German policy toward Sweden 1939-1945

Janet Levengood

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GERMAN POLICY TOWARD SWEDEN

1939-1945

by

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PREFACE

This thesis is presented in the hope of shedding some new light on the role which a neutral state can play in the wartime planning of a belligerent nation. As an illustration of this hypothesis, I have chosen to examine German policy toward Sweden in World War Two. I believe the approach to be an original one, and, to my knowledge, no similar work exists. In the study, I have attempted to acknowledge all sources from which I drew quotations or ideas, but unless otherwise cited, the interpretations and conclusions are entirely my own.

Like any historian, I have based my conclusions on the material at hand, and it is possible that different sources, unknown to me, would provide a varied interpretation. Certainly many of the original German documents dealing with this problem were lost or destroyed during the war, or have remained unpublished. With this limitation in mind, I do not presume that either the text or the conclusions derived therefrom are immutable.
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INTRODUCTION

In wartime, a great deal of literature is devoted to the policies of the various belligerent nations. Their basic strategy and conduct of the war are subject to the closest scrutiny and analysis. However, any examination of the role of the neutral nations during a period of hostilities is likely to be confined to their efforts to maintain a neutral position in the face of pressures to get involved on one side or the other. What is often ignored is the fact that a belligerent power may actually have a policy which takes into account the neutrality of a particular country and attempts to utilize this neutrality to serve its own interests.

In the Second World War, very few European nations were permitted to remain outside the sphere of hostilities. Whether for military reasons or to fulfill Hitler's expansionist dreams, one after another of the neutral nations fell under the advance of the German Wehrmacht. In the North, both Denmark and Norway were victims of German conquest, while Finland became a battleground for both Russian and German forces. Sweden, alone of the northern countries, escaped from the war virtually unscathed.

Why was Sweden allowed to preserve her neutrality when the similar policies of her neighboring states were all but ignored? To find the answer, it is necessary to examine the basic aims of German policy toward Sweden and to evaluate these aims, taking into account the willingness of the Swedish government to cooperate with Germany to an extent which made their achievement possible. This task is simplified
by the fact that Hitler had one over-riding interest in Sweden—the iron ore which he imported from that country and which was essential to the German war effort. Without the Swedish ore, German industry would have difficulty manufacturing the weapons and equipment necessary to sustain a war machine of the size Hitler had created. In fact, the German industrialist, Fritz Thyssen, who had escaped to Switzerland, wrote that "without the ore from Sweden it is possible to calculate the date upon which Germany must capitulate."\(^1\)

Sweden had a traditional policy of neutrality dating from the Napoleonic wars. In the First World War, some factions in Swedish politics had favored the German cause, but Sweden had remained officially neutral. By 1939, pro-German sentiment in Sweden had cooled somewhat, although there still remained close ties between the two countries. At the beginning of the Second World War, Sweden pledged herself to maintain trade relations with all belligerents, and Hitler had little doubt that Germany's supplies of iron ore would continue to flow from the Swedish mines.

The western powers, however, also recognized Germany's dependence on Swedish iron, and Hitler's conquest of Denmark and Norway in April, 1940, was in part the ultimate result of an Allied attempt to cut off German supplies of this precious commodity. Sweden was not invaded, but she was now under tighter pressure than before to comply with German demands. From the spring of 1940 until the end of 1942,

Hitler used Sweden much as he wished, forcing the Swedes to grant concessions of a distinctly unneutral character. After 1942, the German forces met increasing Allied resistance, and the demands which Hitler made upon Sweden were increasingly resisted or ignored altogether. By the beginning of 1945, German policy toward Sweden had primarily become one of reaction; Sweden was following an independent policy and even making some requests of Germany's leaders which earlier in the war she would not have dared to consider.

The inevitable conclusion which must be drawn, and the paradox which is illustrated throughout the thesis, is simply that the success of Germany's policy toward Sweden at any given moment was largely dependent on the entire war situation. When Germany was in a position to invade Sweden and enforce her demands, she had no real need to do so, because the Swedes were already cooperating; by the time Sweden began actively to resist German demands, Hitler was too involved with his other commitments to do anything about it; and by the end of the war, the German leaders were actually complying with Swedish policy in certain instances and an active German policy, as such, had fallen into abeyance.

The various phases which have been described will be presented in a largely chronological order. The policy followed by Germany at various times will often be seen as a reaction to the measures taken by other nations; thus if at times the study seems unduly concerned with Swedish or even British policies, they are cited to bring the total situation into perspective as Germany's leaders must have viewed it.

Another question which will be dealt with in the course of the
work concerns the failure of Germany to invade Sweden at the time Norway and Denmark were attacked and the result of this omission as it affected the eventual outcome of the war. Whether the obvious advantages of an occupation of Sweden would outweigh the possible disadvantages is a matter which must be examined in the light of the actual policy which Germany followed in this area.

It should be emphasized that this study presents a historical evaluation of the wartime policy of one particular belligerent state toward an individual neutral nation. It is not intended to attach any universal validity to the conclusions drawn, as in each instance the policy of a belligerent toward a neutral must be primarily determined by individual considerations.

The thesis is limited in one respect by the lack of original sources for the latter years of the war. An abundant supply of published material from German sources is available for the period from 1939-1943, but after 1943, there are fewer sources dealing with German policy toward Sweden and what has been written tends to be from the Swedish or Allied viewpoint. This in itself is significant, but the reader should be aware of the limitation and judge the conclusions accordingly.
CHAPTER I

GERMANY AND SWEDISH NEUTRALITY

On September 1, 1939, the armed forces of the Third Reich crossed the border into Poland. On that same day, Sweden declared her neutrality in a brief document which referred to the common declaration of neutrality that had been drawn up by the five northern States in the previous year.

The Swedish announcement came as no surprise to the German government, for it reaffirmed a position which had long been regarded as a principal feature of Swedish foreign policy. Sweden had remained neutral in the First World War, in spite of pressure by various interests within her borders. When world tension again seemed to point to conflict, the Swedish government played host at Stockholm to representatives of Iceland, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. On May 27, 1938, the members of the Stockholm Conference announced the adoption of a revised set of neutrality rules, based on the previously accepted regulations issued in 1912. The revisions concerned purely technical points of procedure, such as the restriction of military flights over neutral territory; there was no mention of trade relations with a belligerent power. The agreement was not intended as a military alliance, but was merely an indication of common goals of the signatory powers.

In a Reichstag speech on April 28, 1939, Hitler offered non-aggression pacts to the northern countries, and negotiations on these lines soon followed between Germany and the governments of Sweden,
Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia. Latvia and Estonia readily accepted the proposal, but the other countries were more hesitant. The Swedish foreign minister, Rickard Sandler, opposed the treaty and attempted to persuade the other northern governments to reject Hitler's offer. Sandler doubted that such an agreement was "in keeping with the existing neutrality of the Scandinavian countries," and felt that it might also "be interpreted to mean that, in the event of war, the Scandinavian countries could only make deliveries to Germany, and not to Germany's opponents as well."¹ His views prevailed, and Norway and Finland went along with Sweden in refusing the offer, stating that the idea of a German attack on them was inconceivable. Denmark, in a more vulnerable position, felt bound to accept and signed a non-aggression pact with Germany on May 31, 1939.

In the spring of 1939, the German government was also attempting to determine what Sweden's trade policy would be in the event of a war. Sweden and Finland were engaged in an attempt to build joint defensive fortifications in the Aaland Islands,² and the German navy suggested


²The Aaland Islands, located between Sweden and Finland, at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia, were largely populated by Swedes, but had been awarded to Finland by the League of Nations in 1921. The islands had been demilitarized since 1856, and this was confirmed by the Aaland Convention of 1921. When in 1939, both Sweden and Finland felt that the islands should be fortified, the ten signatory nations of the Aaland Convention were asked to grant their permission. On May 2, Germany agreed, as did the other nations involved. However, during the summer of 1939, the Soviet Union objected violently to the proposal, which cooled enthusiasm for it in Finland and Sweden. The work on the fortifications was scarcely begun when war broke out in September and further work on the project was cancelled.
that negotiations on this issue might be extended to include discussions on the continuation of iron ore shipments to Germany. The Swedish government was asked for a declaration of the trade formula which Sweden would apply in wartime, and it finally responded on April 21 with a statement that:

Sweden who has repeatedly expressed her determination to preserve neutrality in the event of war will also conduct her commercial relations during the period of hostilities in a manner appropriate to that end.³

The Swedish declaration was very similar to a formula which had previously been suggested by the German foreign minister and seemed to satisfy those who had feared that German trade interests might suffer in the event of a war.

As war approached, the group of nations known as the Oslo Powers, which included Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, sent representatives to a conference at Brussels which met on August 23, 1939. The Belgian king broadcast an appeal for peace in the name of all the assembled states, and stressed the desire of all to avoid becoming involved in the conflict which seemed increasingly inevitable. An offer to mediate the dispute went unheeded by Germany.

There were also attempts by private individuals to lessen the growing tension between Germany and Great Britain. One of the most notable efforts was achieved by a Swedish civil engineer, Birger Dahl- erus, who had lived in both Great Britain and Germany, and was a friend of the Luftwaffe commander, Hermann Goering. From the first of July,

³DOFF, VI, 302n.
Dahlerus made many trips between London and Berlin in an attempt to persuade individuals on both sides to come to an agreement. He did succeed in arranging a meeting on August 7 between seven British businessmen and several Germans, including Goering. The British representatives, who were all acting as private individuals, attempted to convince Goering of the seriousness with which Great Britain viewed Germany's actions in the Polish situation, but the meeting accomplished little. Dahlerus persisted in his efforts until after the war had actually started on September 1, but the Germans, with perhaps the exception of Goering, seemed determined to carry out the course Hitler had previously set down and all the attempts at mediation came to nothing.¹

On September 1, the German state secretary, von Weizsaecker, sent a note to Stockholm stating that the German minister, Prinz zu Wied, was to make the following declaration to the Swedish foreign minister:

"We are resolved, in accordance with the friendly relations existing between our countries, not to injure, in any circumstances, the inviolability and integrity of Sweden and at all times to respect the territory of the Swedish State."²

Von Weizsaecker then added that Germany expected Sweden to pursue a policy of strict neutrality, and particularly hoped that Sweden would not allow other nations to interfere in her affairs. If such interference did occur, Germany would naturally act to protect her interests.⁶

¹For Dahlerus' testimony on the events preceding the war, see: International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), IX, 457-491.
²DGFP, VII, 502-503.
⁶Ibid., VII, 503. This latter provision was also stated in a similar German declaration to Norway, but was omitted in the case of Finland.
On September 3, a special envoy from Germany, Ulrich von Hassell, together with Prinz zu Wied, called upon Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson and Foreign Minister Sandler. The purpose of the visit was to assure continued economic relations between the two countries. Von Hassell referred to the statement made by the Swedish government on April 21, which declared Sweden's intentions to conduct her wartime trade policy in a manner consistent with her neutral position. He stressed the importance of Swedish goods to the German economy and expressed the hope that the current trade ratios between Germany and Sweden would be maintained. The Swedish ministers appeared to agree to von Hassell's requests, although they did not discuss the ratio in much detail. They cautioned the Germans that Sweden's needs would come first, but any restrictions on imports would be equally applied to all nations with which Sweden was carrying on trade relations and which respected Swedish neutrality.

The progress made by von Hassell during the discussions in Stockholm might be attributed, in part, to the favorable effect created by the concurrent delivery of a large supply of German coal, a material vital to the Swedish economy. The coal shipment was widely reported in the Swedish press and served to illustrate Germany's desire for continued trade under wartime conditions.

During the autumn of 1939, the Germans continued to assure Sweden of their peaceful intentions. On October 6, Hitler made a speech in which he stated:

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\[\text{Ibid., VII, 541-542. Von Hassell's instructions for the Stockholm visit are cited on pp. 396-397.}\]
Germany has never had any conflicts of interest or even points of controversy with the Northern States; neither has she any today. Sweden and Norway have both been offered non-aggression pacts with Germany and have both refused them solely because they do not feel themselves threatened in any way.\(^8\)

While the war continued, Sweden made every effort to bring about an early settlement of the conflict. In October, the Swedish King, Gustav V, made it known that he and the other Scandinavian rulers would be willing to mediate between the belligerents if they were requested to do so, but it was up to the powers at war to take the initiative. Hitler was cool to the proposal, feeling that Great Britain would not agree to his demands, and no response was forthcoming from the western powers. Another attempt by Dahlénus to intervene was rejected by the German foreign office.

While neutrality was the principal tenet of Sweden's strategy, it was at the same time a policy of "armed neutrality." The small Swedish army was quickly expanded to meet wartime conditions and her defenses strengthened against the possibility of invasion. The degree of expansion was reflected in Sweden's military budget. For 1938-1939, the budget totaled only $50,000,000, but in 1939-1940, it was increased to $400,000,000.\(^9\) The defenses against air attack were especially good, for Sweden possessed the famous Bofors armaments plant, which produced the world's finest anti-aircraft guns. The hardest area to defend was the coastline composed of countless bays and inlets. In order to

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maintain a proper coastal defense, naval facilities had to be increased and special fortifications constructed in the more vulnerable points. The trump card in the Swedish defense system, however, was not of a strictly military nature. In case of attack, the Swedes had constructed a system whereby they would sabotage their own iron mines and render them unworkable. If Germany should decide to invade Sweden, the result would indeed be a costly victory for Hitler because of Germany's great dependence on exports of Swedish iron ore. Thus the Swedes had in their economy their best weapon against German attack.

