was perfectly clear and well considered: a Western alliance was necessary; the strategic problem remained a Swedish-Norwegian one.

Norwegian Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen had not, so far, played a prominent role in the handling of security problems. He signed Haakon Lie's resolution in favor of the Bevin plan,¹⁹⁵ but was probably more attracted by its economic and "third force" aspects than by its implicit vista. In January 1949 he was to say the decisive word, and unite the Labour Party which had been split almost down the middle. Until then, for over a year, he had not committed himself. He was, however, extremely reluctant to accept any major disagreement with the Swedes.

At this juncture, all important elements in the coming debates had been introduced. The Western powers had emphatically expressed their interest in the Norwegian appeal. With equal clarity, Sweden had set forth her apprehensions. No more clarification could be expected from the Western powers until they had worked out more precise plans and examined the possible role and importance of Scandinavia in that frame of reference. In the meantime, an attempt must be made to maintain Scandinavian unity or, at a minimum, to prevent an open split.

Swedish Foreign Minister Undén was determined to make an effort in that direction. For this purpose, he came, unofficially and secretly, to Oslo on the third of May, 1948.

The Swedish initiative and the summer of non-events

Swedish Foreign Minister Undén came to Oslo, privately and unofficially, on May 3rd 1948, to seek a platform for resumption of negotiations on a Scandinavian defense union. His errand had been discussed on the highest level in Stockholm.¹⁹⁶ He met Prime Minister Gerhardsen, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lange, and Defense Minister Hauge in open, free and confidential conversation. This was the time for a full exchange of opinions. All of them were in favor of a Scandinavian union. Hauge and Lange held that such an arrangement would not be credible without some form of established opening toward the West. Undén was of the opinion that such arrangements, if made in peace-time, would represent increased danger of war rather than protection against it. Gerhardsen had not committed himself. The consolidated Norwegian point of view was that a full examination should be made, keeping all options open. The general Swedish attitude was that unconditional nonalignment should be presupposed. At the end of the day, the Norwegians felt that their reasoning had been understood, and that there was a distinct possibility of inquiry without preconditions. Subsequent discussions revealed that no common platform could be found for such procedure. The Swedish government remained convinced that a Scandinavian defense union must be based on the principle of Swedish neutrality. The summer of 1948 became a period of non-events. The Western powers were still moving toward more precise conceptions; the U.S. continued the time-consuming procedures of democratic decision-making; a triangle of British-Swedish-Norwegian misunderstandings led to diplomatic frictions. As far as Scandinavian security problems are concerned, no major event occurred until September 1948. After an exchange of letters between Undén and Lange, a meeting of Nordic Foreign Ministers announced, on September 9, that an inter-Nordic study would now be made. The communiqué stated that "... a certain difference prevails in the attitude toward problems of security policy ...". However, the Foreign Ministers had found that there was a basis for a common study. The Scandinavian Committee on Defense ("Den

skandinaviske forsvarskomite") convened on October 16. In the meantime, Denmark and Norway had received the first substantial information on plans for what was to become the North Atlantic Pact. More complete insight was to be expected at the end of the year, on both alternatives. At that moment a decisive choice would have to be made.¹⁹⁷

Between September 1948 and February 1949 two attempts were made to find a way of associating Sweden with the North Atlantic Pact with limited commitments, through a system of overlapping alliances. Both efforts were British, and both were the personal endeavors of Robert Hankey.¹⁹⁸

Hankey and the interlocking pacts

In the first half of October 1948, Hankey suggested a possible way of indirect affiliation for Sweden. The basic idea was to envisage two separate pacts, one Nordic, one North Atlantic. Denmark and Norway would be members of both pacts, Sweden only of the Nordic one. This system of interlocking pacts would preserve Scandinavian unity, and also imply certain Swedish commitments toward her two neighbors, in other words, toward members of NATO. The scope and extent of these commitments would be the crucial point.

The idea originated with the British Ambassadors in Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm. They had jointly recommended that the British policy should aim at drawing Denmark and Norway into an Atlantic Pact and thereafter "try to attach Sweden to Norway and Denmark".¹⁹⁹ Hankey was strongly attracted by the suggestion, and worked out an outline of possible mutual obligations.

Norway and Denmark should enter the North Atlantic Pact as full members "or if necessary as members with a more limited commitment of mutual assistance". Under the Scandinavian Pact, Sweden would remain "*non belligerent* (not neutral)" even if Denmark and Norway were drawn in by their obligations under an Atlantic treaty. Only if the neighbors were "actively attacked" would Sweden be under an obligation to "enter the war with all her

force" and only in this case would Sweden "be entitled to assistance from Great Britain, United States of America and other Western Powers."²⁰⁰ Sweden would be entitled to the assistance of Norway and Denmark if attacked, and this "would involve the other members of the North Atlantic security pact".²⁰¹

It seems utterly unlikely that Hankey's outline could be acceptable to Sweden, if taken at face value. The mere reference to Sweden as "*non-belligerent*, (not neutral)" would immediately meet with disapproval. The term "non-belligerent" was adopted, in its time, to describe political alignments or affinities that went way beyond the outer limits of neutrality, but stopped short of war. In current usage of the 1940's it frequently referred to Spain's attitude toward The Third Reich, and Franco's toward Hitler, during the Second World War. Two other points, however, call for elucidation.

First, Hankey included the possibility of Danish and Norwegian membership with limited commitments. In this case, if commitments were narrowly limited, could they reduce obligations outside Scandinavia to a point that would be acceptable to Sweden, so that a Scandinavian pact, even if interlocked with the North Atlantic one, did not compromise Swedish neutrality?, and could commitment of mutual assistance be limited so severely that it might even seem attractive to the Swedes?

During the summer of 1948 the notion of limited commitment was used repeatedly by military and political planners working on the strategic concept and outline plan for the future NATO. For the purposes of this paper, suffice it to quote the interpretation offered by participants in the exploratory security conversations in Washington:²⁰² "... these countries would agree to defend their own territories to the limit of their capabilities and to make available such facilities as are within their power, whenever required, in order to provide for the protection of the North Atlantic Area".²⁰³ There was no need to admonish Sweden to defend herself to the utmost of her capacity. Making facilities available to Western powers was an entirely different matter, especially when such facilities should be made available "whenever requested". This phrasing came very close to the Norwegian principle that assistance in war should be prepared in peace-time,²⁰⁴ which the Swedes consistently refused to accept. According to the Swedish view, prepared facilities, for instance in Swedish airfields, might have disastrous consequen-

ces.²⁰⁵ In addition, the purpose of the whole facilities arrangement was "to provide for the protection of the North Atlantic area". Acceptance of this kind of obligations presupposed a revision of Swedish fundamentals, and was, in fact, unimaginable.

In the second place, the implications of Swedish non-belligerency were expounded by Hankey in such a way as to remove any possible indistinctness. If Denmark and Norway were "engaged" in war, but "not actively attacked" Sweden would

*"prepare by mobilization if necessary to defend her territory including her air space against any Soviet²⁰⁶ attempt to cross or use either for any purpose civil or military. She would allow Soviet merchant vessels but not warships to use her territorial waters and would actively prevent the laying of Soviet mines. She would so dispose of her radar services to give warning to the Danish and Norwegian service authorities of any impending attack upon them. She would co-operate so far as she could in measures of economic warfare against Russia, and would resist any attempt to prevent or dissuade her from trading with the Western Powers (iron ore, ball-bearings, timber, munitions) ..."*²⁰⁷

These obligations run counter to some of the basic aims of Swedish neutrality policy. They call for deliberate trade discrimination; direct participation in economic warfare; and systematic deviation from principles of international law as regards *droit de passage* in neutral sea territory. With more forthrightness than art they actually list some major bones of contention that had seriously embittered British-Swedish relations during the Second World War. In addition, they refer throughout to the Soviet Union as the only possible aggressor, whereas the official Swedish position was to shoot at whoever violated Swedish neutrality.²⁰⁸

