

Baltic see conference June 14th, 2025

Tomas Magnusson: "Sweden - the best militarized country"

Thank you for the invitation to join this important conference on the Baltic Sea – a sea of peace.

It is an important, **necessary** conference, but at the same time most of our thoughts today and in recent months go to another sea, the Mediterranean, and the **terrible, incomprehensible, ruthless** things that are happening there. **A genocide. A Holocaust.**

The Baltic Sea, which in comparison to Mediterranean has peace, but it has war preparations and militarization – and that are the two factors that now **hold the western Baltic Sea countries together.**

We are experiencing these war preparations, this militarization in so many ways

- Through the explosions of the North Stream gas pipeline in September 2022 and the aftermaths of it
- Through the hunt for what is called the "shadow fleet"
 - ships that transport oil out of Russia
 - I believe it is completely legal for a country to export even when **neighboring countries do not want it**
- Accusations, including about cable blasts for electricity and communication, **which turn out not to be** cable blasts, and a lot of other nonsense
- The media reports everything, as if media's primary mission **is to be** a megaphone for warmongers.

We the people are being completely abandoned as news consumers.

I can bet a good amount of money that the majority of Swedes still believe that it was Russia that blew up **its own gas export pipeline.**

That was the first explanation that was wired out,

when the explosion had just happened.
Since then, a lot of more or less strange explanations have been published,
all of which have one thing in common:
taking the focus away from the US and NATO as responsible.
Russia's right to travel the international waters of the Baltic Sea
is still respected – but we do not know for how long...
Just look at how Israel acts in the Mediterranean,
by virtue of its superior military,
by virtue of its ruthlessness,
by virtue of its total backing and support from the US.
Sweden is now part of NATO as you know,
we in the peace movement never really got the chance
to influence the political ditch-driving that took place in the spring of 2022.
It was an illustration of what President Eisenhower
called the “**military-industrial complex**”
and which must now be described
as the “**military-industrial-political-media complex**”,
the complex that overran every attempt of resistance.

Among many trips,
the Swedish Minister of Finance went together
with business leader Peter Wallenberg, one of the richest men in Sweden,
and planned Sweden's NATO entry with their Finnish counterparts.

Perhaps it is that type of integration of politics and business
that justifies the title I received for my presentation at this conference:

"Sweden - the best militarized country"?

Or is it because of the story of Oscar Stenström -

- Oscar Stenström was an unknown figure to most people
when he was called home to Sweden
by the then Social Democratic Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson

to arrange the party's planned change of opinion regarding neutrality

- Magdalena Andersson believed that the party would win the upcoming election if it abandoned its traditional foreign policy line, that was appreciated by Swedes for 200 years.

- When the party's forced swing was complete, Oscar Stenström was assigned to become Sweden's NATO negotiator.
- And when the Social Democrats lost the election, Oscar Stenström, who still called himself a social democrat, was given the task of continuing to negotiate Sweden's NATO application
 - now on behalf of the deeply conservative that was now our government.
- The negotiations went as they did, it took two years for Sweden
 - the best militarized country –
 - to become a member of NATO,
 - and we can only imagine all the concessions and bribes to Turkey and Hungary.
- When Sweden finally became a member of NATO in the spring of 2024
 - after two years, Oscar Stenström got a new job at Sweden's largest arms manufacturer - Saab - owned by Wallenberg, who I mentioned earlier.
 - A Strutless lobbyist he is!

In the Peace Movement, we have neither well-paid jobs nor careers to offer our activists.

We failed to stop Swedish NATO membership.

We failed to stop the Defense Cooperation Agreement, which gives the US access to 17 Swedish military bases and training areas in Sweden.

But we did run a very successful campaign, with 40,104 signatures, for the issue of US bases in Sweden to be decided in a referendum.

That struggle is not over. Now the resistance to these bases continues locally, we are organizing local groups near these bases

– to be ready the day the Yankees come!

The first plowshare action

has already been carried out at one of those bases

– with the aim of showing that the base can become a flourishing garden instead of the site of deadly military activity in the name of the US.