The close economic ties between Germany and Sweden are a factor which must be examined in some detail. The importance of Swedish iron ore to German industry can best be illustrated by the fact that more than 50 per cent of Germany's iron ore imports during the 1930's came from the Swedish mines. From 1939-1942, the amount came to approximately ten million tons per year. The Swedish ore is especially high-grade, containing "55-67% of iron, as against the 20-40% of most other European ore-fields." It was of particular value to Germany's armament industry and most of the principal companies such as Krupp and Thyssen had their plants specially adapted to utilize this rich ore. A continued supply was essential to maintain the high industrial output necessary for a wartime economy. In fact, the industrialist, Fritz Thyssen, was reported to have told Hitler that "the war would be won

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10 Joachim Joesten, Stalwart Sweden (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1943), p. 65. This is in reference to the value of the ore rather than the tonnage.

by the side which secured control of the Swedish ores.\textsuperscript{12}

The principal difficulty facing the Germans, provided Sweden was willing to export the ore, was the problem of transportation. The largest ore deposits in Sweden are in the northern part of the country near the mining centers of Kiruna and Gällivare. The first includes the Kirunavaara ore field, thought to contain the largest single iron ore deposit in the world.\textsuperscript{13} Besides the northern mines there are ore deposits in central Sweden near the town of Bergslagen. The ore from the Bergslagen mines contains less iron percentage than the Lapland ore. During the war it was used primarily for home consumption, although some was exported to Germany. However, it was the richer northern ore which Germany found most vital to her economy. The difficulty lay in the fact that there were only two ports from which the ore was exported. The port of Luleå on the Baltic was one of these. But Luleå is ice-bound four or five months out of the year. Thus the major outlet for the ore was the port of Narvik on the northern coast of Norway. Narvik is one hundred miles north of the arctic circle, but, because of the gulf-stream, is free of ice throughout the winter. The ports were both connected to the ore-fields by a Swedish state railway, the "Iron Ore Line."

Once the ore had been delivered to Narvik, it was loaded onto German ships for their return voyage. Although the journey was long, it was simplified by the fact that the Norwegian coastline is bounded

\textsuperscript{12} W. N. Medlicott, \textit{The Economic Blockade} (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), I, 45.

\textsuperscript{13} Joesten, p. 60.
by a continuous chain of island archipelagoes, which form a deep channel called the Leads. The Leads are part of Norway's territorial waters, so the German cargos were relatively safe as long as they did not venture outside this zone. The Allies soon realized this, and as the war continued serious efforts were made to stop the flow of iron ore through the Leads to Germany.

Iron ore was not the only material which Germany imported from Sweden. She also imported "copper, ferro-alloys, chalk and limestone and pyrites; certain lumber and wood products, especially sulphite cellulose; butter, oil cake, hides, skins, and tanning extracts." Germany also imported large quantities of Swedish ball-bearings, which were vital for the German aircraft industry. The Svenska Kullagerfabriken or SKF Company, Sweden's largest producer of high-quality ball-bearings, continued against the protests of the Allies to supply ball-bearings to Germany until the autumn of 1944.

On the other side, Sweden provided a market for certain German goods. These were notably machinery, textiles, chemicals, and in particular, supplies of coke and coal. The latter were essential to Swedish industry and had to be imported since Sweden has only enough coal deposits to supply 5 per cent of her needs.

Through a combination of an active trade policy with Sweden, coupled with trade agreements between the two countries, the Germans hoped to tie Sweden more closely to their own economy. At a Fuehrer conference on October 23, 1939, it was stated that:

11 Medlicott, p. 141.
The attitude of the neutral nations toward the war and toward Germany must be changed completely by clear and definite directives and by measures on the part of Germany. More than ever before it must be driven home to the neutrals that they can never emerge from this war as laughing victors in the face of an economically destroyed or weakened Germany.¹⁵

From the outbreak of the war, negotiations for a German-Swedish trade agreement were in progress in Stockholm. At first the Swedes seemed to favor such an agreement, but several factors threatened to disrupt the talks. In September, Swedish public opinion was aroused by the torpedoing of two Swedish ships carrying goods to England. The director of Germany's Economic Policy Department warned that ill feeling of this sort could disrupt the ore traffic:

"Not only must the ores be sold, they also have to be dug and shipped," and for that reason the mood of the workers in the mines and loading plants must also be considered.¹⁶

On October 10, it was announced at a Fuehrer conference that submarines were not to interfere with merchant shipping in Scandinavian waters, for fear of sinking Scandinavian ships.¹⁷ The economic negotiations were reopened on October 17, but new conflicts soon arose to promote discord among the delegates.

The German government was greatly disturbed by the amount of merchant shipping that passed through Swedish territorial waters. Sweden claimed not only the usual three-mile limit recognized under international law, but insisted that her territorial waters extended

¹⁵Germany, Kriegsmarine Oberkommando, Fuehrer Conferences On Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1945 (on microfilm), 1939, p. 27. Hereafter cited as Fuehrer Conferences.

¹⁶DGFP, VIII, 171.

¹⁷Fuehrer Conferences, 1939, p. 12.
to four miles from the coastline. The German navy was naturally con-
cerned with this since it was attempting to lay mine-fields in the
Baltic to restrict enemy shipping. As a high-ranking naval officer
explained the problem:

A large part of the merchant vessels carrying goods from the
Baltic to the North Sea and beyond actually went through the
gap in our mine barrage and through the three-mile zone. This
was done by a large number of ships every day. The Naval Staff
was convinced that they were mostly ships which were afraid of
control by German naval vessels.\(^{18}\)

The German navy felt that a large percentage of this traffic could be
reduced if mine fields were laid in the fourth mile claimed by Sweden.
The German foreign office was duly consulted by the naval staff, but
here the plan encountered some opposition. The Economic Policy Depart­
ment hesitated to deprive Sweden of her fourth territorial mile when
the economic discussions were in progress; it would make the task of
the negotiators much more difficult, particularly since Germany could
only pay with commodity exports for about half the iron ore she wished
Sweden to deliver and would have to depend for the rest on credit and
"the goodwill of the Swedes."\(^{19}\) The foreign office preferred to post­
pone a decision until the economic questions were settled.

However, in spite of these objections, the naval staff considered
it necessary to take measures against shipping within the disputed
fourth mile and informed the German foreign office of its decision.
Accordingly, a note was presented to the Swedish government on October
31, stating "that Germany would continue to recognize only the standard

\(^{18}\) DGFP, VIII, 341.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., VIII, 340. See also pp. 338-339.
three-mile limit." As the German economic experts had predicted, the Swedish government was not disposed to relinquish its claim and sent a note of protest to Berlin on November 4. The repercussions threatened to disrupt the trade negotiations then in progress, but the German delegates were empowered to discuss the matter of sea warfare with the Swedes in an effort to work out their differences over the conference table. On November 24, the German navy laid mines within the fourth mile of Swedish waters, but outside the three-mile zone; this closed the channel to larger ships requiring deeper water and served to strengthen German control of the Baltic.

Another cause for conflict was the seizure of Swedish merchant vessels by Germany. On November 29, The Times of London reported that thirty-seven Swedish ships were currently being held by the German contraband authorities, although "all but three have neutral destinations." The Germans were afraid that the ships might be sold to England if they were allowed to leave the Baltic.

Although Sweden protested against the German mine fields within the four-mile zone, the German government complained that the Swedes were laying mine fields in the area surrounding the Aaland Islands and several German patrol boats had been sunk as a result. This complicated the war against the merchant shipping of other nations and could only be regarded as a measure designed to hinder German interests. On the other hand, Sweden refused to mine her territorial waters within the

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20 DGFP, VIII, 341.

three-mile zone. A note from the German foreign office requesting the Swedes to lay mines in the Falsterbo Channel was rejected by the Swedish government. 22

In spite of these conflicts, Germany and Sweden finally negotiated a trade agreement which was signed on December 22, 1939. During 1940, the Swedish government would allow the issuance of export licenses for Swedish goods bound for Germany, "as a rule up to the amounts which, according to the official Swedish export statistics of 1938, were exported to Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland." 23 Certain exceptions to the 1938 figure were itemized, including the projected export to Germany in 1940 of 10,000,000 tons of iron ore. However, it was specifically noted that two or three million tons of iron ore would have to be exported via Narvik in order to achieve this export figure. 24 Germany, for her part, promised increased deliveries of coal and coke to Sweden, although the Swedes would have to provide rail transport for the bulk of the shipments. Other products to be exported by Germany included rolling mill products, coke pig iron, and table salt.

Another section of the agreement concerned the prices to be charged for the various exported commodities. For the time being, it was decided to keep the prices for Swedish iron ore and most German goods at the levels "in force in 1939 before September 1." 25 However, the possibility of a moderate price rise to be agreed upon by both

22 Fuehrer Conferences, 1939, I, Part 1, 62, and 1940, I, 1.
23 DGFP, VIII, 564.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., VIII, 566.
countries was not excluded. The important thing was that a balance must be maintained between the value of the Swedish and German commodities exchanged. On January 12, 1940, an additional agreement was signed raising the value of certain listed items.

While the regular economic negotiations were in progress, Sweden also requested the German government's permission to purchase stock of military supplies from Germany. In December, the Swedish military attaché submitted a list of war material desired by the Swedish government to the Defense Economy Staff in Berlin; included were anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, field howitzers, submachine guns, hand grenades, and armored cars. The request was relayed to Hitler who agreed that Sweden could be allowed to purchase surplus material from Germany, insofar as the sale would not hinder the German war effort. On January 27, 1940, an agreement was signed in which the German government promised to deliver arms and ammunition to Sweden in exchange for gold and additional shipments of raw materials. The items Germany could spare, however, amounted to only a fraction of the total Sweden had requested.

While Sweden sent a large proportion of her exports to Germany, she also maintained her trade relations with the western powers. On December 7, a trade agreement was signed between Sweden and Great Britain. The British were primarily concerned with the export to Germany of Swedish iron ore and hoped to persuade the Swedish government...
to place a limit on these shipments. During the negotiations for the agreement which took place in October, the Swedes, feeling German pressure, refused to make any reductions. The most they would do was to make a secret understanding with Great Britain that they would try to restrict ore exports by "technical obstructions." What these were the Swedes did not say. The British delegates hoped that the Swedish promise of "technical obstructions" would soon be fulfilled. However, at the end of November, it was reported that the Swedish mines were being worked twenty-four hours a day instead of the usual sixteen. The Ore Line was also running eighteen trains a day to Narvik instead of the usual ten. The Swedes explained that the mines were frequently worked on this shift during the winter, so that a large supply of iron ore could be stored at Narvik before it froze in the cars during the colder months of the year. The reply did not seem very satisfactory to the British, but Sweden was obviously looking after her own economic interests. Sweden did agree not to re-export goods which had been previously exported from Great Britain. The only exception to this was that finished products made from imported raw materials could be resold to British or Allied customers. No goods in this category could be sold to Germany. A shipping agreement signed on December 28, 1939, provided that if possible all products transported between Sweden and Great Britain should be carried in both directions by Swedish vessels.

The fact that Sweden was able to come to an agreement with Great

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27 Medlicott, p. 116.
28 Ibid., p. 188.  
29 Ibid., p. 150.
Britain, based on the assumption that trade with the West would not be restricted by her proximity to Germany, is itself significant. Sweden as a neutral nation had announced her intention to conduct trade relations with both powers. As long as Sweden continued to supply quantities of iron ore and other raw materials needed by German industry, Germany's leaders were reluctant to place any pressure upon the Swedes which might result in a negative attitude on the part of the Swedish government. The terms of the German-Swedish trade agreements were ample proof that any promises Sweden might have made to the Allies were not sufficiently binding to curtail to any great extent Swedish exports to Germany.

During the winter of 1939-1940, the attention of Europe was focused on the conflict which broke out on November 10 between Russia and Finland. Germany was bound to Russia by a non-aggression treaty, and much as Hitler may have disliked Russian expansion in the North, he could not openly intervene. But he could stand silently by while Sweden gave aid to the Finns.

On December 19, Bluecher, the German minister in Finland, reported to von Weizsaecker that it was rumored that Germany had informed the Swedish government of possible German military action against Sweden if she intervened in the Finnish war. Von Weizsaecker replied that the assertion was untrue; no such warning had been made to Sweden and the position of Germany in the war was one of strict neutrality. 30

Sentiment in Sweden almost universally favored the Finnish cause.

30DGFP, VIII, 558-559.
The foreign minister, Rickard Sandler, was an advocate of direct intervention, for he feared that Russia's expansionist aims included Sweden and the Aaland Islands as well as Finland. But caution prevailed in other circles. Sandler was removed from office in December and replaced by Christian Guenther, a career diplomat. Swedish policy now evolved into something which might be termed "non-belligerent interventionism."\(^{31}\)

The Finnish war was considered outside the sphere of the general European war, and thus Sweden could give assistance to one of the belligerents without seriously endangering her status as a neutral in the latter conflict.