However, Hankey sent his memorandum to the Chiefs of Staff – who approved – and thereafter to the British Embassy in Washington for communication to the State Department.²⁰⁹ He also suggested that it might be circulated to the Permanent Commission of the Brussels Powers. He took care to point out that Danes and Norwegians wished to conclude the Scandinavian discussions before facing the wider question of their association with an Atlantic union. For this reason, the timing and presentation of any proposal along these lines required separate consideration.²¹⁰

Apparently he changed his mind as to timing, or perhaps he embarked on an indirect approach. He disclosed his trend of thought to the Norwegian Ambassador in London, Mr. Prebensen, in two conversations.²¹¹ Prebensen felt that the idea deserved to be considered. Hankey authorized him to submit it to Lange, as "top secret" information.²¹²

The Hankey plan was given most serious consideration in Oslo. On October 19, Lange instructed Prebensen to advise against it. The instruction was strongly worded: the suggestion was seen as "very dangerous". Prebensen should immediately express a wish for dropping the proposal and not making it known. In agreement with Gerhardsen and Hauge, Lange gave two reasons for his decision. If the Hankey plan became a matter of public discussion in Norway, it would lead to considerable domestic problems and might even threaten the position of the Government. Equally important, the plan was counter-productive. It would not attract Sweden. On the contrary, it would strengthen the argument for absolute neutrality, and be interpreted as a sign that Sweden might receive Western guarantees without accepting significant obligations in return. At this point, Lange was not acquainted with the full definition of non-belligerency in Hankey's memorandum. Prebensen's report had only referred summarily to "certain services" which Sweden would have to render. With fuller information, Lange would no doubt have felt even more convinced that Sweden could do nothing but turn down the Hankey plan. Prebensen immediately notified Hankey, who said that he would be guided by Lange.

Lange's alternative

Lange was very much aware of Sweden's military and economic strength. He also shared the feeling of belonging together which is a permanent factor in Scandinavian politics, and in public opinion. During the German occupation of Norway, the Norwegian Government in London set out its guidelines for future foreign policy, and stressed the importance of Atlantic and Western solidarity. It fell to Lange to comment upon the statement, on behalf of Norwegian Resistance. In spite of strained Norwegian-Swedish

relations at the time, he warned strongly against giving second priority to Nordic solidarity. In 1948, he felt very strongly that Norway needed support from her Eastern neighbor as well as from the West. He felt equally strongly that if Sweden remained adamant on the principle of non alignment and rigorously refused even tenuous ties with the West, Norway could not hope to have the best of both worlds. He had made up his mind that if the moment came when a definitive choice could no longer be avoided, Norway must choose the West. In the meantime, he was looking for possible ways to bring the Nordic and North Atlantic alternatives together. He was firmly convinced that the Hankey plan could not serve this purpose. Lange had a plan of his own, that might just barely bring Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Western interests under a common denominator.

The negotiations had reached a stage where strategic considerations, defense and deterrence, played a predominant role. From this point of view, the crucial problem was the entrance to the Baltic, through the narrow passages of Skagerrak and Kattegat, bordering all three countries and of vital interest to Western naval strategy. If Sweden could accept some kind of common arrangement for the closing of these narrows in war-time, it might prove satisfactory to all parties concerned. On the same day as Lange spoke strongly against the Hankey plan, he set forth his alternative in a conversation with the British Ambassador. There was a chance, he said, that Sweden might be induced to assume jointly with Norway and Denmark the responsibility for "sealing off the Baltic" and to accept a guarantee from the United States. He had discussed this possibility with Mr. Marshall and had gathered that as a last resort this solution would be acceptable to the United States.²¹³

Lange's alternative should be seen against the background of general trends of thought at the time. In the first place, Lange's position was strengthened through the Norwegian cabinet's unanimous agreement on aims and purposes of the negotiations. In a special session on October 18, i.e. immediately before Lange turned down the Hankey plan, the following guideline was adopted:

"... that the solution of the problem that should be sought also from the Norwegian side, was a Nordic defense alliance under the rules set out in articles 51 and 52-54 in the Charter of the United Nations, with a

guarantee from the Western Powers, but without automatic obligations of alliance toward the West. It lies within the limits of the possible to get such a concept accepted by the Swedes, and it must be a task for us to try to have it accepted also by Great Britain and by the United States.

Only if it turns out to be absolutely impossible to obtain a guarantee from the West on this basis, can the problem arise whether one should go further from the Norwegian side, and accept direct mutual obligations within a North Atlantic Regional Pact. However, everything points in the direction that this would mean alienation from Sweden, and therefore it would be very difficult to unite the total non-communist part of the Norwegian population around it".²¹⁴

On the Western side, opinions on Sweden were clearly divided at the time. The British were very much aware of Sweden as an asset, and were willing to offer special inducements. However, it was undesirable that Undén should feel assured of British approval for a continued policy of neutrality in all circumstances.²¹⁵ In the U.S. Sweden was frequently seen as a deliberate sideliners who did not really deserve support unless she accepted commitments to the common cause. A National Security Council study on Scandinavia dated September 3 1948 stated with respect to Sweden that the U.S. should "make perfectly clear to Sweden our dissatisfaction with its apparent failure to discriminate ... between the West and the Soviet Union" and that Swedish requirements for military equipment should be considered only after those of countries which have given indication of intention to cooperate with the US or Brussels signatories in security arrangements."²¹⁶

The brunt of the argument, however, was directed against Great Britain. British aviation industry had accepted orders to manufacture modern fighter planes, Spitfires and Vampires, for Sweden. In a hand-written postscript, Hickerson waxed indignant: "Why the hell should we spend money to rearm the Brussels Pact countries when they are selling jets to neutrals?"²¹⁷ The State Department conveyed its disapproval in an aide-mémoire to British Ambassador Oliver Franks, September 24.²¹⁸ The stage seemed set for a confrontation of incompatible policies, the American stick versus the British carrot. At this juncture, Secretary Marshall intervened. He disapproved of what seemed to him to be unnecessarily strong language in conversations with the Swedes. He issued instructions to

lay off outspoken pressure tactics with Sweden.²¹⁹ Obviously, Marshall expected more from a patient approach to Sweden, over time. One reason for this may be found in his conversation with Lange, September 29. Marshall spent more than two hours with his Norwegian opposite number and "was impressed by the frankness and sincerity of his presentation".²²⁰ Lange expanded on the guidelines that had been set down in a memorandum signed by Prime Minister Gerhardsen after deliberations in the Norwegian cabinet, September 27 and took particular care to explain why a Scandinavian union must have top priority. This would not be strong enough, but it would be an essential advantage, from any point of view, if the three Nordic neighbors could stand together. From the Norwegian side it was clear that such a Nordic union must in some form or other have ties to a regional North Atlantic cooperation. Sweden was the only Nordic country with a strong defense, and also had a much broader industrial infrastructure. In addition, public opinion in Norway would find it very difficult to accept Norwegian association with a regional system outside Norden, unless Sweden and Denmark did the same. Marshall asked whether the Swedes could have agreed to Scandinavian negotiations with the purpose of convincing Denmark and Norway that they should adopt the Swedish/Swiss conception of neutrality. Lange said this was a strong trend of thought in Sweden. However, he again stressed the importance of, if possible, bringing Sweden into a "Collaboration on defense" ("forsvarssamarbeid") without any clause of absolute neutrality. Under no circumstance could Norway defend both her coastline and her eastern frontier, so a neutral and friendly Sweden would also be of fundamental importance. At this point, the conversation took an interesting turn. Marshall said he was aware of Norway's difficult geographic position, and the disproportion between territory and population. He felt, however, that the South-West coast of Norway was of such fundamental strategic interest to the Soviet Union that in case of war, the Soviets would make considerable efforts to control it, regardless of whether Norway had Western commitments or not. Lange's memo on the conversation continues: "I said that I, personally, entirely agreed with this reasoning, but that it would be of great importance to public opinion in Norway if we had reasonable assurance of prompt assistance to hold the South-West coast; and we would consider it

an essential gain if we could have Sweden participate in the defense of this area. Mr. Marshall asked, somewhat wonderingly ("noe undrende") whether I really believed we could get Sweden to accept such obligations. If the three Nordic countries were to commit themselves to preventing that the Soviets secured a foothold on the Norwegian South-West coast, a regional Nordic union could have real importance. I replied that this was what we now would like to ascertain, but to find out, we needed time."²²¹