By the way – the most important support

in the popular campaign against the US bases came from Hans Blix

– former Foreign Minister of Sweden

and the hero from the days of the Iraq War.

He refused to bow to US and British pressure

as head of the weapons inspectors in Iraq –he **refused to say**

that there were nuclear weapons

because he had not found any trace of nuclear weapons during his inspections, even though Bush and Blair knew –

from the White House and from 10 Downing Street.

And now even the military establishment in Sweden is reacting

– including the professor at the Military Academy

Linus Hagström who in a well written debate articles

demands that Sweden should terminate its DCA agreement with the US,

as soon as possible, for the sake of peace!

The purpose of the US bases in Sweden, Finland etc.

is that the US wants to get close to Russia's border –

and at the same time be able to act independently of NATO

where decisions are to be made jointly by consensus.

For Sweden - since we do not border Russia - like Finland and the Baltic states - to offer **transport routes** for tanks and all military equipment

through Sweden to the Baltic Sea

- From Halmstad and Gothenburg on Sweden's west coast
- to the nearest Swedish port in the Baltic Sea

- Further north from Trondheim in Norway over to Sundsvall on the Swedish coast of the Baltic Sea
- And in the north from Narvik in Norway to Luleå on the Swedish Baltic coast in the very north.

This part of the DCA agreement is already being implemented.

Sweden is building cross-connections,

- not because Sweden needs it, but because the US needs it
- Sweden is paying
- The EU has contributed from its military funds (the EU contribution was even decided before Sweden signed any agreement with the US on DCA)
- these roads will be made strong enough to carry tanks, etc., bridges will be reinforced, the railways across Sweden will be reinforced. Four-lane motorways where hardly any cars drive!
- Swedish taxpayers will finance this, i.e. all most road maintenance in Sweden will stop, including the roads in the direction from north to south that are needed for Sweden's needs - the money will not be enough for them.

And – all Swedish military air bases, four in total,

are included in the agreement with the USA

– the USA will have command rights over all military aircraft within Sweden – not just US aircraft,

but Swedish military aircraft, and visiting NATO aircraft.

What can we do to make the Baltic Sea a sea of peace instead of the Baltic Sea being included in the war preparations and militarization

The simple answer is of course that we must resist at all means.

We need a new END movement, like in the 1980s,

for the Baltic Sea as a sea of peace

– from the Gulf of Bothnia in the north to Öresund and the outlets towards the Atlantantic Ocean.

And before I end, you should listen to this story:

It has been a long time since Russia attacked Sweden.

It happened in April 1808, during an ongoing war that can be called the Finnish War, which was actually a small part of what is also called the Napoleonic War. All of Sweden's military resources were on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea, in Finland and the current Baltic states, so when the Russians arrived at the Gotland Island there were no soldiers there. The Russians came with 1,800 men under the command of Admiral Nikolaj Bodisko, and the Swedish governor, a civilian high official named Erik af Klint, realized that Gotland has to give up without resistance. The ordinary Gotlanders realized it even more. They arranged food and shelter for the tired and hungry Russians, there was room in churches, private homes and inns. There are no reports of conflicts or inhospitality in the stories from this time. After three weeks – before any Swedish military reached Gotland, the Russians sailed away, with full stomachs and satisfied – like the Gotlanders – who had avoided killing and could continue their normal peaceful lives,

Now that we are in a time of war preparation and militarization, and we see that **our political leaders have their survival strategy** to keep Russia as an enemy – we must go the other way, the “Gotland way”, **making our neighbour friends, not enemies.**

I conclude by quoting **Joe Hill**, the Swedish-born singer and union leader who was sentenced to death and executed in Utah, USA on November 19, 1915 – his last words were:

- Don't mourn – organize!

Thank you for listening. Don't mourn – organize!

Tomas Magnusson

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Former President of International Peace Bureau 2006-2013

Board member, Foundation Lay down your arms 2014 -

Active member “People against DCA -for Peace, democracy and climate justice” 2024 -