The Swedes collected war material for Finland and contributed a total of "80,000 rifles, 500 automatic weapons, 85 anti-tank guns, 112 field guns and howitzers, 104 A.A. guns, 50,000,000 cartridges, 300,000 artillery shells, and 25 planes, as well as petrol and equipment."\(^{32}\) Some of these weapons were merely loaned to the Finns, to be returned after the war. There were also collections taken up among the Swedes to provide clothing, food, and medical supplies for the Finnish people. Sweden did not send regular troops to Finland, but permitted the recruitment of Swedish volunteers. The volunteers numbered nearly 9,000 men and were sent across the border, fully equipped, to assist the Finns in their struggle.

The German government was fully aware of all this activity. On


February 10, 1940, the director of the Political Department, Woermann, wrote in a memorandum:

According to our information Sweden . . . permitted the departure of volunteers, who, however, if they were members of the Swedish armed forces, had to resign from the service. We had not taken any official stand on this action by Sweden. A different situation would naturally arise if forces of the powers with whom we were at war should arrive in Sweden or Norway en route to Finland. That would be an issue of importance to us.33

The possibility of Allied interference in the Finnish conflict was very real. The western powers were not only concerned for the future of Finland; they were also aware that any aid sent to Finland would probably have to pass through Norway and Sweden, thus presenting the opportunity to seize control of the Swedish ore facilities and prevent the further shipment of iron ore to Germany. As early as mid-December, the British government was considering a plan to land an expedition at Narvik for the purpose of supporting the Finns and occupying the northern ore fields. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was an enthusiastic supporter of the proposal, although he wished to extend the venture to include the mining of Norwegian waters. He wrote:

If Narvik were to become a kind of Allied base to supply the Finns, it would certainly be easy to prevent the German ships loading ore at the port and sailing safely down the Leads to Germany. 34

On February 5, the Supreme Allied War Council met in Paris to discuss the possibility of intervention. It was decided to send an expedition

33DGPP, VIII, 762.
to Narvik which would first secure the Gällivare ore fields and then proceed to the Finnish front via the iron-ore port of Luleå. Landings would also take place at Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim. Churchill's proposal to mine Norwegian waters had been shelved for the time being by the British government.

The Allies also planned to ask the Norwegian and Swedish governments for permission to cross their territory. The consent of Sweden was particularly necessary since the forces from Narvik would have to use the iron ore railway to cross into Sweden. There were no roads along this route and the railway was electrified; if the Swedes decided to cut off the power, the entire expedition could be stranded in Narvik. However, both Norway and Sweden refused to consider the Allied proposal, fearing that compliance on their part might drag them into war with Germany. They did permit the shipment to Finland of armaments from the Allies and the passage of "volunteers" from France and England, but they would not agree to the transit of Allied troops through their territory.

By the beginning of March, everyone but the western powers was exerting pressure on Finland to put a speedy end to the war. The Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, General Ironside, put the matter very succinctly when he wrote than an armistice was desired:

(i) By the Germans because they want neither the Russians nor the Allies in Gällivare before the Gulf of Bothnia is clear of ice.

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(ii) By the Russians because they have had enough embarrass­ment already and because they cannot satisfy the German demands for raw materials.

(iii) By the Swedes because they do not wish to become a bone of contention and mixed up in the war.36

The German point of view was aptly stated on February 22 by the minis­ter in Finland:

... there is no doubt in my mind ... that the neatest solution would be to compose the Finnish-Russian conflict before the Western guardian angels have time to arrive and take the Swedish ore, instead of Finland, under their wing.37

During the ensuing peace negotiations between Russia and Finland, the Swedish government acted as an intermediary and on March 12, the Winter War finally came to an end. The terms of the Peace of Moscow were more harsh than the Swedes had anticipated, but Finland was in no position to refuse the Russian demands.

For Germany the situation was quite favorable. With the return to peace, the Allies had no further excuse to intervene in Scandinavia, and the Norwegian and Swedish governments had both shown, to Hitler's satisfaction, that they would resist any attempts by the western powers to involve them in an operation inimical to German interests. German industry could now feel assured of a plentiful supply of iron ore flowing uninterruptedly from the Swedish mines to Germany.

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36 Ironside, pp. 224-225.
37 DGFP, VIII, 804.
CHAPTER II

THE NORWEGIAN INVASION

With the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish War, the British and French could no longer hope to land troops in Narvik under the guise of aiding the Finnish cause. However, the Allies were not inclined to let the Swedish ore slip that easily through their fingers, and a new justification for intervention was soon found in the continued violation of Norwegian neutrality by German vessels. The next phase in the battle for the Swedish ore supplies was a struggle for control of the water route through which the ore was shipped to Germany.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, there had appeared evidence that Germany was using Norwegian territorial waters for a variety of purposes. On October 9, 1939, the City of Flint, an American ship carrying a British cargo, was captured in the North Atlantic by the German pocket battleship Deutschland and a prize crew was put aboard. The Germans also transferred 38 British prisoners, who had been taken from the torpedoed ship Stone Gate onto the City of Flint, intending to transport them to Germany through Norwegian territorial waters. On October 20, the ship stopped at Tromsø to get water, and the Norwegian authorities released the British prisoners. The ship, however, was allowed to continue her voyage and was escorted down the Leads by Norwegian warships as a precaution against action by enemy forces. On November 3, the ship docked at Haugesund a few miles south of Bergen. The German captain pretended that there was illness aboard and sent for
a doctor, but this story was soon proven false. Under international law, the City of Flint had no further justification for remaining in port; the German crew was removed by Norwegian authorities and the ship was returned to its American captain.

The Norwegian government had acted correctly in its handling of the situation and had followed the rules laid down in the Hague Convention of 1907. It had only released the ship when the German action constituted a definite breach of Norwegian neutrality. In spite of protests from Berlin, the Norwegian government refused to return the City of Flint to German control.

Another violation of Norwegian neutrality occurred in December, 1939, when three foreign ships were torpedoed within Norwegian territorial waters. These were the British ships, the Thomas Walton, sunk on December 8, and the Deptford, torpedoed on December 13, and a Greek steamer, the Caraufalia, which was sunk on December 11. On January 6, 1940, the British government sent a note to the Norwegian government


"Article 10. The neutrality of a Power is not affected by the mere passage through its territorial waters of war-ships or prizes belonging to belligerents.

"Article 21. A prize may only be brought into a neutral port on account of unseaworthiness, stress of weather, or want of fuel or provisions. It must leave as soon as the circumstances which justified its entry are at an end. If it does not, the neutral Power must order it to leave at once; should it fail to obey, the neutral Power must employ the means at its disposal to release it with its officers and crew and to intern the prize crew.

"Article 22. A neutral Power must, similarly, release a prize brought into one of its ports under circumstances other than those referred to in Article 21."
protesting these sinkings in a supposedly neutral area. The note stated that Norway:

had permitted Germany without protest to undertake naval operations in Norwegian territorial waters. Should such incidents be repeated, England would be compelled to act in the same manner, that is, to operate with her naval forces in Norwegian territorial waters.²

In response to the British note, the Norwegian foreign minister, Dr. Halvdan Koht, defended his country’s position, stating that there was no proof that two of the ships had actually been within Norwegian territorial waters at the time of the sinking. He also said that there was no reliable evidence to substantiate the theory that any of the ships had been torpedoed (although he admitted privately to the German minister, Braeuer, that some witnesses had claimed to have seen torpedoes).³

The Swedish and Norwegian governments frequently consulted with one another regarding problems of neutrality before taking joint action, and in this case both Sweden and Norway urged Great Britain not to intervene in Norwegian waters.

In view of the strong Swedish and Norwegian statements, the British did not immediately carry out their threat of intervention, but it was clear that another incident might bring Norwegian waters into the general theater of war. On February 15, a German motor tanker, the Altmark, the supply ship of the Admiral Graf Spee, entered Norwegian territorial waters. On board were 299 British merchant seamen who had been captured from ships sunk by the Graf Spee and were being transported

²DGFP, VIII, 697.
³Ibid., VIII, 698.
to Germany as prisoners of war. The British were aware of the Altmark's cargo and sent several destroyers to intercept her. At the same time, the Altmark was being escorted by Norwegian torpedo-boats on her southward course. The Norwegians were informed by the British that the Altmark carried prisoners, but they failed to make a thorough search of the vessel to confirm these reports. On February 18, the British destroyer Cossack entered Norwegian territorial waters and sent a crew to board the Altmark, in spite of Norwegian protests that the British were violating their neutrality. The prisoners were rescued, and several German crewmen were killed when they resisted. The British action definitely constituted a violation of Norwegian neutrality, although the British government declared that Germany had also violated Norway's neutrality by misusing her right of "innocent passage" by transporting prisoners through Norwegian territorial waters.4

The German government was very concerned over the failure of the Norwegian ships to protect the Altmark against interference. The German naval attaché in Norway, Schrieber, held an interview with the Norwegian naval commander, Admiral Diesen, who offered the explanation:

"What is a little torpedo boat with two automatic weapons on board to do against a cruiser? [sic] A single salvo would wipe her out. Besides the ice was so heavy that our small Norwegian boats were in no position to pursue the powerful British destroyers." (Comment by Naval Attachés according to the captain of the Altmark the ice was not that heavy.)

When I said that I, as an officer of the German Navy, found it impossible to understand and approve the weak attitude of the commander of the Norwegian torpedo boat, he replied only by shrugging his shoulders.5

5DGFP, VIII, 781.
The Norwegian government did send a note of protest to Great Britain, but this act failed to impress the Germans as much as the fact that British forces had intervened in Norwegian waters in the first place. The effect on Germany's military leaders may be seen from this remark by Admiral Raeder:

This incident proved without a doubt that Norway was completely helpless to maintain its neutrality even if the Norwegian government wished to do so, which obviously not all authorities did. It further showed that the British government had no hesitation in violating Norway's neutrality when the liberation of prisoners was at stake. Now it seemed almost sure that the English would not hesitate to occupy bases ashore in Norway if they could do so without a fight. . . . Now at last the necessity of moving into Norway to forestall the enemy had to be strongly considered.6

Germany had long held an interest in the strategic location of the Norwegian coastline. In 1929, Vice-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener published a book called The Strategy of World War, which was widely read by German naval officers. Wegener claimed that the main task of the navy in wartime was to protect merchant shipping, and to do this Germany must extend its bases of operation northward in order to stretch the English blockade lines. He criticized Germany's failure to occupy Norway in the First World War, pointing out that possession of Norwegian bases would allow Germany to "considerably outflank the English strategic position from the north."7 Both Hitler and the Naval Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Raeder, were familiar with Wegener's ideas, and at a Fuehrer conference on October 10, 1939, Raeder pointed out the

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importance of obtaining submarine bases in Norway.  

In December, Vidkun Quisling, the leader of the tiny Nazi-inspired "Nasjonal Samling" party in Norway, paid a visit to Germany. He came at the request of Rosenberg, the expert on Nazi fifth-column activities abroad, who arranged an interview with Admiral Raeder. Rosenberg also sent a report to Raeder designed to acquaint him with a proposal by Quisling to take over the Norwegian government. The Norwegian Storting, or Parliament, had passed a resolution extending itself for a year, starting January 12, a step contrary to the constitution. With this as a pretext, Quisling planned to achieve a political coup and gain the support of the Norwegian army. (Quisling was a former minister of war and a major in the reserves, and had important connections in the armed forces.) During his visit to Germany, he hoped to persuade Hitler to provide special training for a number of his followers who would then return to Norway and attempt to seize key government positions in Oslo. Once this was accomplished, contingents of the German army and navy would be invited by Quisling's new government to assist in the operation.

On December 12, Raeder talked with Quisling and his assistant, Hagelin, and reported to Hitler that:

Quisling is convinced that an agreement exists between England and Norway regarding a possible occupation of Norway. Sweden would then also turn against Germany. There is a very real danger that Norway may be occupied by Britain, possibly soon.

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8 Fuehrer Conference, 1939, I, Pt. 1, 11.
9 Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, I, 740-741. From a report by Rosenberg to Admiral Raeder.
10 Fuehrer Conference, 1939, I, Pt. 1, 54.
Raeder suggested that Hitler see Quisling, but warned "that a politician like Quisling might have his own private axe to grind, and it might be well to be cautious." But Hitler was impressed with Quisling's arguments and he ordered preparations begun for a possible German invasion of Norway to forestall any British action. Hitler also agreed to try political methods at the same time; money and coal were to be sent to Quisling's group and Nazi political experts would assist in furthering his plans to take over the Norwegian government.

The plans for a possible invasion were discussed throughout January and February, 1940. The Altmark affair in particular pointed out the necessity for action on the part of Germany. On February 23, Admiral Raeder and Hitler discussed the best policy with regard to the maintenance of the iron ore traffic from Narvik. Raeder stated that while a continuance of Norwegian neutrality was the best solution, Britain must not be permitted to occupy Norway:

That could not be undone; it would entail increased pressure on Sweden, perhaps extension of the war to the Baltic, and cessation of all ore supplies from Sweden.