Without jumping to conclusions, it may be worth noting that in Marshall's own memo on the same conversation, this particular point is toned down to almost nothing.²²² In a supplement,²²³ however, he mentioned vaguely "a reference by Foreign Minister Lange to the possibility that something short of complete participation in a North Atlantic arrangement might be the best plan for Norway." It seems entirely possible that he did not want the idea publicized until Lange had explored possibilities in complete secrecy. There is weighty evidence to the effect that Marshall took the idea seriously. On October 4 he told Bevin "that in his view the critical point was the strait between Denmark and Sweden: if that could be made impassable in time of war then a Scandinavian *bloc* might not be too bad ..."²²⁴

Lange continued to mention the idea,²²⁵ although he may not have been too optimistic about it. In the meeting of British Ambassadors to Scandinavia October 22, Mr. Collier stated that Lange "might still conceivably be hoping to bring the Swedes into some sort of general association with an Atlantic security pact."²²⁶

Hankey was not convinced that the Nordic states were able to seal off the Baltic, even if they wanted to. "I don't see them doing it myself without considerable armed assistance from the West."²²⁷

Marshall may have been left with little hope after his meeting with Undén in Paris, October 14. The conversation developed into two monologues running parallel, with both participants explaining their own policy and being unable to harmonize them. Rumors had it that there was, at times, an undertone that bordered on bitterness. Marshall himself conveyed a hint in that direction, by ending his memorandum on the conversation as follows: "Towards the end of our conversation, Foreign minister Undén made the comment that the problem of Swedish neutrality was his problem. I agreed that it

was, but indicated that as he had spoken frankly to me, I wanted to give him my frank views on the question".²²⁸

However, Lange did not give up all hope. Talking to Mr. Jebb ²²⁹ in Paris, on November 20, 1948, he still did not discard the idea of a Scandinavian bloc "sealing the Baltic". Jebb had the impression, however, that it must be a very remote possibility. It was "just possible ... that if sufficient pressure were put on the Swedes, and notably if the Americans made it clear that a policy of complete neutrality would result in no American arms, the Swedes would agree to the Three Power defensive alliance embodying some provisions designed to deny the entrances to the Baltic to both sides in the event of war in which the Scandinavian bloc would not be involved."²³⁰ In this version it is made explicitly clear that the "sealing" must work both ways. No other obligations would seem likely to win Swedish approval. Such a stipulation would of course make the whole arrangement less palatable to the Western Powers. It is clear from Lange's notes that it was Jebb who brought up the problem by asking whether the Swedes would "at a minimum accept mutual responsibility to keep the Belts closed and South-West Norway free?" Lange replied that "this we did not yet know, but we would of course try to find out." No doubt he wanted to wait for the findings of the Scandinavian Committee on Defense that was now in session. No doubt, he also realized that Undén, at least, would never give his consent. In a long conversation, before Lange met Marshall, the Swedish Foreign Minister had made it quite clear that there was considerable doubt in Sweden about joining a Scandinavian alliance at all, regardless of conditions, since Denmark and Norway were militarily weak, Undén was convinced that a Scandinavian defense union, based on Swedish principles, could be assured of Western support without commitments and preparations in peacetime, and that military assistance would be forthcoming, once the union had been established.

In Lange's view, two main problems now remained. Would the Western Powers feel that a system of "all out commitment on joint Scandinavian defense obligations" without formal ties to a North Atlantic alliance, could serve a purpose by itself? And in this case, would Norway receive military assistance on a lend-lease basis? These were the two questions that Lange posed to Marshall on November 20.²³¹ The "sealing off" of the Baltic was no longer a

practical proposition. Lange's alternative to Hankey had proved no more acceptable to Sweden than the Hankey plan itself.

This could hardly have been entirely unexpected, at least as far as Undén's personal opinions were concerned. Why, then, did Lange keep the suggestion alive for so many weeks? Many explanations might be offered.

Defense Minister Hauge was reportedly slightly more optimistic about Sweden than Lange was. He knew that many leading Swedish officers were aware that even Sweden needed considerable assistance from abroad, such as airplanes, radar, arms and other equipment.²³² He saw the military necessity of relying on the nearest strong power. The Western Powers were far away and had, so far, little to offer. Their contribution to Norwegian security, apart from the general deterrence factor, would be to provide modern armament at moderate cost, when their production got going again. Hauge also had reason to doubt whether the U.S. seriously wanted Norway to join the North Atlantic system in the immediate future. In April 1948, American General Wedemeyer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, advised Dag Bryn to keep Norway neutral until the U. S. was strong enough²³³. William Donovan, the former OSS chief, told Hauge in Oslo, October 16, 1948, that the U.S. would welcome with satisfaction a "pure and simple Scandinavian regional defense pact". Hauge took this seriously enough to discuss it with near advisers as well as with Lange.²³⁴ Both of them knew that these attitudes did not coincide with political thinking in Foreign Office and State Department. However, as long as security systems were still under discussion, they could not afford to neglect any information from knowledgeable sources. It is easily understandable if military information was more readily available to Hauge, and political thinking to Lange. Wedemeyer's statement, for instance, may well have reflected general views in the American military establishment at the time.²³⁵ Lange had more immediate experience of Undén's adamant attitude, as well as of Western desires to bring Norway into the Atlantic alliance. There are also indications that Bevin was inclined to expect more from Sweden than his officials did, with the possible exception of Hankey.²³⁶

But both Hauge's and Lange's personal impressions and interpretations were secondary to the established policy of the

Norwegian cabinet, where the stature and the firm hand of Prime Minister Gerhardsen dominated, and where the Norwegian priorities had been repeatedly set out and unanimously approved. The obvious first choice must be a Scandinavian agreement on security policies. Everything must be tried to reach this solution, as long as it did not preclude ties to a major system within the United Nations.²³⁷ The same general attitude was expressed in a cabinet meeting October 18, 1948. Norway should aim at a Nordic defense union under the rules set in articles 51 and 52-54 in the Charter of the United Nation "with guarantee from the Western Powers but without automatic obligations of Western alliance". Only if a western guarantee turned out to be absolutely unobtainable on this basis, could other solutions be considered.²³⁸

Finally, and decisively: Lange and Hauge shared the conviction that close cooperation with Sweden was essential, for material reasons; as a natural and traditional tenet of Scandinavian policy; and with regard to public opinion and solid national unity of purpose in such vital matters. Neither hesitated to make this perfectly clear to western diplomats. Counselor Villard of the American Embassy in Oslo received the impression that Lange had "definite mental reservations about unilateral adherence to North Atlantic security pact" pending the outcome of the Scandinavian discussions, and that he would "maintain this cautious attitude until all possibilities have been explored with Sweden".²³⁹ On the following day, Villard reported a conversation with Hauge, who stated that "Norway must explore every possibility [of] reaching agreement with [he] Swedes before taking action to join any western security pact."²⁴⁰

Lange's alternative to Hankey was introduced because Lange felt that it had at least a possibility of succeeding. Also, he felt that once Sweden had taken this first step, it would ultimately, sooner or later, lead to Swedish acceptance of closer links with the West. Thus, in due time, a Scandinavian defense union would develop more substantial ties with an Atlantic system. If this perspective remained open, Lange would have accepted a regional Scandinavian alliance.²⁴¹

After the attempt had failed, the final outcome seemed to hinge upon the findings of the Scandinavian Committee on Defense, and on more complete information regarding the scope and purpose of

the North Atlantic Treaty. Comprehensive reports on both were available in December 1948. At this point, Hankey renewed his efforts and submitted the second version of his plan.

The Second Hankey Plan

The Committee on Scandinavian Defense did not formally deliver its report until January 15, 1949. Its conclusions, however, were clear at its third meeting, December 14–19, 1948, and known to the three governments. The report is still classified, but important parts, including the general conclusion, have been quoted in the Nordic parliaments and other contexts.²⁴² The committee emphasized that a Scandinavian defense union was likely to be a factor in preventing attack but would not in itself be sufficient to prevent a strategic assault; that the necessary Danish and Norwegian rearmament depended to a considerable extent on supplies from abroad; that the two nations could only afford this if material became available on lenient financial terms; that, in case of an attack, armed assistance would be needed already in the opening phase; and that, if no preparations had been made in peace-time, extensive assistance could not be expected for several months.

So far the conclusion was unanimous. After this, the commission split. The Danish and Norwegian members added a statement to the effect that an agreement on defense union must not exclude Scandinavia from receiving assistance "prepared in peace-time". The Swedish members stated that, for the time being, it must be assumed that necessary supplies for Danish and Norwegian rearmament would be available. A union determined to seriously improve its forces by resources of its own, might stimulate material assistance from outside. It is widely felt that the Swedish military members of the commission, at this point, felt bound by their democratic loyalty toward political authority.²⁴³ When the conclusions of the report were known, Norway urgently requested as complete information as could be given at the time on progress in drafting the charter of the North Atlantic Alliance. Replies from London and Washington were received on New Years eve, 1948. A few days later, the Prime Ministers, Foreign Affairs and Defense

Ministers of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, met privately and secretly in Karlstad, Sweden, with access to the fullest information that had so far been available. At this meeting, Sweden gave a considerable concession to the neighbor states, and offered to join an alliance with them immediately, regardless of their military deficiencies. In more colloquial terms, Sweden was prepared to shoulder the burden of Scandinavian defense almost alone for a couple of years to come. Even with considerable efforts, Danish and Norwegian defense could not be expected to reach a state of relevant credibility until after 1955. Under these circumstances it was a foregone conclusion that Denmark could only hope for limited assistance, to prevent immediate occupation; also, Sweden could not be expected to defend all of Northern Norway. The offer would not be valid if Denmark and Norway had an attachment to the West.

When the ministers left from Karlstad, nothing had been decided. Gerhardsen was weighing the pros and cons in the new situation. Lange and Hauge felt that real possibilities had been exhausted, there was no hope left that Sweden could accept any form of opening toward the West. They went for a "walk in the woods" or more precisely, along the canals of Karlstad, and decided to take the problem home with them, and consult with advisers. At this point, Hankey decided to try his hand again.

Three alternatives

In Washington there was a strong feeling that under no circumstances would Sweden move away from absolute formal non-alignment. Therefore, it should be made perfectly clear that any Swedish wishes for military supplies would only be added to the waiting list of nations with low priority.²⁴⁴ Hankey was, of course, fully aware of this. A report from Washington on December 18 was very clear: The State Department "feels strongly that we might as well rule Sweden out as a participant here and now."²⁴⁵ At this juncture, the Foreign Office was also guided by a formal cabinet decision to the effect that Norway and Denmark should be included if possible, but that any country which hesitated or caused delay

should be immediately discarded.²⁴⁶ The general trend of thought was that if the Swedes were left in isolation, reflection would move them to attach themselves in some way at a later date to the other Scandinavian countries who would be better partners when they were strengthened and backed up by their membership in the Atlantic Pact.²⁴⁷

Given all this, it may seem surprising that Hankey again tried to find a compromise acceptable to Sweden. That is what he did, however, in a memorandum dated January 17, 1949.

Hankey recommended "a joint Anglo-American proposal to all three Scandinavian Powers that Norway and Denmark should be enabled to adhere to the Scandinavian Pact as well as to the Atlantic Pact, arrangements being made to ensure that Sweden would not thereby be involved in war unless Norway or Denmark were physically attacked." There were, at the time, three possible courses to pursue: a) stick to the policy that had been agreed upon in Washington before Christmas, ignore Sweden and invite Denmark and Norway in; b) a new version of the first Hankey plan, with interlocking Atlantic and Scandinavian pacts, but only Denmark and Norway as members of both; c) a Scandinavian Pact only, but with special Danish and Norwegian concessions to the West, in the form of bases in the Faeroes, special arrangements for defense of the Norwegian coastline, and staff talks where Denmark and Norway would "make provisional plans with the British and American Staffs so that they could receive assistance if ever it was asked for; and in return the Scandinavian Powers would be supplied with arms, equipment and technical advice ...". Hankey greatly preferred alternative no. 2, the interlocking pacts, and wanted it submitted to Washington at once, before a final Scandinavian decision.²⁴⁸ Jebb was rather doubtful, and preferred alternative c), mainly because he felt that the interlocking pacts solution would be difficult to put across.²⁴⁹ Plan c), however, was soon discarded.²⁵⁰ In Oslo, British Ambassador Collier spoke clearly against any attempt to approach Sweden at this late stage, it could only lead Denmark and Norway away from the Western Powers. He did not offer any opinion on what the Swedish reaction might be, if they were asked to join an alliance which had binding obligations toward powers outside the alliance. Hankey was impressed by Collier's reasoning, but still felt

that one should try, at least, to get the Scandinavians to accept a system of interlocking pacts "if we possibly can".²⁵¹

Hankey's second effort ended as abruptly as it had begun. Its epitaph can be read in Collier's telegram from Oslo, January 27, 1949: "Interlocking pacts now academic since Swedes will not agree".²⁵² It remains to be discussed what made Hankey try so hard at all.

Officers and politicians in Sweden

It was well known in London that many Swedish officers were worried about how to maintain the high standards of Swedish defense, if they were excluded from American priority lists. In the joint conclusions of the Scandinavian Committee on Defense, they shared the opinion of their Danish and Norwegian colleagues, that supplies from the West, i.e. from the U.S., were vital to Scandinavian defense as a whole. Politically, they were bound by the declared intention of the Swedish Government to stay out of any, even indirect, association with a North Atlantic alliance. They continued to promote the idea of a compromise.

As the moment of decision drew near, they intensified their activities. In a lengthy conversation with the British Naval Attachè to Stockholm, Commodore Tham²⁵³ adopted the very word "compromise" and suggested what seemed to him a satisfactory proposal. A "pre-war Western alliance" was from the general Swedish point of view unnecessary and undesirable. The compromise would aim at an assurance of Western military fighting aid for Scandinavia, if the Nordic states, united in a Scandinavian pact, were involved in war. According to the British report, Tham spoke "with obvious anxiety and a desire to accommodate or perhaps to placate the West as far as possible". He also criticized Americans for pressing forward, instead of waiting for the findings of the Scandinavian committee "to convince the Swedish politicians of the need for Scandinavian unity, with perhaps Western backing". Using quotation marks, the report went on: "He said: 'This U.S. pressure now is distracting our politicians from the first requirement which is Scandinavian unity and if we are not careful these politicians will

retreat into their shells of obstinate, ignorant, unreasoning isolationism which will wreck all hopes of Scandinavian unity and thus of eventual possible Scandinavian alliance with the West.” From the context, it seems clear that the “U.S. pressure” mainly referred to the warnings that Sweden could not expect high priority for Western supply of arms unless in association with the Atlantic alliance. In his conclusion, the attaché described Tham as “typical of the Defence Staff”.²⁵⁴

Three points in this report deserve special attention. Where Tham referred to Western aid “if and when, and not before, Scandinavia is involved in war...” Hankey added in the margin “No. Must be plans”; where Tham said “We must find a compromise” Hankey added “Yes”; and when at one point Tham suggested that Sweden might even guarantee “to come to the immediate support of Norway no matter how she was attacked, even if it was a seaborne assault on Narvik” he foreshadowed the admittedly less specific Swedish offer in Karlstad a month later, to assume the burdens of a Scandinavian alliance immediately, without waiting for Danish and Norwegian rearmament.