While a German occupation of Norway might temporarily suspend the ore traffic, the losses this involved would be preferable to the total loss incurred if Britain conquered Norway. Raeder added: "If Germany occupies Norway, she can also exert heavy pressure on Sweden, which would

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11 Raeder, p. 305.
12 In spite of these preparations, Quisling was never taken fully into the confidence of the Germans. The supplies promised by Hitler were very slow in arriving and he was not notified in advance of the impending invasion in April. In short, Hitler soon came to favor a military rather than political solution to the problem.
13 Fuehrer Conferences, 1940, I, 14.
then be obliged to meet all our demands."\textsuperscript{11}

On March 1, Hitler issued a formal directive for the invasion of Norway and Denmark. He stated that:

The development of the situation in Scandinavia requires the making of all preparations for the occupation of Denmark and Norway by a part of the Wehrmacht (\textit{Fall Weseruebung}). This operation should prevent British encroachment on Scandinavia and the Baltic. Further it should guarantee our ore base in Sweden and give our Navy and Luftwaffe a wider start-line against Britain.\textsuperscript{15}

General von Falkenhorst was directed to prepare and command the German forces, but no definite date was set for the invasion at this time. The inclusion of Denmark in \textit{Operation Weseruebung} was insisted upon by the Luftwaffe commanders who felt that the occupation of the Danish airfields was essential in order to shorten the distance of flights between Germany and Norway.\textsuperscript{16}

During the month of March, plans for the invasion were being perfected with one eye on Allied moves in the northern area. The end of the Winter War on March 12 eased the situation somewhat, but the Germans did not abandon their preparations. In a Fuehrer conference on March 26, Raeder informed Hitler that although there was little immediate danger of a British landing in Norway, the Allies had not given up. He predicted that:

They will make further attempts to disrupt German trade in neutral waters and to cause incidents, in order perhaps to create a pretext for action against Norway. One object has been and still is to cut off Germany's imports from Narvik. . . . Sooner or later Germany will be faced with the necessity of carrying out operation "Weseruebung."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{11}Tbid. \textsuperscript{16}Raeder, p. 309. \textsuperscript{15}DOFP, VIII, 831. \textsuperscript{17}Fuehrer Conferences, 1940, I, 22.
Since this was the case, Raeder advised Hitler to strike promptly while there was a sufficient period of darkness to cover the operation and insure success. He suggested April 7 as the target date. Hitler agreed that Operation Weseruebung had to be carried out, and on April 2, a Fuehrer's Directive was issued which announced that the invasion of Denmark and Norway would begin on April 9, 1940, at 5:15 A.M.

Meanwhile, the British and French were seeking a new approach to prevent Swedish ore from reaching Germany via the Norwegian coastline. On March 20, the former German steel magnate, Fritz Thyssen, reported to the Allies that "plants in the Ruhr were now shut down for three days a week owing to shortages of raw materials." If the Narvik route could be cut, the greater shortage resulting from such action might seriously damage the German war effort.

On March 28, at a meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council, it was decided that the ore traffic must be stopped at all costs. Within a week, mines would be laid in the Norwegian Leads to halt the ore shipments from Narvik, and later in the spring, mines would be dropped from aircraft near the Swedish port of Luleå. In conjunction with the former operation, the Allies also agreed to carry out Operation Royal Marine, or the dropping of mines in the Rhine. Since the mining of the Leads would presumably be opposed by Germany, it was also planned to have a small Allied force land at certain points on the Norwegian coastline to secure these positions against possible German attack. However, the landing was only to be carried out if Norway agreed to cooperate

18Medlicott, p. 192.
and the Germans showed definite signs of military opposition.

Operation Royal Marine was planned for April 1, and the mining of the Leads, known by the code name Wilfred, was to follow on April 5. But at the last minute the French backed out of the former operation in spite of English protests, and on April 3, the British war cabinet postponed the Norwegian operation until April 8. On April 5, notes were sent to both the Norwegian and Swedish governments warning them against engaging in unfriendly acts, but making no direct mention of the projected mine laying. The mining in the Narvik area was actually begun at 4:30 A.M. on April 8. At 5:30 A.M., a further note was handed to the Norwegian foreign minister by the British and French representatives in Oslo announcing that the Allied governments had taken steps to mine certain vital areas within Norwegian territorial waters. Both Norway and Sweden instantly protested this violation of Norwegian neutrality. The Norwegian government demanded that the mines be removed at once and insisted that foreign warships should cease their intervention in Norwegian waters. No British troops had been landed as yet, although several units were embarked upon warships in the Clyde, ready to sail at a moment’s notice.

The allied action in mining the Leads actually played right into Hitler's hands. The German invasion, already planned for the following day, could now be represented to world opinion as a necessary countermeasure to "preserve" Norwegian independence from the encroachment of the British and French forces. In addition, the stir created in Norway

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19 Taylor, p. 98; Churchill, Gathering Storm, pp. 578-579, and Ironside, p. 238.
by the Allied operation helped to divert the attention of the Norwegian authorities from the otherwise disturbing reports which were drifting in from various points along the coastline.

The Norwegian government received several warnings of the ensuing danger, but no one seemed to take them seriously. Apparently the Norwegians could not comprehend the idea that a German attack might be directed against them. On April 5, a film was shown at the German legation in Oslo to several members of the Norwegian government and other distinguished guests. They were treated to a vivid pictorial review of the Polish campaign and the bombing of Warsaw with the caption, "For this they could thank their English and French friends."

Evidently the film was intended as a warning to the Scandinavian nations, for it was presented the same evening at the legations in Stockholm and Copenhagen.

On April 7, the various units of the German fleet which were to take part in the invasion embarked from their respective ports. By the morning of April 8, a great amount of shipping activity had been sighted in the Kattegat and German naval forces were reported steaming northward. A German troop transport was sighted by the Polish submarine, Orzel, in the Skaggerak and was torpedoed and sunk. The German troops who abandoned the ship were rescued by a Norwegian destroyer and gave the story that they were on their way to "protect Bergen."

Also on April 8, the British destroyer Glowworm was sunk when it accidentally

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20 Koht, p. 58.

ran into a group of German warships bound for Norway.

By now, it should have been evident that an invasion was in progress, but reactions on the part of both the British and Norwegian governments were extremely slow. Troops were not mobilized and no advance warnings were given to the various commanders of Norwegian ships and coastal installations.

At 4:15 A.M. on April 9, the German minister in Oslo, Dr. Braeuer, called on the Norwegian foreign minister, Dr. Koht, with a memorandum containing a long list of German demands. The note stated that the German government had acted solely to "protect" the Kingdom of Norway from an impending invasion by English and French troops, and thus was acting in the "interests of Norway" by forestalling this Allied attack. Germany would naturally expect the Norwegians to offer no resistance and to cooperate with the German authorities in taking over the territory and military installations of the country. The same demands were made in Denmark. The Danes, quickly overwhelmed by superior forces, had no choice but to capitulate. In Norway, German forces successfully seized the major seaports, including Oslo, but the Norwegian government was determined to resist the German ultimatum and issued orders for a general mobilization.

On the same day, the German minister in Stockholm, Prinz zu Wied, called upon Foreign Minister Guenther and handed him the following note:

The German Government expects Sweden to observe the strictest neutrality: to refrain from any kind of measures directed

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against the German occupation of Denmark and Norway, particularly military mobilization and the deployment of troops.23

The German note also stressed the importance of the maintenance of Swedish ore deliveries and requested the free and unhampered use of lines of communication through Sweden. Swedish warships should "in their own interests" stay within the three-mile limit for the present.24 The Swedes were assured that their territorial integrity would in no way be impaired by the action against Norway and Denmark.

The Swedish cabinet immediately met to consider the German requests and to determine the course which Swedish policy should take. Late in the afternoon of April 9, Guenther again received the German minister and transmitted to him the following reply:

The Swedish Government intends to maintain the policy of neutrality which it has already declared several times during the present war. It must retain complete freedom to take all such precautions as may be considered necessary for the preservation and defense of this neutrality.25

The Swedes did not, however, intend to take any action which might lead to conflict between Germany and Sweden, and would attempt to conform to the measures requested in the German memorandum.

The direction which Swedish policy took was dictated by the circumstances of the Norwegian invasion, not out of any particular sympathy for the German action. During the Russo-Finnish War, Sweden had given considerable assistance to the Finnish forces, but the Norwegian invasion was a different situation entirely. This was part of the general conflict between Germany and the western powers, and any intervention

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23DGFP, IX, 95.  
24Ibid.  
25Ibid., IX, 117.
might be interpreted as an attitude of belligerency on the part of Sweden. Although the Swedes had a great desire to help the Norwegian cause, strict neutrality was the only official course which the government could follow.

However, from the very beginning of the invasion and during the ensuing fighting in Norway, great pressure was exerted on Sweden by both sides to grant concessions of an unneutral character. When the German forces invaded Norway on April 9, their commanders had orders to not let King Haakon and the members of the government escape. On April 12, the king was forced to flee across the border onto Swedish territory to avoid a German bombing attack. He returned to Norway half an hour later, but some of his entourage remained in Sweden. The foreign minister, Dr. Koht, stayed for two days and during that time organized the Norwegian foreign service to meet the new threat. The Norwegian legation in Stockholm soon became the center of the resistance, where the attempt was made to coordinate the efforts of the various fighting forces in Norway. From the legation, the Norwegian officials in Stockholm could talk by telephone with the military leaders at home and with the personnel of the Norwegian legations in other countries who were trying to maintain contact with the foreign ministry. On May 17, the Swedish government permitted the Norwegian exiles to hold a special service in a Stockholm church to celebrate Norway's national day.

In spite of these concessions, there were many Norwegian requests which the Swedish government refused to consider. When the Storting

26 Hambro, p. 91.
president, C. J. Hambro, wished to broadcast from Stockholm on April 11 in the name of King Haakon, the German government applied pressure on Sweden to prevent the address from taking place. Ribbentrop informed the Swedish minister that Germany desired "a loyal Swedish attitude" and that the broadcast did not conform to this principle.\(^{27}\) State Secretary von Weizsaecker also told the German minister in Stockholm to "see that a Swedish ban on it should be issued."\(^{28}\) The German warnings were sufficient, and at the last minute Hambro was forbidden to speak. The Swedish government was equally inhospitable to Norwegian soldiers who were forced to cross the frontier. Such persons were immediately interned by the Swedes, although many were later permitted to escape to Great Britain. The government also would not allow the recruitment of volunteers to fight for Norway, a distinct departure from its attitude during the Winter War.

Many Norwegians were particularly embittered by the Swedish attitude with regard to supplies which the Norwegian forces desperately needed. The Swedish government refused to sell arms or ammunition to the Norwegian government, nor would it permit the transit of war materials bought in other countries through Sweden to Norway. A large shipment of ammunition from the Finmarken district in northern Norway was seized by the Swedish authorities when the Norwegian government attempted to send it through Sweden to the forces fighting near Narvik.\(^{29}\)

Toward Germany, however, Sweden was a great deal more conciliatory. Shortly after the beginning of the invasion, the Germans complained that

\(^{27}\)DGFP, IX, 131.  
\(^{28}\)Ibid., IX, 130.  
\(^{29}\)Hambro, p. 97.
they were being inconvenienced by the black-out of Swedish lighthouses along the coast. Pressure from the foreign office was applied and the Swedish government promptly ordered the lights reilluminated.

On April 19, King Gustav V wrote personally to Hitler, assuring him of Sweden's neutral intentions. The Fuehrer's response was quite cordial; he informed the Swedish king that the invasion of Norway had been forced upon him by the actions of Britain and France in attempting to halt Germany's supplies of Swedish ore, but that he had no intention of extending the conflict to the rest of Scandinavia. A political and economic reorganization of the Baltic area, favorable to both sides, might soon become the subject of a new settlement between Germany and Sweden. Both King Gustav and Foreign Minister Guenther were reported extremely pleased with Hitler's reply.

The Fuehrer had reason to woo the leaders of the Swedish government, for important economic and political discussions were now in progress between the two countries, the results of which were largely dependent on Swedish good will and cooperation. On April 12, the Swedish prime minister, Per Albin Hansson, broadcast an address in which he stated:

*It is not consistent with strict neutrality to permit any belligerent to make use of Swedish territory for its activity. Fortunately no demands in such a direction have been made of us. Should any such demands be made they must be refused.*

Hansson's speech, however, was not strictly in accordance with the facts.

On April 11, General Halder, the Chief of Staff of the German army,
noted in his diary that Germany had "made an official request to Sweden for permission to use the Swedish railroads in connection with our occupation operation." 33

The German government wished to arrange the transport across Sweden of war materials for the troops in Narvik and Trondheim, and also hoped to secure permission for the transit to Narvik of certain non-military goods including food, clothing, medical supplies, and medical personnel. After some consideration, the Swedish government refused to permit the shipment of war material or troops since this would constitute an unneutral act on the part of Sweden. However, the other requests received more sympathetic attention. The cabinet agreed on April 17 to permit the transit of non-military supplies and medical personnel, but emphasized that the concession "should be regarded as an individual case." 34

On April 18, the German government requested permission for the transit to Germany from Narvik of about six hundred merchant seamen who had been stranded there by the invasion. This also was approved by the Swedish government, and the men were transported across Sweden between April 21 and April 23. According to a memorandum by Brunhoff, an official in the German foreign ministry, certain naval personnel were among the "merchant" seamen included in the transit. 35

Meanwhile the train with non-military supplies had left for Narvik

33Franz Halder, The Private War Journal of Generaloberst Franz Halder; 14 August 1939 to 24 September 1942 (on deposit at the University of Montana Library), III, 159.
34DGFP, IX, 182n. 35Ibid., IX, 252n.
on April 20 carrying "medical stores, forty members of the medical corps, and rations for the troops stationed in and around Narvik." At the same time, Guenther warned the German government that such shipments could not be considered a routine concession by Sweden and he admitted that he was rather disturbed by the amount of goods that the Germans were sending. However, on April 28, the Swedish government received and approved a German request for the transit of wounded and disabled troops from Narvik to Germany.