General Nordenskiöld²⁵⁵ was as outspoken, if not more. In a private conversation he said that “all top Swedish officers in all three branches of the Service “are now of one mind, namely, that Sweden must associate itself in some form with the West.” The great problem was to convince the Defense Minister Vougt and Foreign Minister Undén. The General would like to continue the talk in near future “about the possibility of finding a ‘formula’ to fit the situation.”²⁵⁶

The British Ambassador Farquhar commented that Tham “seems to regard his politicians like the proverbial mule or donkey, and thinks that they can only be made to move by the ‘carrot’ technique”.²⁵⁷ The Ambassador himself felt that besides this, “an occasional wallop on the backside sometimes has a salutary effect”. Hankey, in one of his marginal notes, found that particular passage very interesting.²⁵⁸

As late as January 3, 1949, Hankey still shared the general British and American view at the time, that it seemed better to leave the Swedes out of the picture for the moment, and hope that they would dislike their isolation and ultimately try to find some way of adhering directly or indirectly to the North Atlantic Pact. This was

the policy that Bevin had approved "and which we propose to follow in the immediate future".²⁵⁹ Soon after that, something must have encouraged him to try again. This something seems to be fresh information that Swedish military chiefs intended to approach the political leadership in serious terms.

On January 10, 1949, the Chief of Staff of the Swedish Air Force informed the British Air Attachè that the Air Staff saw Sweden standing isolated. He assumed that the promised supply of aircraft from Great Britain would cease. He added "that the three Commanders-in-Chief of the Swedish armed forces were all equally alarmed and had persuaded Commander-in-Chief Jung to make urgent representations to the Swedish Cabinet, and to point out that a policy of isolation may jeopardize the rearming and modernization of the Swedish armed forces."²⁶⁰ Hankey already knew that the Swedish Defense Staff and the British Foreign Office were thinking along converging lines, hoping for a compromise that left the door open for more immediate association at a later stage. Now he learned that a unanimous military leadership was to take a serious initiative in the same direction, on the highest level possible in Sweden. This must be the time when he felt that a suggestion of compromise from the western side might still serve a purpose. On the following day he told the Swedish Ambassador that the Swedes should use "a little ingenuity to see if they could not devise a system by which Sweden would only be directly involved if Norway and Denmark were physically attacked" and that he felt sure "that we did not want to slam any doors and would be quite willing to discuss these problems amiably".²⁶¹ On the next day again, he drafted the first sketch of the second Hankey plan, which he submitted in more elaborate form on the 17th - and which was deemed "academic" on the 27th.

The memorandum of the Swedish Chiefs of Staff was handed over to Defense Minister Vougt by General Jung on January 21, 1949. The story of how it also became known to the British, very quickly and in utmost secrecy, does not belong here.²⁶²

At the Nordic meeting of parliamentarians and advisers in Copenhagen January 22-24, the negotiations broke down irreparably. A new meeting in Oslo at the end of the month was only a matter of protocol. Norway joined NATO, Denmark followed

Norway, and Sweden stayed outside. The Nordic council was created to preserve and continue the tradition of unity. The story of how, and to what extent, permanent factors of geography, inclinations and necessities, continued to influence security policies and strategic analysis in the Nordic Region, remains to be written.

NOTES:

1. Bryn, Dag and Jens Christian Hauge: De skandinaviske forsvarsforhandlinger og Norges inntreden i NATO (The Scandinavian defense negotiations and Norway's entry in NATO). A report prepared 1952, declassified 1967, here quoted from copy No. 3, UD archives.
2. The first Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jörgen Lövland, in his first formal, programmatic statement (1906), gave a clear warning against foreign entanglements.
3. F. inst. Evensmo, Sigurd: *Ut i kulda* (Out into the cold), Oslo 1978.
4. F. inst. Enholm, Kari: *Fört bak lyset* (Deceived, Norway and NATO), Oslo 1979.
5. Trygve Lie, as Norwegian minister of Foreign Affairs, started in 1941 "an incredible activity to break away from traditional Norwegian policy of neutrality" by suggesting common British American-Norwegian defense arrangements after the war, possibly with British bases in Norway (Enholm, loc. cit. p. 24.) The remark refers to trends of thought that Lie later summed up in a speech in Oxford, quoted in the Times November 14, 1941. "What these people are concerned about, is to organize the fight against the Soviet Union after the war. For this purpose, Iceland and Norway are to be used." (Solheim, Torolv: *I solnedgangstider*. Oslo 1976).
6. Udgaard, Nils Morten: *Great Power Politics and Norwegian Foreign Policy*. Oslo 1973
7. Riste, Olav: *London-regjeringa I-II* Oslo 1973-79.
8. Riste, Olav: Was 1949 a Turning Point ? Norway and the Western Powers 1947 - 1950, in *Western Security: The Formative Years. European and Atlantic Defence 1947-1953*, edited by Olav Riste, Oslo 1985, p 146
9. Riste, *Ibid.* p. 128.
10. Foreign Minister Lange, in the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget), Dec. 11, 1947.
11. *Ibid.*, also reprinted in Lange, Halvard: *Norsk utenrikspolitikk siden 1945*, 24 - 28, Oslo 1952
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*

14. "Scandinavia and Western Union" FO 371/71449
15. The quotation is from a note by Hankey, 2. Feb. 1948, FO 371/71444
16. British Embassy in Stockholm to FO, 29 Nov 1947, FO 371/65961
17. Bevin to Attlee, 12 June 1946, FO 371/56297
18. Oslo to FO, April 8 1947, FO 371/66061
19. November 1, 1946, FO 371/56285.
20. Riste, Olav: *London-regjeringa II*, p.303
21. FO 371/65961. J.P. (47) 56 (Final), 4 June 1947
22. FO 371/65961, instructions to ambassadors, 29 Nov 1947
23. Hickerson to Woolridge 30 Oct 1947. NA 857 D
24. *Above*, p. 5
25. Report by colonel K. J. Garner-Smith (British military attache' to Oslo) on conversation with Lt.Col. Carl v. Horn (Swedish Military Attache') 19 Dec 1947. FO 371/71444.
26. FO 371/71719 22 and 23 Dec 1947. Memo by Talbot, comments by Bateman, Hankey, Hayter, Warner, Jerram Kirkpatrick and Warner.
27. FO 371/71719, 10 Jan 1948
28. See for instance Bullock, Alan: Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary 1945 - 1951 London 1983 (vol. III of *The life and times of Ernest Bevin*), p. 496-501
29. Bevin to Bidault on the morning of 17 December. FO 800/465/FO/47/31 as quoted by Bullock
30. FO 371/64250. See also *FRUS 1948*, III, p.1 and 2.
31. Policy in Germany, C. P. (48) 5, 5 January 1948, CAB 129/23; The first Aim of British Foreign Policy, C.P. (48) 6, 4 January, *ibid.*; Review of Soviet policy, C.P. (48) 7, 5 January 1948, *ibid.*; Future Foreign Publicity Policy, C. P. (48) 8, 4 January 1948, *ibid.*
32. The treaty of Dunkirk
33. Obviously the Benelux
34. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 4
35. "First Aims..." see note 32 above

36. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 1947 - 1948, 5th Series, vol. 446, column 383 ff
37. FO 371/71723, Jerram to FO 3 Feb 1948. Eriksen and Skodvin assumed that this refers to an early draft of Bevin's speech. More likely, it was a draft for the relevant part of Bevin's "First Aims..." see note 32 above.
38. FO 371/ 65846, Copenhagen to FO 29 August 1947.
39. Copenhagen to FO, No 15, 14 January 1948, FO 371/71444
40. *Ibid.*
41. Summary of Agm No 6 from Stockholm, 2 Feb 1948, NR 858
42. US Embass, Stockholm to State, 10 Jan 1948. NA 858, XR 858.51
43. FO 371/71719
44. British Embassy in Stockholm to FO No 30, FO 371/71723
45. Statement by Harold Wilson, as president of the Board of Trade
46. Stockholm to FO, NMo 30, Jan 18, 1948, FO 371/71723.
47. *Ibid.*
48. The Soviet ambassador was displeased with a speech by Norwegian author Arnulf Øverland, a dedicated supporter of Norwegian alignment with the West, and wished to prevent him from speaking in a Swedish broadcasting program
49. FO 371/71505
50. *Ibid.*
51. See above, p. 5
52. *Ibid*, p. 4
53. Cowards note on the conversation on 14 Jan 1948, FO 371/71444
54. FO 371/71444
55. *Ibid.* Collier's comment was written on 21 Jan, the day before Bevin's speech
56. Svalbard is the name of the archipelago. Spitsbergen is the main island, where the coal mines, including the Soviet ones, are located
57. Hauge to Alexander 10 Jan 1948. FO 371/71494

58. Primary Scandinavian sources from Defense ministries have not been available at this point. Reports of British and American military attache's are known to the extent that they were included in diplomatic files. They seem in general well informed, although of course neither exhaustive nor authoritative on domestic Scandinavian developments
59. Oslo to FO No 48,30 Jan 1948, FO 371/71444; Stockholm to FO No 70, 31 Jan ibid; memo by Hankey, 4 Feb, ibid
60. Quoted by P. E. Sköld, Swedish Minister of Defense during the Second World War, now Minister for agriculture, a confirmed spokesman for Scandinavian co-operation in defense matters. His diaries published by Jonasson.
61. Sköld diary 2 Feb 1948
62. Speech in the House of Commons, 22 Jan 1948, see note 36 above
63. Bevin to Prebensen 24 Jan 1948. Also quoted by Lange in the parliamentary special committee on 26 Jan.
64. 26 Jan 1948
65. Hankey to Copenhagen No 40, Feb 9, 1948, FO 371/71370
66. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 359
67. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 3
68. *FRUS 1948*, III, 1 - 17
69. See note 66 above.
70. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 3 ff.
71. Marshall to Inverchapel 20 Jan 1948. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 9.
72. "Thoughts on Western European Security" Jan 20 1948. NA, 840.20.
73. Memo of conversation between Inverchapel, Hickerson et al., 21 Jan 1948. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 9 - 12.
74. *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 18.
75. Januar 21, 1948, *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 11
76. Am. Emb in Sth to State, No. 31, 9. Jan 1948, reporting a message Undn had received from Bidault

77. Speech in the Riksdag's debate on foreign affairs, 4. Feb 1948
78. *Le Monde*, usually well informed on thinking in the French Affaires Etrangeres, wrote on Feb 6: "Le ministre sue'dois semble re'pliquer a M. Bevin..."
79. His statement in Danish Broadcasting 30 Jan 1948
80. Gerhardsen, in conversation with the author.
81. Herman Smitt Ingebretsen
82. Statement in Stortinget (the Norwegian parliament), in secret session 8 April 1948, repeated with minor excisions in a public speech 19 April
83. Czechoslovakia Dec 12 1943 (in London); Yugoslavia Apr 11, 1945 (abrogated by the Soviet Union in 1949); Poland Apr 21, 1945; Romania Feb 4, 1948, Hungary Feb 18 1948; Bulgaria Mar 18 1948. The three latter were ex-enemy states, which explains why the treaties were not established until after the peace treaties came into force
84. American legation H.fors to State, No 88, Feb 24 1948. NA 758.00
85. Report by Norwegian Military Attache', Sth (Hassel) 29 Feb 1948; UD 25.2/63.
86. FO to H.fors No 72, 3 Mar 1948, FO 371/71405. The conversation took place on 1 Mar.
87. Praha to FO, No. 149, 26 Feb 1948.
88. COS (48) 29th meeting, Feb 28 1948 and summary of meeting by R. G. Etherington-Smith with comment by Hankey, who agreed, same day. FO 371/71447 More precise suggestions in FO to Cph. No 126, Mar 2. Jerram reported from Sth. Mar 4 that a demonstration of the kind "would be a valuable tonic to Swedish public opinion" but was unlikely to affect Swedish policy in general. He gave qualified support to the suggestion from the C.O.S. From Oslo, Collier, in his No 93, 4 Mar, spoke against visits in Norwegian waters, it seemed better to demonstrate that the UK had not written off the Baltic. The British Admiralty felt that the forces available would be too small to have much effect on Scandinavian morale, 4 Mar 1948, FO 371/71447. FO comments at this stage went against the whole idea (comments by hand on Colliers telegram).
89. "Scandinavia and Western Union" FO 371/71449. See above, p. 6 with note 14.

90. "The Threat to Western Civilization" C.P.(48)72, 3 Mar 1948, CAB/129/25, p. 62 and 64
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid*, p. 64
93. Manchester Guardian 4 Mar 1948. Cooke's article was written on the 1st. The Norwegian Embassy to Washington immediately requested further comment, from Cooke himself and from State Department sources. Ambassador Morgenstierne was able to report on 5 March that the Department's reaction was "an attitude of incomprehension."
94. Undén, in the social-democrat periodical "Tiden" May 1948: "If Sweden is an important strategic area for the major powers, it follows that a promise of assistance would be given with the precise purpose that this area of bases should be available to our allies, in the interest of the general conduct of war. If we are committed to open bases to a guaranteeing power, this means, very likely, that at the outbreak of a major war, our territory will be considered as enemy territory by the other party." As the alternative to non-alignment, he saw only "an agreement that means the opening of bases for a major power."
95. Karl Fredriksson, *ibid.*
96. Regeringsmeddelande, 22 Oct 1945, during the discussion on Swedish membership in the UN
97. F. inst.Sth to State no 1270, NA 857 D.20/11-1248; Daily Staff Summary, November 16, 1948, NA, RG 59, box 7; British Naval att. Sth to DNI, December 15, 1948, Fo 371/77391
98. Critical observations by Åström and Assarson quoted
99. See above, notes 57 and 58
100. Am. Emb. Oslo to State, No 45, 30 Jan 1948. NA 857.20. Brit. Emb Oslo to FO, same day, No 48, "of particular secrecy" FO 371/71444.
101. See note 193 below
102. Hansen met Swedish Cabinet members immediately afterwards for similar discussions
103. On *Sköld diaries*, see note 61 above.
104. *Sköld diary* Feb 2 1948

105. See above, p 28, on the meeting and resolution of 4 Feb, and Haakon Lie's active role. The British Embassy had already reported that Lie's support was "assured". Brit Emb Oslo to FO, No 55, 2 Feb. Collier reported, 5 Feb, that the resolution was "the result of the efforts made by M. Haakon Lie and his friends" Colliers No 35, FO 371/71485. On draft resolution, Sköld diary 2 Feb
106. On his reports in Stockholm, see above p. 24
107. Indirectly, in an informal conversation with the French Ambassador to Copenhagen, who immediately told the British, as he may have been expected to do. The report engendered speculation as to whether Denmark was "influenced by Norwegians" and perhaps feeling their way to closer co-operation. FO 371/71371.
108. The translation is taken from the American Embassy's report to the State Department, No 155, Feb 6. NA 758.00
109. Am. Emb. Sth. to State, No 119, 27 Jan. NA 758.00, see also No 149, 3 Feb, *ibid.*
110. US Emb. Oslo to State, A-66, 4 Feb 1948, NA 857.20
111. Lange in conversation with American Ambassador Bay, Bay to State 18 May 1948, NA 757 D.00, also printed in FRUS 1948, III, 126 fg
112. Andvord, whose function in American correspondence is given as Foreign Office Secretary General, which does not exactly describe his place in the Norwegian system, but credits him with the credibility he obviously had.
113. Bay to State 25 Feb 1948, NA 840.50, also printed in FRUS 1948, III, 30-32
114. Lange later said to Bay (see note 108 above) that Benediktsson said his country was "not interested"
115. See *f. inst.* above, notes 92-94
116. 26 Feb. 1948, see above, p. 25
117. Halvard Lange: *Norges vei til NATO* (Norway's road to NATO), Oslo 1968, p. 19
118. UDC 173/48 i, in UD 25.2/63
119. UD, 25.22/63
120. Erlander, as quoted in *Sköld diary*
121. Lange, in conversation with the author