While these negotiations were going on, general economic discussions were also in progress between Germany and Sweden. The Swedes wanted increased coal deliveries from Germany, and permission for the safe conduct through German controlled waters of a certain number of Swedish merchant ships which were currently in English ports. The Swedish government particularly desired the prompt delivery of some armaments which had been ordered in Germany and were now long overdue, and it was this last request which the German negotiators seized upon as a bargaining point.

On the suggestion of the legation in Stockholm, Ribbentrop agreed to permit the shipment of additional military supplies to Sweden, provided the Swedish government would in turn consent to the shipment through Sweden of German armaments and ammunition bound for Narvik and Trondheim. Sweden had already refused such a request, but it was hoped she might reconsider her position. To facilitate an agreement, Ribbentrop sent a note to the German representatives listing the deliveries

36 Ibid., IX, 221.
he would permit if Sweden complied with the German requests. In that
eventuality, Germany would supply Sweden with:

1. 2850 machine guns with 38 million rounds of ammunition
   --1500 in May and the rest in June;
2. 24,000 rounds of howitzer ammunition, immediately;
3. 30 two-centimeter naval antiaircraft guns with ammuni-
   tion, immediately;
4. 200 three-centimeter and seven-centimeter antitank guns
   with 500 rounds of ammunition each . . . ;
5. 1000 pistols in June;
6. the possibility of supplying further two-centimeter
   antiaircraft guns and 100,000 rifle barrels . . . .

There were also several proposals designed to overcome Swedish
objections to arms transit on the grounds of neutrality. Extra-large
artillery would not be transported and the shipments would be made to
appear as inconspicuous as possible. Ribbentrop suggested that Germany
would:

Be prepared formally to sell to Sweden the arms the transit of
which we desire together with the arms that are to be delivered
to Sweden, on condition that Sweden will immediately sell them
back to us, and undertake to deliver them to a place to be
designated by us. 38

He added, however, that this would not be considered until he learned
the result of the present negotiations.

On May 7, a meeting was held at the Swedish foreign ministry
between members of the Swedish government and representatives of Germany.
The Swedish Secretary General Boheman informed the German minister that
Sweden had never allowed the transit of arms through Swedish territory
except in the case of the Russo-Finnish War, in which the Swedish atti-
tude was not one of absolute neutrality. In this war, however, Swedish

37 Ibid., IX, 259. 38 Ibid., IX, 259-260.
policy was clearly defined and any concessions of this nature to Germany would be a breach of neutrality. The Swedish government, therefore, did not wish to consider the matter further. The train of non-military supplies sent to Narvik had been a special case and did not create a precedent, although Boheman added that "there was nothing to prevent the sending of single carloads and of individual freight shipments in normal international railway traffic."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, IX, 292.}

Following the breakdown of the negotiations, Germany placed an embargo on the delivery of arms shipments to Sweden. Even material which had been promised to Sweden earlier was to be withheld as an attempted means of coercion.

In the middle of May, the German government tried to re-open talks on the transit question. On May 16, the Swedish minister in Berlin, Richert, had an interview with Ribbentrop and the following day he discussed with von Weizsaecker the new German requests. The Germans wanted permission to send three special trains to Narvik which would carry supplies of ammunition, guns, and other military equipment. A request was also made for the crews of German destroyers which had been sunk near Narvik to be sent back to Germany through Sweden. Richert immediately flew to Stockholm with the German requests. The Swedish government agreed to the transit of approximately 2000 men from the destroyer crews, but again refused to permit the delivery of arms through Swedish territory. This time the argument was not only neutrality, but the fact that such action would endanger Sweden's good relations with the Norwegian people. The Swedish government had previously
denied a Norwegian request for the delivery of war material and did not feel that, under the circumstances, it would be possible to grant a concession of this nature to Germany. Guenther also objected to the unusually large number of medical personnel (nearly 300 men) who had been sent through Sweden under the existing arrangements.

Aside from the transit question, the German government held discussions on other matters with Sweden during the period of fighting in Norway. At the beginning of June, the Swedish navy agreed to cooperate in laying submarine nets across the Sound, even including the area within Swedish territorial waters. The nets were laid on June 4 by German naval personnel dressed in civilian clothes and using German equipment.

At this time, German attention was centered on Narvik, which had been recaptured by Allied forces on May 28. The object of the Allied operations was not only to regain Norway, but according to General Ismay:

> to capture the town and obtain possession of the railway to the Swedish frontier. We should then be in a position to put a force, if necessary, into the Gallivare ore-fields, the possession of which is the main objective of the whole of the operations in Scandinavia.

The area near Trondheim, in central Norway, was also the scene of Allied landings.

The initial impact of these operations was recorded on the German side by Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge. He stated that Hitler "took a very pessimistic view of the situation and actually ordered General Dietl to allow his troops to be interned in Sweden." The decision was not

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40 Ibid., IX, 369
41 Ibid., IX, 502.
handed down, however, because of the action of a colonel on the OKW Staff who stopped the transmission of the radio message.

The Swedish government was also apprehensive about the prospect of a British occupation of northern Norway. Following the German invasion on April 9, Swedish troops had been mobilized and extra forces stationed in the northern region to prevent any encroachment on the ore-fields by either side. In the middle of May, when a Norwegian collapse seemed imminent, representatives of the Norwegian and Swedish governments met in Stockholm and formulated a proposal whereby an armistice would be declared in northern Norway, to be followed by the evacuation of the troops of both belligerents and the occupation of the area by Swedish forces. The Norwegian government was at first hopeful that a British success would prevent the necessity of such an action, but it soon became evident that the situation in France might necessitate the evacuation of the British troops in Narvik. During the first days of June, the matter was broached several times to various German officials as well as to representatives of Great Britain, but Germany was non-committal. On June 3, the foreign ministers of Norway and Sweden met at Luleå and drew up in detail a definite proposal regarding an armistice agreement. However, by this time it was obvious to the Germans as well that the British could not hold on in Narvik much longer. When the Swedish minister explained the armistice plan to von Weizsaecker, the state secretary was dubious about the possibility of its acceptance. He referred the idea to Ribbentrop, who decided to treat the matter "dilatorily." The British forces

[DGPP, IX, 518n.]
finally evacuated Narvik on June 8, and the remaining Norwegian troops capitulated on June 10.

With the conclusion of hostilities, Germany emerged as the dominant power in Scandinavia. Hitler's objectives of maintaining control over the Swedish ore supplies as well as over the sea route to Germany had been achieved. The Allies were now on the defensive in France, and it was unlikely that any large-scale attack would be mounted in the near future against the German positions in Norway. Although Sweden remained unoccupied and technically free, she remained cut off from the West by German-dominated territory. Sweden was now dependent on Germany for her necessary imports, and she therefore was not in a position to resist any outstanding German demands. For approximately the next three years, until Allied advances in 1943 foreshadowed Germany's eventual defeat, Hitler took advantage of his position, forcing the Swedes to grant concessions which, in effect, were a departure from their policy of neutrality and made Sweden an unwilling accomplice in the German plan of conquest.
CHAPTER III

THE ERA OF CONCESSIONS

With the conclusion of hostilities in Norway, Germany was in a position to apply pressure upon the Swedish government to grant concessions of a distinctly unneutral character. On June 13, 1940, only three days after the Norwegian surrender, the Chief of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, General Keitel, sent a communique to Ribbontrop requesting the foreign minister to reopen negotiations on the subject of further transit concessions through Swedish territory. The note pointed out that:

The collapse of the Norwegian resistance removes, in the opinion of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, any pretext which the Swedes have advanced up to the present against the German demands. On the other hand our need to send transports still remains, since the air route only allows the sending of small loads, and besides, like the sea route, exposed to enemy countermeasures.¹

On June 15, the Swedish minister in Berlin, Richert, was presented with a list of specific requests which had been drawn up by Keitel and included in the note to the German foreign minister. Sweden's consent was sought for the transit of supplies, including arms and ammunition, through Swedish territory to various German-held bases in Norway. Transit of goods to Narvik was held especially vital, owing to the isolated, but strategic location of the area, but shipment of material to Trondheim and Oslo was also desired. In addition, the Germans wanted Sweden to grant permission for members of the Wehrmacht to travel through Sweden

¹DGFP, IX, 563.
while "on duty and on leave journeys." Keitel reasoned that the Norwegian capitulation had changed the situation for Sweden, altering her need to adhere to a fairly strict conduct of neutrality, and Ribbentrop tried to impress this view on the Swedish minister.

Richert flew to Stockholm on June 17 to present the German requests to the Swedish government, and on June 19 he returned to Berlin with the reply which Keitel had anticipated. The Swedish government was anxious to assure Ribbentrop that it would not oppose the shipment of war material through Sweden.

In this connection it was pointed out that, in accordance with the regulations in Sweden concerning the transit of war equipment, special permission was required each time. This did not mean, however, that a special investigation would also take place; it was more a matter of formality to see that previous notification had each time been given in order to ensure immediate transport for the war material.

The Swedish government was also prepared to consent to the request for the transit of military personnel between Germany and various bases in Norway.

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2 Ibid., IX, 596.  
3 Ibid., IX, 619. 
4 The decision of the Swedish government to permit the transit of troops and war materials through its territory marked a definite departure from the policy of neutrality. The regulations concerning such practices were laid down by the Hague Convention of 1907 as follows: "Convention (V) Concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land," given in Briggs, The Law of Nations, pp. 1033-1034.

"Article 2. Belligerents are forbidden to move troops or convoys of either munitions of war or supplies across the territory of a neutral Power.

"Article 5. A neutral Power must not allow any of the acts referred to in articles 2 to 4 to occur on its territory.

"Article 11. A neutral Power which receives on its territory troops belonging to the belligerent armies shall intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war."

The Swedish government now seemed virtually prepared to abandon
Between June 19 and July 8, the details of the proposed transit agreements were settled through the exchange of notes and meetings between representatives of the two governments involved. During the progress of the negotiations, 150 troops on leave were transported weekly between Narvik and Germany, and two special trains weekly also transported troops between Kornsjö, a Norwegian border station southeast of Oslo, and Germany.\(^5\)

On July 8, 1940, the transit agreement was signed. Sweden in large measure acceded to the German demands while attempting to preserve some vestiges of neutrality to present to the outside world. The Swedish government would permit the shipment of Wehrmacht supplies, including war material, through Swedish territory from Germany to Norway. In accordance with Swedish regulations, the German government would always notify Sweden in advance when planning a shipment and secure the necessary transit permit.\(^6\) The Swedish government would also allow the conveyance of troops in uniform across Swedish territory as individual travelers or in groups, and in the latter case, the Swedish authorities would be informed ahead of time in order to facilitate preparations for the journey. Officers traveling on the trains in special compartments would be permitted to keep their pistols, but soldiers could have only

its neutrality in contrast to its attitude during the fighting in Norway. With some exceptions, the transit of troops allowed at that time was confined largely to humane purposes in accordance with Article 11 of the Convention: "A neutral Power may authorize the passage over its territory of the sick and wounded belonging to the belligerent armies, on condition that the trains bringing them shall carry neither personnel nor war material."

\(^5\)DGFP, X, 63.  \(^6\)Ibid., X, 14 and 158.
their bayonets. The rest of the arms belonging to the troops, including rifles and pistols, would be transported in separate trains. Foreign Minister Guenther was worried about the possibility of British bombing attacks on the rail lines used for the transit and promised the German representatives that anti-aircraft defenses along these routes would be strengthened.

Further details of the transit were arranged by agreement between the two governments. One train in each direction would be provided for the conveyance of troops on leave between Narvik and Trelleborg, the port in southern Sweden from which they would sail to Germany. This number was increased on September 14 to provide for "two trains weekly between Narvik and Trelleborg for each 500 men on leave." The number of trains on this line was later increased to three a week. Transportation was also to be continued between Kornsjö and Trelleborg with one train daily in both directions for each 500 men on leave. This was amended in September to provide "one train daily between Kornsjö and Trelleborg for each 1000 men on leave."

The entire matter of the transit of troops to and from Norway was approached by Sweden with the assumption that the total number of German forces in that country would not be increased by this measure. No more soldiers were to be permitted to travel to Norway than had previously returned from there. Guenther granted the concession for

7 Ibid., X, 158, and Joachim Joesten, "Phases in Swedish Neutrality," Foreign Affairs, XXIII (January, 1945), 327.
8 DGFP, X, 159n.
9 Ibid.
daily trains on various routes in spite of disapproval by the Riksdag and against his own belief that "daily German military trains on Swedish soil as a regular institution would . . . be incompatible with his efforts to maintain at least the outward appearance of neutrality." On this point German pressure triumphed over Guenther's reluctance.

In addition to the conveyance of troops between Norway and Germany, there was also what was referred to as the "horseshoe traffic." Because the rail line between Trondheim, in central Norway, and Narvik ran through Swedish territory, transportation of members of the Wehrmacht between these two locations was routed through Sweden from Storlien to Riksgränsen in the Narvik area. This traffic amounted to two trains weekly in each direction.