122. On 31 May 1928, Kollontay, who was then Soviet Minister to Oslo, handed over to the Foreign Office a copy of the Soviet-German friendship and neutrality treaty of 24 April 1926, and suggested that it might serve as a model for a similar Soviet-Norwegian treaty. The suggestion was under discussion off and on for two years, but came to nothing. The main Norwegian objections were that it was too much of a military-political agreement, and that, on principle, Norway was reluctant to conclude such agreements except in common with her Nordic neighbors. Kollontay's suggestion was part of an effort - of no avail - to create an Eastern European security system on the model of the West European one, the Locarno treaty of October 1925.
123. UD 25.2/63
124. UD 25.2/63
125. Note by Lange, *ibid.* Also, Lange's statement in Stortinget, secret session, 8. April 1948
126. At the time, he was not aware of a confidential report from the Netherlands minister to Helsinki, van der Vlugt, who reported to his Government that one of his "most prominent colleagues" had told him that Savonenkov was pressing for an early conclusion of the Soviet-Finnish treaty, and further that "Moscow should have had the intention of finishing with Finland quickly and taking by surprise immediately afterwards Norway with a similar pact". Like the Warsaw source, this informant also added that the hands of the United States would be tied up in the Mediterranean. The report was dated 8 March, and relayed from there to the Ministers of the Netherlands in Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm. There is no evidence that it reached the UD. Netherlands legation, Politiek Bericht No. 89, 8 March 1948. I am indebted to Dr. Helge Pharo for this information. The crucial passage, in this connection, in the original language: "Moskou zou nl. de bedoeling gehad hebben Finland met spoed af te werken en onmiddellijk daarna Noorwegen met een zelfde pact te overrompelen. Volgens mijn ambtgenoot had Moskou opzettelijk dit ogenblik gekozen, wetende dat Amerika's handen in de Middellandsche Zee momenteel vrijwel geheel gebonden zijn..." - 15 March Lange learned from Bidault that the Affaires Etrangères had also been aware of the information from Warsaw, see Lange's note on conversation with Bidault 15 March in Paris, UD, dossier on Paris meeting.
127. Lange's notes, UD 25.2/63

128. A special committee established by Stortinget on 25 Feb 1948 to discuss extraordinary measures including additional grants for defense
129. See above on Norwegian occupation forces in Germany
130. See f. inst. Denham, Henry: Inside the Nazi Ring, New York 1985, 130, 143.
131. Scandinavian Defence: Aide Memoire by Hankey, FO 371/71444
132. See below, p. 41 ff
133. Lange's notes, UD 25.2/63 I, March 8, with supplements 10 March. Bay's No 131, 8. March, 134, 9 March, NA 857.20, 143, 11 March, *FRUS 1948*, III, 44 fg.; Collier's No 104, March 8, FO 371/71504, also quoted by British Embassy Washington to State Dept, 12 March, *FRUS 1948*, III, p. 46 ff.
134. Lange was fluent in English, and would normally have prepared notes for such important talks, but may not have had time for it. His own reports, in UD files, are of course in Norwegian. They are here rendered in English, with more attention to fidelity than to style.
135. "I stated my mission was not in position to discuss the subject as it has not been informed of US policies in this regard..." No 134, see note 133 above
136. Above, p. 32 fg
137. FO 371/71477
138. Note by Alexander, March 17 1948, FO 371/71447
139. Annex to Fo 371/73052
140. Lange, in conversation with Bay 11 March. UD 25.2/63
141. In the terminology created during the Second World War, representatives of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee joined opposite numbers from the American Combined Chiefs of Staff to form the Joint Chiefs of Staff
142. Supplementary notes on conversation with Collier, UD 2.25/63
143. Directly from State Department to the secretaries of Army, Navy and Air, i.e. bypassing the Secretary of Defense, which made him complain. Forrestal to Marshall 11 March 1948, NA 857.20

144. State (Armour) to Army (Royall), March 9 1948, NA 857.20. Sullivan to Marshall, same day, *ibid*
145. CIA 3-48. NA, Modern Military Branch
146. Collier to Hankey March 10, post-script to letter dated March 8, FO 371/ 71450
147. Alexander to Bevin March 9, FO 371/73052
148. British Embassy to State Dept March 11 1948. NA 840.20, printed in FRUS 1948, III
149. *Ibid.*
150. State to Defense March 12, 1948, NA 757.6111
151. *FRUS 1948*, III, 48
152. DEPTTEL 107, printed *FRUS 1948*, III, p 51 fg; see also DEPTTEL 312, June 29 1948, NA 840.20
153. UD 25.2/63 I
154. Notes, March 8, 1948, UD 2.25/63 I
155. *Ibid.*
156. Lange informed Bay and Collier of this , Bay to State No 116, NA 857.20
157. Collier to Lange, March 8. Lange's note, UD 2.25/63
158. UD to Norwegian Embassy Paris, March 13, 1948
159. In Gothenborg, March 5-9. NA 757.58/3-1748
160. NA 857 D.20/3-1748
161. US military attaché in Oslo to Navy, State and Air, March 17, NA 857 D.20/3-1748
162. Bay to State No 188, NA 857.20, see also No 188, March 25 *ibid.*
163. Wyburd to Director Naval Intelligence March 8 1948, FO 371/ 71444
164. Marvel to FO No 79, March 12
165. FO 371
166. Admiralty, Intelligence Division, to Hankey, March 23, 1948, FO 371/71370

167. Marvel to State, March 13 1948, NA 757D.00
168. Memo on conversation with Cunningham, March 4, NA 759.61
169. See for instance article by former Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag, *Berlingske Tidende* March 22, 1988, and letter to the Editor by Aage Hoffmann, *ibid* March 30
170. Thus reported by Ambassador Marvel after his conversation with Bang-Jensen on March 21. Marvel to State No 264, NA 759.00
171. *Ibid*, and Cph to State No 243, NA 711.59/3-1748
172. Marvel to State No 244, March 18
173. Cph to State, Nos 243 and 244,, State to Cph 174 and 178, NA 711.59, all these telegrams dated March 17
174. See f. inst. the "Grey book" (Graabog), an official Danish publication
175. Cph to State No 275, NA 859.20, printed *FRUS 1948*, III, p 67
176. Marvel to State No 286, on conversation with Danish Prime Minister Hedtoft, March 24, NA 959.20/3-2748, printed *FRUS 1948* III p 68
177. Wyburd to Admiralty, March 8 1948, FO 371/71444
178. Printed in *FRUS 1948*, III p. 66 fg
179. PPS 27, 840.20, printed *FRUS 1948*, III p61 ff
180. Note by Lange, UD archives
181. See f. inst. memo on conversation Rasmussen-Bevin, March 16 1948, FO 371/71371, point 5
182. Lange to Bidault March 15, Lange papers in UD.
183. "Don't forget it was an after-lunch statement !" Lange to the author, April 1970
184. FO 371/71444
185. *Ibid*.
186. See above, p. 42
187. This is not included in Bevin's memo on the conversation (FO 371/73056), but Lange told Unde'n later, UD 38.3/3 III)
188. Notes made March 8, UD 25.2/63 I

189. The ERP representative in Norway worked in absolute harmony with Finance Minister Brofoss, who was the very embodiment of post-war planned economy.
190. "*Regjeringen og Hjemmefronten*" (Government and Home Front, an official publication of relevant documents), Oslo 1948
191. Above, p. 9
192. Stortingsmelding (Message to Parliament) No. 32 (194546), p. 3
193. *Forsvarskommisjonen av 1946*, whose chairman, Trygve Bratteli, was vice-chairman of the Norwegian Labour Party
194. Memo by Dag Bryn, Sept 1947, as quoted in Bryn and Hauge, see note 2 above
195. See above, p. 28
196. Meetings in Foreign Policy committees April 19 and 20.
197. This very brief survey is based on Skodvin: *Norden eller NATO?*, Oslo 1971, 123-208. Its purpose here is only to link the previous chapters with the following
198. This brief survey is based on Skodvin: *Norden eller NATO?*, Oslo 1971, 123 - 208
199. FO 371/71454
200. Hankey: The Relation of Sweden to Scandinavian Cooperation and to North Atlantic Security, 30th September 1948, FO 371/71454
201. *Ibid*, point IV
202. Memorandum by the participants in the Washington security talks, July 6 to September 9, submitted to their respective governments for study and comment, September 9, 1948, entitled "Washington exploratory conversations on security" subsequently referred to as "the Washington paper". NA 840.20/9-948, printed in *FRUS 1948*, III, p 237-248.
203. *loc. cit.* p. 241, point 6.
204. See above
205. Memo of conversation, Swedish Ambassador Erik Boheman and Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett, October 26, 1948. Boheman said that "Sweden felt great reluctance to enter any sort of

military alliance, because to do so would lead the Soviets to take counter-measures in the belief that airfields in Sweden were made available to the Western Powers for attack on Russia. These counter-measures would include prompt Russian occupation of Finland." NA, 758.00, printed *FRUS 1948*, III, 268 fg. Here, as elsewhere in this paper, Swedish records are likely to supplement the information.