The Germans made extensive use of these concessions; by the end of 1940, the number of troops transported was "133,135 from, and 123,105 to Norway," although Christmas leave may have accounted for part of this traffic. A substantial amount of German equipment was also shipped to Norway during 1940; by December "450 vans of war material had passed through Sweden."12

While the transit discussions were in progress, German and Swedish representatives were also negotiating agreements concerning shipping and trade. A shipping agreement signed on June 20, 1940,

10Ibid., X, 123.


12Ibid.
provided for the transportation to Sweden of German coal exports. The coal was to be carried on the same Swedish ships which were used to transport iron ore from Luleå to German ports. This arrangement would free German ships, which would ordinarily carry the coal, for other uses.\(^\text{13}\)

Other economic discussions, lasting until July 10, concerned the clearing arrangements necessary for increased trade between Germany and Sweden during 1940. One facet of the agreement dealt with the expected increase in value of the exports which Sweden planned to sell to Germany in 1940:

The price arrangement, by which the cost of certain goods imported from Germany depended on the cost to Germany of Swedish iron ore was to continue. This arrangement was to apply to German deliveries of coal and coke, which was thus to benefit from the rise in prices.\(^\text{14}\)

The Swedish negotiators were anxious to secure a continuing supply of coal and coke; in the final agreement, Germany promised to send 4,000,000 tons of coal and 1,700,000 tons of coke to Sweden in 1940.\(^\text{15}\) Germany would also increase exports to Sweden of machinery and chemicals. For her part, Sweden agreed to increase her exports to Germany of ferrosilicate and pig-iron and to supply certain quantities of steel, timber, pulp, and lead and zinc ores.\(^\text{16}\)

In the latter part of June, when both the economic discussions and transit negotiations were being favorably considered by Sweden, the question of resuming the shipment of war materials to Sweden was suggested by the German foreign office. The shipments had been suspended

\(^{13}\) Medlicott, p. 621.  \(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.  \(^{16}\) Ibid., pp. 621-622.
in the beginning of May when Sweden refused to grant extensive concessions to Germany. Now that the Swedish attitude had become more flexible, there were solid reasons for relaxing this embargo. As a memorandum from the foreign ministry suggested on June 25:

Entirely apart from the very accommodating attitude which the Swedish Government showed in the last economic negotiations, a resumption of our deliveries of war material is essential in order to finance the German imports of ore and other urgently needed raw materials from Sweden.\(^{17}\)

On June 27, the foreign office was informed of the Fuehrer's decision that the war materials which Germany had withheld could now be released for export to Sweden.

On December 14, 1940, a new economic agreement to regulate trade between Germany and Sweden during 1941 was signed by representatives of the two governments. The amounts of German iron, coke and coal, and Swedish iron ore to be exported were to remain the same as in the previous year, but the price of the German goods would be increased from fifteen to twenty per cent, while the price of the Swedish ore would not fluctuate from its 1940 level.\(^{18}\)

In addition to the trade agreements with Germany, Sweden maintained her economic relations with the countries of occupied Europe and with other nations on the continent. On April 5, 1941, Sweden reached an agreement with the German authorities in Norway in which she promised to send 10,000 tons of grain to Norway in exchange for imports of fish and certain metals, including aluminum.\(^{19}\) Sweden also signed trade

\(^{17}\)DGFP, X, 15.

\(^{18}\)Medlicott, p. 622.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 584.
treaties during 1940 and 1941 with Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Hungary.

Outside of the German occupied areas, Sweden held trade negotiations with Finland, Turkey, Spain and the Soviet Union. In May, 1940, an agreement with the latter provided Sweden with "Russian oil and low-grade petrol," for which Sweden "in return was to bring similar American products to Vladivostok."²⁰

In spite of her isolated position, Sweden also maintained limited trade relations with Great Britain following the Norwegian invasion. Most of the economic negotiations were carried on through a "Joint Standing Committee" composed of an equal number of representatives from Great Britain and Sweden. The other Allied countries could also be invited to membership in the committee, as was the United States in 1942. The committee handled many details concerning the trade which continued between Sweden and Great Britain. A large part of its work included:

the consideration of individual applications of firms to effect imports and exports outside the terms of the war-trade agreement, and after the introduction of quotas, applications to effect imports and exports not provided for by the quotas. At times the assistance of the committee was used to keep Swedish trading activities under the control of Allied interests.²¹

The British were primarily concerned that raw materials imported into Sweden might later be re-exported to German-controlled areas in their original form or as manufactured goods, and attempted to bring pressure upon the Swedish government to discourage firms from engaging in this practice.

The problem of transportation between Sweden and the West was

²⁰Ibid., p. 628. ²¹Ibid., p. 619.
one of the difficulties faced by the committee. In the spring of 1940, when the German blockade cut off ship traffic to the West, Sweden leased a large part of her merchant fleet to Great Britain. During the remainder of that year, goods from the West reached Sweden via Petsamo and Vladivostok. On December 9, 1940, an agreement was signed providing for a certain amount of ship traffic between Britain and the Swedish port of Gothenburg. The Gothenburg agreement stipulated that "four ships would be allowed to pass in and out of the port each month, but no ship would be permitted to enter without a corresponding ship leaving port."

The ships were to follow specific routes and were not to submit to German contraband controls.

Since the ships would have to pass through German-controlled waters, it was essential for Sweden to obtain the consent of the German government. On February 7 and March 5, 1941, notes were exchanged between Stockholm and Berlin in which the Germans agreed to a certain amount of traffic between Sweden and the West. A German control office was to be established in Gothenburg, with the proviso that all data concerning the arrival and departure of the ships and the nature of their cargos would be submitted to the office by the Swedish maritime authorities.

The shipping arrangement worked well until the first of April when the Germans extended their zone of operations to include the area around Iceland. The Germans wanted the Swedish ships to follow a course midway between Iceland and the Faroes, but the British insisted on

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\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 629. \(^{23}\) DCBP, XIII, 117n.
passage through the Faroes and Skapen Fjord. For several months, the
Gothenburg traffic was at a standstill. From July 4 to July 8, German-
Swedish negotiations on the subject were held in Berlin. The German
authorities agreed to allow the continuation of the Gothenburg traffic
and the passage of ships through the Faroes, but warned that:

Within the area that is comprised within a circle with a
radius of 60 nautical miles with its center at Skapen the
traffic goes exclusively at Swedish risk. . . . a guarantee
for a safe trip by the ships through the German zone of
operations cannot be undertaken on the German part.\textsuperscript{24}

Five Swedish ships now in American ports would make the trip to Gothen-
burg via this route. Sweden agreed not to take cargo aboard or discharge
it near the Faroes, and to limit further trips through the German zone
of operations to no more than "twice a month in each direction."\textsuperscript{25}

Although the Gothenburg traffic primarily benefited Sweden, the
German government had good reasons for permitting it to continue. In
September, 1941, the German minister in Sweden discussed the value of
the traffic to Germany in terms of Sweden's increased "capacity to make
deliveries to Germany and Finland."\textsuperscript{26} The Germans also did not wish to
jeopardize their own trade agreements with Sweden by creating incidents
which might result in public pressure on the Swedish government to cur-
tail the concessions granted to Germany. At a Fuehrer conference on
September 17, it was announced that:


\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid.,} XIII, 565. Although Sweden had promised Great Britain
that she would not re-export goods to Germany, Minister zu Wied pointed
out that in August, Britain suspended the importation of American truck
parts to Sweden because the Swedes had delivered 500 trucks to Finland.
Within the entire (extended) blockade areas, all merchant vessels may be attacked without warning. Swedish vessels are excepted, in accordance with the special arrangement with Sweden.27

During the autumn of 1940, attention in the North was focused on a proposed alliance between Sweden and Finland. Following the conclusion of the Winter War between Russia and Finland, and prior to the Norwegian invasion, a defensive alliance between Norway, Sweden and Finland had become the subject of discussions among the northern countries, but the idea was shelved when the Soviet Union applied pressure by pointing out that Article Three of the treaty ending the Winter War expressly stated that Finland should refrain from entering into a coalition which might be aimed at Russia.28

However, interest in a northern alliance revived in October, 1940, when Sweden initiated talks on the subject with the Finnish government. On this occasion the Swedes proposed a political as well as military union with Finland, which would have far-reaching implications for the northern countries. The Swedish government stressed that it would not sanction a war of revenge against Russia and hoped that in this case Swedish moderation might prevail upon the Soviet Union to soften its attitude toward a Finnish alliance.

27Fuehrer Conferences, 1941, II, 44.

28Mannerheim, p. 394. Mannerheim asserts that: "The veto of the Soviet Union was to prove to be a mistake. As events were to show, the failure of the alliance to materialize was only to benefit Hitler, whose attack on Scandinavia consequently did not result in united opposition from Sweden and Norway. It may be doubted if Hitler would ever have attacked Norway if he had known that it would lead to an open conflict with Sweden and Finland. A defensive alliance would automatically have carried us over to the camp of Germany's enemies. Tied to the defensive policy of Sweden and Norway, Finland, though mutilated and weakened, could have guaranteed the security of Leningrad."
The German government, for its part, determined to treat the matter with restraint. On November 7, instructions sent to the legation in Sweden stated that: "The Foreign Minister requests you to keep entirely aloof for the time being from all plans for a Finnish-Swedish rapprochement." On December 5, the Swedish explorer and self-styled diplomat, Sven Hedin, had a meeting with Hitler in Berlin and argued the merits of the Finnish alliance. When Hitler remarked that the peace treaty with Russia precluded such a proposal, Hedin answered that perhaps a secret understanding between the two countries might be the answer. This aroused the Fuehrer to expound on the dangers of such a course, pointing out that:

Even the most secret agreements always leak out and soon become common property. . . . Any step in that direction would only make Russia nervous and Moscow would regard it as a provocation. . . . I advise Finland to carry out the Moscow Peace down to the smallest detail and to do nothing that might give rise to fresh misunderstandings and unpleasantness.

The Soviet Union ultimately took the initiative in subverting the planned alliance. Twice during the month of December, Molotov met with the Finnish minister in Moscow and reiterated the Soviet stand against a northern coalition, declaring that it was contrary to the terms of the peace treaty. At the same time, Molotov made certain that the Swedish government understood plainly his warnings to Finland. Because of this Soviet pressure and the lack of encouragement from Germany, the project was ultimately abandoned.

29 DGFP, XI, 478n.

As Hitler had indicated to Sven Hedin, a difficult situation in the North, which was bound to arouse Russia's displeasure, was not consistent with his own wishes at the moment. In December, 1940, he was engaged in preparing the directives for Operation Barbarossa, the planned invasion of the Soviet Union, and did not wish to approach the problem with an irate Molotov breathing down the necks of the Scandinavian countries. Hitler had his own plans for Sweden and Finland, whom he hoped to have as his allies in the approaching conflict with the Soviet Union. On December 18, Directive Number 21 for Operation Barbarossa was issued in which the proposed roles of both countries were defined. According to this pronouncement, Finland would operate jointly with German troops to be transported from Norway via Swedish roads and railways, which Hitler hoped would be made available for this purpose. In formulating his plans for Operation Barbarossa, Hitler intended to utilize Sweden's traditional distrust of the Soviet Union as well as exploiting Finland's desire to recover her territory lost to the Soviet Union in the Winter War.

On February 3, at a conference of the German operations staff, General Halder announced a plan to transport one and a half troop divisions from Norway to northern Finland, provided Sweden would cooperate. Hitler then interjected his assumption:

that Sweden will participate for the price of the cession of the Aaland Islands. A Swedish-Finnish union will not be considered, because it does not fit into the new order of Europe.31


32DGFP, XII, 12.
During the first quarter of 1941, the number of German military personnel traveling north through Sweden, in accordance with the transit agreement, rose in proportion to those journeying south. A move to strengthen the German garrison in Norway was apparently underway. On March 1, Guenther protested to Minister zu Wied that "transport of German troops in a south-north direction was exceeding the permitted figures."33 On March 11, in response to a German request, Guenther agreed to renewed discussions of the transit arrangements.

As part of the attack against the Soviet Union, the Germans planned to commit two divisions in central Finland. In a memorandum of March 19, the German envoy in charge of the transit negotiations, Ambassador Ritter, stated that:

The two divisions are to be brought through Sweden by rail to Finland to the area north of the Gulf of Bothnia. They are to join one or two Finnish divisions there. . . . As camouflage Sweden is to be told that the mountain divisions now in northern Norway are to be later relieved by ship since they are needed elsewhere. In their place two infantry divisions are, as stated above, to be transported through Sweden by rail, with the decision to be reserved for later on whether the remaining distance through Finland to northern Norway will be covered by automobile transport via the Arctic Highway or whether part of it will go to Narvik via Swedish railway.34

Negotiations would begin immediately in Stockholm under the direction of Minister Schmure, who had been instrumental in securing the original transit concessions.

On March 21, the German legation in Stockholm reported that Guenther had declined permission for a large German replacement force to travel via Swedish railways, but had suggested instead that the

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33Ibid., XII, 320n.  
34Ibid., XII, 320.
troops be transported through Swedish territorial waters. Guenther insisted that Sweden did not feel threatened by the German reinforcements. "What was important for Sweden, however, was the equality of the railway transports in each direction." A one-sided transport such as the Germans were requesting would be incompatible with the terms of the transit agreement. In his decision, Guenther was undoubtedly reacting to criticisms of the government's policy which had recently appeared in the Swedish press. After March 23, the amount of German rail traffic going to Norway through Sweden decreased to a rate more in accordance with the provisions of the transit treaty.

In April, various German officials sought to probe the possibility of active Swedish participation in case of a renewal of the Finnish-Russian dispute. On April 23, the German military attaché talked with Colonel Kellgren, who was head of the Swedish office for liaison with foreign military attachés. Kellgren "assured him that in case of a renewed Russian attack on Finland, Sweden would give active aid to Finland." The situation would be more difficult in case of a conflict between Germany and Russia, although Swedish military leaders were taking the possibility into consideration. The Swedish government was displaying a more cautious attitude than the military planners. The military attaché's report was studied carefully by State Secretary von Weizsaecker, who agreed that Sweden's intervention would be more likely if Finland were attacked first by Russian forces. As Weizsaecker analyzed the situation:

35 Ibid., XII, 322. 36 Ibid., XII, 620.
As long as Swedish policy believes that we are confronting it with the choice between Berlin and London it will have great difficulties in domestic politics.

However, if we confront Sweden with the choice between Berlin and Moscow then the Swedish decision is clear. It would therefore probably be easier and more successful to institute conversations with Sweden in the military sector than in the general political sector.  

On April 25, Bluecher, the German minister in Finland, reported that Foreign Minister Guenther was coming to Helsinki for talks with Finnish officials. It was believed that Guenther would try to discourage Finland from allying militarily with Germany and that Sweden would not actively support Finland unless the Finns were attacked first by the Soviet Union.

Between April and June, the Germans continued their approaches to Sweden, attempting to win concessions which would facilitate the forthcoming invasion. The extent of their success may be judged by the text of the Directive issued on June 17 by the High Command of the Wehrmacht concerning expected Swedish assistance in Operation Barbarossa. Swedish military forces would not participate in the invasion, but far-reaching concessions were anticipated. The Directive assumed that Sweden would permit one division of German troops to journey across her territory to the Finnish front, as well as allowing the continuation of the transit between Trondheim and Narvik. Sweden would also furnish "motorized transportation" and safe passage through her territorial waters for supplies enroute to Finland. The Germans planned to send transport experts to Sweden at the beginning of hostilities to coordinate

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37 Ibid., XII, 629.  
38 Ibid., XII, 633.  
the various German and Swedish transport activities. The Directive also stated that Sweden would allow German use of her "communications network." Transit flights over Swedish territory by German airplanes would be permitted and Sweden would make available facilities for emergency landings.

The Directive also discussed "questions of armaments and supply." It was expected that Sweden would allow the purchase of motor vehicles by Germany and Finland, and would furnish other supplies, ranging from arms and ammunition to non-military goods, such as foodstuffs. Sweden was expected to furnish the Wehrmacht with a "tank depot" in the northern part of the country.

The German military leaders assumed that Sweden would mobilize troops at the beginning of the invasion, but hoped that these measures would not impede the progress of German troops in transit. The Germans would expect the Swedish forces to afford protection for the German transports while they were crossing Swedish territory. The Swedish navy would cooperate in laying mine barriers and in defending the Swedish coastline from attack. Sweden would make weather reports available to German authorities, but would withhold them from the Soviet Union. Beacon lights along the coast would be turned on to aid navigation, and lights would also be provided for purposes of aerial navigation. Airplanes and crews which had been forced down on Swedish territory would not be interned; instead Sweden would assist German efforts to repair and salvage the planes.

These, then, were Germany's expectations when on June 22, forces of the Wehrmacht crossed the border into the Soviet Union. On the same
day the Germans presented Foreign Minister Guenther with a list of military requests which he promised to bring immediately to the government's attention. The primary item, which was jointly requested by Finland, concerned the transfer of one fully-armed German division from Oslo across Sweden to Finland. Guenther, with the active support of King Gustav V and Prime Minister Hansson, attempted to persuade the rest of the Swedish government to grant the German wishes. The Swedish cabinet was divided on the issue and a political crisis was narrowly averted when the king threatened to abdicate if a favorable decision was not reached.\(^{10}\) On June 25, Minister zu Wied was informed by the king that the transit of a single division would be permitted. It was emphasized, however, that this was to be a one-time concession and would not be repeated. The same afternoon the train carrying the Engelbrecht Division left Oslo and on June 26, crossed the Swedish frontier.

While these negotiations between Germany and Sweden were in progress, Finland was being subjected to repeated Soviet provocations. On June 26, Russian planes bombed Finnish ports and airbases and the Finns once again declared war on the Soviet Union.

The entry of Finland into the conflict was used by Sweden to justify the transit concession granted to Germany. On June 26, a report appearing in *The New York Times* quoted a Swedish government spokesman as saying that in deciding to allow the transit, the government was cognizant of the "special relations" between Sweden and Finland. He went on to say that in this case, Sweden was more neutral than in the

Winter War, but upon further questioning admitted that the Swedish con-
cession constituted "a slight deviation from neutrality." The
spokesman denied that Germany had requested bases in Sweden or the
cooperation of the Swedish navy.

In spite of Swedish attempts to minimize the extent of the as-
sistance provided to the German-Finnish forces in the ensuing conflict,
German documents provide a slightly different view of the situation.

On June 27, the legation in Sweden reported that:

The movement of supplies to Finland on every technically
practical scale has been approved by the Swedish government.
... Preparations are now being hastened to organize a route
to Finland over Swedish railroads to the Swedish ports of Gävle
and Sundsvall on the Gulf of Bothnia. From there the goods would
be transported by sea to Finnish ports.

Toward the end of June, agreements were concluded in which both
the Swedish air force and navy granted certain concessions to the German
counterparts. The Swedish navy agreed to mine the passage west of the
Aaland Islands, which in turn would be connected on the west to the
German mine field at Öland. This was done on June 28, effectively
closing the passage to Russian shipping. The Swedish navy also promised
to provide convoy service, beginning on June 30, for German ships sail-
ing in Swedish territorial waters. Sweden would not allow Russian war-
ships to enter her territorial waters. The provisions of international
law were deliberately cast aside when Sweden agreed that German naval
forces would not be interned if "they exceed the period of stay in


\[42\] DQFP, XIII, 30.
Swedish territorial waters permitted by international law."\textsuperscript{43}

An agreement between the Luftwaffe and the Swedish air force set up the procedures to be followed in case German planes had to make forced landings on Swedish territory. Certain airfields were to be used by the Germans for this purpose, and maps of the designated landing strips would be sent to Luftwaffe headquarters. The Swedish authorities would provide fuel and emergency repairs, and pilots forced to land would not be interned. Permission was also granted for German courier aircraft to fly over Swedish territory. The planes would be considered civilian aircraft and would fly identifying pennants. The flights were to be announced at least two hours in advance so the Swedish air force could be notified and the planes must follow previously designated routes. Two routes were established between Norway, Finland and Germany and the flight schedule called for: "one plane over each route and in each direction, or two planes on one route in each direction, daily."\textsuperscript{44} Swedish consent must be obtained in case a German air unit should be transferred to Finland over Swedish territory and intermediate landing fields established for this purpose. The Swedes also agreed not to broadcast weather reports which might benefit the Russian forces. If the Germans needed detailed reports, they would be sent via the closed circuit communications at the legation in Stockholm.

On September 15, an additional agreement concerning courier flights established two routes between Norway and Finland and two between

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., XIII, 50. For the complete naval agreement, see pp. 48-50.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., XIII, 46. The entire text of the agreement is given on pp. 45-48.
Germany and Finland. Other points of settlement included technical
details of communications, advance notice of flights, overnight stops
and night flights. It was emphasized that the planes were to be un-
armed and flown by civilian crews. 45

Although Sweden's policy in this phase of the war displayed a
considerable acquiescence to German demands, the Swedish government
persistently attempted to maintain its freedom of action. The transfer
of the Engelbrecht division across Sweden had been granted primarily
because Finland as well as Germany had requested it, but the Swedes
refused to allow the transit of military personnel on leave from Fin-
land. The permission for courier flights over Swedish territory was
also granted to the Allies, although it was used less extensively by
the western powers owing to the geographical limitations. Humanitarian
aid was once again sent to Finland, but no volunteer organizations were
officially sanctioned, as in the Winter War, to fight for the Finnish
cause. Only a few individual Swedish volunteers crossed the border to
join the Finns. Since in this instance, Finland's war had become part
of the general European conflagration, the Swedes wished to avoid giv-
ing the impression that they were unneutral in the conflict. In a
speech on July 27, 1941, Per Edvin Sköld, the Swedish minister of de-
fense, explained his country's position.

Our line is to try to keep out of the war and we will stick
to this course with iron determination. It cannot be said that
if Sweden grants one belligerent power certain privileges, we
therby have given up our national independence. These conces-
sions do not affect our sovereignty, and that is where we draw
the line. 46

In Hitler’s ideological schemes, he had visions of Sweden as a northern partner in the new order which he dreamed of establishing in Europe. In a Fuehrer conference on September 6, 1940, speaking specifically of Sweden and Finland, he had defined this union as a one in which:

the individual members have a certain sovereignty (diplomatic representation, etc.) and have armed forces trained and equipped by them but organized on the pattern of the German Armed Forces. Otherwise, however, they should be both politically and economically closely connected with Germany.\textsuperscript{47}

Simultaneously, the German leaders were always quick to emphasize that any arrangements of this nature would not interfere with the customs or national freedom of the Swedish people. Speaking to Sven Hedin at a dinner party in October, 1940, the German state secretary, von Weizsaecker, explained that the new order would be concerned primarily with an economic reorganization which would see the elimination of customs barriers and might be termed a "continuation and consummation of Napoleon’s Continental System."\textsuperscript{48} He also assured Hedin that no compulsion would be exerted on Sweden, and the alliance would not interfere in any way with Sweden’s independence.

The Swedes, however, did not prove responsive to such proposals. For a time the Germans hoped to draw Sweden into the realm of the Tripartite Pact, but the Swedish government appeared to veto this idea.\textsuperscript{49}

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\textsuperscript{47} Fuehrer Conferences, 1940, Vol. II, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{48} Hedin, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{49} Halder, IV, 229, and VI, 216 and 272; DGFP, XIII, 93-94.
between Germany and Sweden might be approved by the Swedes met with a flat rejection by Ribbentrop.  

The beginning of July, 1941, saw the resumption of economic discussions between Sweden and Germany. On July 2, the German minister was handed a list of military equipment desired by the Swedish government. The memorandum was forwarded to Berlin to be considered by the proper economic and military officials. On July 10, the Economic Policy Department reported that an OKW negotiator would bring the German answer to Stockholm that week.

The Germans refused to grant licenses for airplane engines or delivery of some aircraft ordered by Sweden, although they did agree to release aircraft motors captured from French stocks. The Swedes had requested the delivery of tanks from Germany in exchange for spare parts for tanks, but the German reply was largely negative. The Germans made several small concessions, but the general tone of the response evidenced an unwillingness to meet the Swedish requests. This occasioned a complaint from the legation in Sweden, in which Schnurre, the principal economic negotiator, stated that he had been forced to call off economic discussions temporarily because the OKW "does not wish to make any concessions at all without new massive Swedish counterservices."  

The negotiations for a new Swedish-German trade agreement for 1942 were scheduled to begin in Berlin in October, and German economic

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50 DGFP, XIII, 96.  
51 Ibid., XIII. The Swedish requests are given on pp. 68-69, and the German response on pp. 118-119.  
52 Ibid., XIII, 124.
experts met on August 28 to discuss the prospects of a Swedish agree­ment. Germany faced the problem of a clearing deficit brought about by the low volume of German exports to Sweden in comparison to the amount that Sweden exported to Germany, and a clearing credit would have to be obtained from the Swedish government. The German economists emphasized that the lack of German exports was reflected by fewer Swedish exports vital to the war effort; this was particularly noticeable in the lumber and steel industries and in the production of vessels ordered by Germany from Swedish shipyards. To alleviate the situation, a special priority would be placed on German exports destined for Sweden. The question of war material deliveries would be re-examined:

in the light of the known list of items that the Swedes want, and particularly from the view-point of how far we might still be able to go in offering captured material.\(^{53}\)

The problem with captured material lay in delivering it to Sweden, but it was suggested that the Swedes might agree to transport it themselves.

Preparations for the economic negotiations continued through September. The legation in Sweden reported that the Swedes appeared willing to extend credit "to cover existing and anticipated clearing deficits," and might facilitate matters by "advance payments on future German deliveries."\(^{54}\) The amount of credit promised actually fell short of German requirements, but the economic advisors were optimistic that a better arrangement could be obtained. The legation advised setting up a regular sub-committee to handle war-economy orders since the current situation:

\(^{53}\text{Ibid.},\ \text{XIII, 406} \quad ^{54}\text{Ibid.},\ \text{XIII, 546}.
gets the Swedes into the habit of saying no to irregular requests and by bringing private Swedish firms into the picture makes it possible for the enemy intelligence service to find out where German shortages exist.\textsuperscript{55}

The sub-committee should include among its membership one individual who was familiar with the present trade policy, and another from the OKW to represent military interests.