206. Underlined by Hankey
207. Hankey, September 30 1948, see above
208. The prominent commentator Karl Fredriksson, in the authoritative social-democrat periodical *Tiden*, May 1948: "That it should be possible for us, silently and in advance, to choose sides - on the model that we must absolutely avoid antagonism to one of the sides - that is the most childish of illusions. Neutrality signifies that whoever attacks becomes our enemy. At lesser price, neutrality cannot be bought."
209. Minutes by Hankey, October 6, 1948, FO 371/71454
210. *Ibid.*
211. Reports from Prebensen to Lange, personally and confidentially, October 6 and again October 13. The first conversation dealt with "the question of Sweden" in general terms, although Hankey hinted that he took a special interest in this aspect, and was working on it. The second time he spoke openly and freely of his interlocking pacts plan. UD archives
212. *Ibid.* See also Kirkpatrick to Hoyer Millar (in Washington), October 23, 1948. FO 371/71454
213. Oslo to FO, No 452, October 30, 1948, FO 371/71454. The report was a late one ("I saw Mr. Lange at his request on October 19th."), and may be a requested supplement to an earlier message.
214. Lange's note, October 18 1948. The translation clings to the Norwegian text, regardless of American style
215. "Scandinavian Defence Cooperation and the Atlantic Security Pact" October 22, 1948, FO 371/71454
216. Quoted by Hickerson in a note for Lovett, NA 711.58/92148
217. *Ibid*
218. NA 711.58/9-2148

219. Marshall to Lovett October 20 1948, NA 758.00/10-2048. The reminder was caused by reports of a conversation between Hickerson and the new Swedish Ambassador Boheman on October 15 where Hickerson stated that Sweden's "seeming disposition to find nothing to choose between us and the Soviet Union distressed and shocked" him. See Hickerson's explanatory letter October 23, NA 711.58 and General Carter (Special Assistant to Marshall) to Hickerson same day, *ibid*
220. Marshall to Lovett No 5130, NA 857.D.20/9-3048, printed *FRUS* 1948 III, 256 fg
221. Lange's memo of conversation, dictated same day, September 29. UD archives 25.2/72 I and 38.313 II
222. "HE i. e. Lange is fully conscious of importance to West of southern Norwegian coast." No 5130, NA 857 D.20/93048, *FRUS* 1948, III p. 256
223. Memo October 6, 1948, NA 840.20, *FRUS* 1948, III p. 260
224. British memo, November 8 1948, FO 371/ 71454. An American record of the same conversation (NA 840.20/10-448) shows that Marshall gave great importance to the possible closing of the Baltic. He said "there was a certain danger in a Scandinavian neutral bloc since there were facilities and important waterways controlled by the Scandinavian countries ..., which, if neutralized, would be most damaging."
225. See note 208 above
226. "Scandinavian Defence Cooperation and the Atlantic Security Pact" Fo 371/71454
227. Hankey's handwritten comment, in "Norwegian views on possibilities of full Swedish participation in a Scandinavian Defence Pact" FO 371/71454
228. Memorandum of conversation, by the Secretary of State, NA 840.00/10-1448, *FRUS* 1948, III, 264-266
229. Gladwyn Jebb was at the time British representative to the Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission and in 1949 became Deputy Under Secretary in the FO
230. "Scandinavia and the Atlantic Pact. Note of Conversation with the Norwegian Foreign Minister." Fo 371/71455

231. Marshall to Lovett and Hickerson, DELGA 863, November 20, 1948, NA 840.20
232. The British Ambassador to Stockholm, Mr. Farquhar, also stressed this point in meeting of Scandinavian ambassadors, FO October 22, FO 371/71454
233. Bryn and Hauge, p. 15 (see above, note 1)
234. Villard, Oslo, to State, No 663, NA 857 D.20/10-2148
235. Bryn and Hauge, p. 15
236. However, Bevin left practical problems of approach and timing to Hankey
237. Note, signed by Gerhardsen September 27, 1948, as basis for Lange's conversations with Marshall. UD 25.2/72 I
238. Meeting October 18, note in Lange's papers, UD archives. See also above, p. 60
239. Villard to State, No 675, October 27, 1948, NA 857 D.20/10-2748
240. Villard to State No 677, October 28. NA 840.20/10-2848
241. See f. inst. Crowe (British Embassy, Oslo) to FO, October 30, 1948, Fo 371/71454
242. References in Skodvin: *Norden eller NATO?*, Oslo 1971, p. 246
243. Several members of the committee, in interviews with the author.
244. Sth to State No 1307, November 26, see also Oslo to State, 840.20/11-2948 and f. inst. Daily Staff Summaries, NA, RG 59, box 7, and Sth to State No 19, January 10, 1949, FO 371/77400
245. Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, FO 371/73085, see also Hankey's "Scandinavia and the Atlantic Pact" December 22, 1948, point 7, FO 371/71455
246. Conclusions 48(68) item 3, November 4, 1948. See also comment by Kirkpatrick on Hankey's December 22 paper, FO 371/77391, and Roberts to Defence January 21, 1949, FO 371/77400
247. See f. inst. Hankey, December 22, loc. cit.
248. Hankey: "Scandinavian Defence and the Atlantic Pact" January 17, 1949, FO 371/77394. The suggestion of bases etc conforms with the views of the Chiefs of Staff, see f inst Jebb, Jan 28, FO 371/77394

249. His comment, *ibid.*
250. Note by Etherington-Smith, January 19, 1949, FO 371/77392
251. "...he has been consistently right so far in this question" January 20, 1949, Fo 371/77392
252. Oslo to FO, No 43, FO 371/77393
253. The Swedish D.C.I.
254. Naval attach Stockholm to Director of Naval Intelligence, December 16, 1948, FO 371/77391. The conversation took place on December 3
255. Chief of the Swedish Air Force, who had shown considerable active sympathy for the Allies during the Second World War
256. American Embassy Stockholm to State, No 1353, December 14, 1948, NA 840.20. The conversation took place on December 13. See also f. inst. Hankey, January 8, 1949: "...all our reports so far have indicated that the Swedish Service Chiefs were in favour of extensive cooperation with the West, but had hitherto been unable to make their views prevail over those of their political leaders." FO 371/77400
257. Personal letter to Hankey, December 21, 1948, FO 371/77391
258. *Ibid.*
259. Hankey to Farquhar, January 3, 1949, FO 371/71455
260. Farquhar to FO, No 19, January 10, 1949, FO 371/77400
261. Hankey: "Sweden and the Atlantic Pact" January 12, 1949 (the report on the Swedish Defense staff's initiative was received in London on the 11th), FO 371/77392
262. English translation of the memorandum, from February 9, 1949, in FO 371/77401.

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Nordic or North Atlantic Alliance?

The Postwar Scandinavian Security Debate

Magne Skodvin

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Nordic or North Atlantic Alliance?

The decision to join the North Atlantic Pact in 1949 constituted a major breakaway from traditional security policies in Denmark and Norway. Even Sweden, which in the end decided to remain nonaligned, went through a period of considerable reevaluation of established trends of thought. In this study Professor Magne Skodvin describes and analyzes some major phases in the series of events that caused Norway to become a charter member of the North Atlantic Alliance and directed Denmark to follow. Professor Skodvin has drawn heavily on material from archives in the Norwegian Foreign Office, the Public Record Office in London, and the National Archives in Washington DC.

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