While the economists attempted to obtain a favorable settlement from the Swedish government, the military and political experts were also engaged in negotiations to further their particular aims. On July 31, the German envoy Schnurre and the Finnish minister in Sweden met separately with Foreign Minister Guenther and requested the transit of another German troop division through Sweden. The following day, Guenther informed them that the cabinet had refused to permit the overland transport of troops, but recommended instead that the division be shipped to Finland via Swedish territorial waters. The Swedes pointed out that this route had already been used by the Germans; for example, in the previous three days six German troop carriers had sailed through Swedish waters. This coastal traffic was under the protective escort of the Swedish navy, and with such transport available the Swedes saw no reason to allow the use of the land route.\textsuperscript{56} On August 4, Ribbentrop informed the legation that the OKW found this acceptable, and in September, a convoy carrying the German division passed through Swedish territorial waters.

The Swedish government continued to disallow troop transports to Finland, but on August 5, Schnurre reported that Guenther would expand

\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Tbid.}, XIII, 547-548. \textsuperscript{56}\textit{Tbid.}, XIII, 273.
the application of the original transit agreement signed on July 8, 1940, to include the "unrestricted transport of materials over Swedish railroads to Haparanda," a border town between Sweden and Finland.57

The furlough traffic between Germany and Norway and the shipment of supplies on Swedish railroads continued in spite of several incidents which evoked protests from the Swedish government. On July 19, 1941, a German ammunition train loaded with artillery shells exploded at the station in Krylbo, injuring several persons. On August 6, a captured British air force officer was discovered by Swedish authorities on one of the furlough trains from Norway. The Swedes, however, did not release the officer, but permitted him to continue to Germany, meanwhile making known:

their earnest wish that on the German side care be taken lest the captured English officer communicate to England the fact of his transportation over Swedish territory in a German furlough train by letter or any other means at his next opportunity.58

The German military leaders also wished to obtain supplies in Sweden for the German divisions in Finland. On September 22, Fuehrer Directive Number 36 concerning the conduct of the war in northern Finland emphasized that trucks would be "bought or hired in Sweden in order to shift the supply route of the Mountain Corps to the Arctic Highway."59 The other urgent need was for tents and stoves for use in sub-zero weather. On October 23, the legation reported that the Swedish army had agreed to release 2000 tents equipped with stoves to be delivered

in three days at the Finnish border. The trucks were more difficult to obtain. It was first reported that Sweden would be willing to lease over 1000 trucks, but without tires. The Swedes finally agreed to lease 300 trucks, equipped with tires, with the provision that Germany would deliver fifty tons of buna, or artificial rubber, to Sweden "to compensate for the wear on the tires." On the first trip, the trucks would be used to transport a shipment of wooden barracks to Finland and return to Sweden with a load of nickel ore from Petsamo.

On November 20, Minister zu Wied complained to Guenther about Sweden's refusal to furnish wool or leather goods needed for winter fighting in Finland. Guenther explained that since many of the raw materials came from Great Britain, such products could not be re-exported for fear the British would halt the Gothenburg traffic. Guenther pointed out, in this connection, that the fuel imported via the Gothenburg route "was eking out the supplies of the Swedish navy, which, since the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, was rendering continual convoy service for German troops and goods." Therefore, it was also in Germany's interest to see that the British were not unduly antagonized. On December 7, Great Britain declared war on Finland. This action did not change Sweden's attitude toward the Finns, but they were now forced to be more cautious about supplying Finland with materials originating in the West. Zu Wied observed that new Finnish-German requests might meet with more success if presented by Finnish representatives and through regular diplomatic channels. As he pointed out:

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60DGFP, XIII, 675.  
61Ibid., XIII, 804.
It is quite obvious and natural that the alarm button will be pressed as soon as Herr Schnurre applies at the Swedish Legation in Berlin for a renewed visa and that the "Swedish Hedgehog" . . . will then immediately roll itself up and present all its spines.  

That Sweden did not always prove amenable to German demands is illustrated by the case of several Norwegian cargo ships which since the Norwegian invasion had lain at anchor in the Swedish ports of Gothenburg and Malmo. In July, 1941, a rumor that the ships planned to break out and escape to Great Britain prompted the German foreign ministry to remonstrate with the Swedish government. A few months previously some of the ships had managed to escape, and the Germans warned that a repetition of this would result in the cancellation of the Gothenburg agreement. The Swedes did not wish to take overt action against the ship's crews, however, and suggested that the matter might best be settled through the Swedish courts. The Swedish government proposed that the Norwegian shipping firms should send captains to bring the ships to Norway. The ships had already been requisitioned by the Norwegian government-in-exile, so the Norwegian legation would certainly object to this measure and the case could be brought to court. If the courts upheld the Norwegian government:

then the shipping firms should propose detention of the ships on the argument that the right to dispose of the ships was a matter of dispute and with the aim of getting a judicial decision on the right to dispose of ships.  

The ensuing litigation would keep the ships in Gothenburg until the problem could be settled. The Germans were not completely satisfied with this approach, but they were assured by Guenther that the ships

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62Ibid., XIII, 977.  
63Ibid., XIII, 278.
would not be allowed to escape.

On September 8, zu Wied visited Guenther and protested that the judicial procedures were too time-consuming and he feared the "danger of sabotage." The Germans could not understand why the Swedes would not forcibly remove the crews and put new ones on board, although Guenther explained that he wished to do everything in accordance with Swedish laws. On September 11, Guenther reiterated his decision to settle the issue through the courts. The judicial procedure was somewhat complex and the case of each individual vessel would have to be decided separately, but once a precedent was set it would not take long to dispose of the remaining cases. The shipowners could demand police protection if they were afraid of sabotage.

At this point the Germans felt they had two alternatives: they could accept the Swedish view or prepare to let the ships break out and hope to recapture them at sea. A decision was imperative because it was reported that three of the ships had nearly completed preparations to break out. On September 17, Guenther informed the German legation that the Norwegian government—in-exile had chartered the ships to Great Britain. It was also rumored that the ships had English captains on board and that one vessel, the Dicto, was preparing to load a cargo of war material. The Germans then demanded that the ships be returned to the Norwegian shipowners, "immediately and without recourse to judicial proceedings." Until this occurred, the ships were not to leave port.

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64 Ibid., XIII, 465.  
65 Ibid., XIII, 476.  
66 Ibid., XIII, 522.
The same ruling applied to Norwegian ships currently under construction in Swedish shipyards which were to be turned over to the Norwegian firms upon completion. Guenther argued that compliance with the German demands would be inconsistent with Swedish neutrality. He insisted that if the cases were brought to trial, the ships could be detained by arrest until a decision was reached. On September 19, the legation reported that the ship-owner had made a motion for the arrest of one of the ship's captains, and the arrest had taken place within twenty-four hours.  

While these proceedings continued, the Germans lost no opportunity to let the Swedish government know that they considered Sweden's policy an affront to German interests. On September 19, Schnurre lectured Guenther for some time on Sweden's "negative attitude" and once more threatened to cut off the Gothenburg traffic.  

Ambassador Ritter, in instructions to the German legation, complained that:  

The facts that the Norwegian ships have apparently been chartered to England for a long time, that English captains are on board and that, as is being said, war materials for England are being loaded on individual ships have evoked a most unfavorable impression with the Reich Government. . . . It follows from this that the Swedish Government has not dealt openly with us.  

He further stated that the Swedish government:  

recognizes the right of disposition of a third party [the exiled Norwegian Government], it protects charter contracts which were concluded against the wishes of the owners, and it demands of the shipowners that they prove their clear and primary legal claims before the courts.  

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67 Ibid., XIII, 522n.  
68 Ibid., XIII, 523n.  
69 Ibid., XIII, 530.  
70 Ibid.
On September 26, Ribbentrop talked with the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, Counselor von Post, and accused the Swedes of stabbing Germany in the back by recognizing British interests in the case. Ribbentrop pointed out that since Great Britain was fighting on the side of Bolshevism, "every action by Sweden favoring England was something on the order of suicide." 71

The Germans also sought means of coercion to force the recalcitrant Swedes into a policy more compatible with German interests. The director of the Economic Policy Department requested the legation to submit a review "of our economic relations with Sweden with special regard to what possibilities we have for putting the thumbscrews on the Swedes." 72 The legation responded immediately, but the results were hardly encouraging. In the report, Minister Schmurre summarized the extent of Swedish exports to Germany in the past year, mentioning also the Swedish concessions for the transit of goods overland to Norway and Finland and the convoy services through Swedish territorial waters. German counter-deliveries were cited, but as Schmurre admitted, they were insufficient to compensate for the amount of raw material and finished products exported from Sweden. Moreover, increased deliveries from Sweden during the coming year were largely dependent on an extension of credit to bridge the German deficit. Schmurre felt that pressure could be applied upon Sweden by withholding German supplies of coal and armaments, but by so doing:

71 Ibid., XIII, 585.
72 Ibid., XIII, 531.
we would disrupt the German-Swedish trade on which we depend to a much greater extent than do the Swedes. I would therefore advise against stopping the shipment of coal and other deliveries to Sweden, because we would thereby defeat our plan of making Sweden the arsenal of Germany. Under the circumstances, the best method for effecting reprisals would be to strike at the Gothenburg traffic which Sweden depended upon for many of her raw materials. This Germany could do with less harm to her own interests, although Schnurre admitted that Germany also derived benefits from the traffic.

The Economic Policy Department concurred with Schnurre's views and forwarded the report to Ribbentrop. However, no action to shut off the traffic was forthcoming, as the Germans were still not anxious to antagonize the Swedes. On October 1, it was reported that a Swedish court of appeals had approved the arrest of one of the ships and had thereby established a precedent which would probably be applied in the other cases. There also seemed no immediate danger that the ships would attempt to break out of the ports. On November 13, the British protested that the Swedish courts were favoring German interests in the ships. The cases were still involved in litigation at the end of 1941, and it seemed that the matter would be tied up indefinitely. In April, 1942, some of the vessels attempted to escape to the West, but the breakout proved unsuccessful.

In November, 1941, as discussions concerning the renewal of the

73Ibid., XIII, 533.

74Fuhrer Conferences, 1942, p. 40. The attempted breakout was reported at a Fuhrer conference on April 13, but the details were not noted in the record of the proceedings.
German-Swedish trade agreement were in progress, the Swedish government sent a memorandum to the Economic Policy Department enumerating Swedish services and concessions granted to Germany since the outbreak of the war in 1939. The note, designed to strengthen Sweden's bargaining position in the negotiations, listed among other items the extensive transport facilities provided for Wehrmacht troops on leave journeys; from July 1940 to November 1, 1941, 670,000 men had been conveyed across Swedish territory between Germany and Norway, or via the "horse-shoe traffic" between Narvik and Trondheim. A vast quantity of supplies, including military equipment, was also transported across Sweden every month to bases in Norway. The Swedish government had also granted transit privileges to individual members of the Wehrmacht passing through Sweden between Norway and Finland; up to November 1, 5,100 passengers had been transported between Storlien on the Norwegian border and Haparanda on the Finnish frontier. In this same period, 5,000 carloads of military equipment had crossed Sweden to Haparanda. Wehrmacht couriers traveling in Sweden had been granted considerable freedom of movement by the Swedish authorities.

At least seventy ships transporting troops and war material to Finland had passed through Swedish territorial waters escorted by Swedish naval vessels and aircraft. German courier planes made extensive use of the special flight privileges granted by Sweden, and hospital planes and trains carried wounded German soldiers from Finland to Norway. To facilitate the transit of material to Finland, Sweden had

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75 DOFP, XIII. The text of the Swedish note is given on pp. 927-930.
permitted the installation of supply depots in the area of Luleå. Supplies were transported from there to Finland in trucks leased from the Swedish army which had also provided the Wehrmacht with tents and stoves for winter use.

Trade between Sweden and Germany had expanded in value from 799.7 million kronor in 1938 to between 1,800 and 1,900 million kronor in 1941. For 1942, the Swedes had granted credit to Germany of 100 million kronor to cover the clearing deficit from 1941. Many Swedish exports to Germany were now carried in Swedish vessels, freeing German ships for other uses. Since the port facilities at Narvik had been extensively damaged in 1940, the Swedes had exported 45,000 tons of iron ore per day from the alternate port of Luleå. The harbor at Narvik had been partially restored, however, due to the efforts of the Granesberg firm, one of the principal exporters of Swedish iron ore. The Swedish note also cited the delivery of supplies to Finland as a major contribution to the war effort there. During 1941, Sweden sent quantities of flour, potatoes, meat, butter and molasses, as well as other foodstuffs. Finland had been allowed credits to the amount of 300 million kronor. War material delivered to Finland included ammunition, powder, signal equipment, and other military supplies.

The German economists recognized Germany's dependence on Swedish goods and services by agreeing to the delivery of much of the war material previously requested by the Swedish government. In a secret protocol signed on December 8, Germany agreed to supply 15,000 binoculars, 11,000 field telescopes, 2000 light machine guns with accessories and ammunition, 110 light field howitzers with ammunition, three batteries of
long-barreled Skoda cannons with ammunition, a quantity of pistol ammunition, and shortwave transmitters and receivers. Delivery of many of the requested items would be divided into monthly installments. The Germans were also considering granting licenses for the manufacture of some of the ammunition and radio equipment in lieu of making deliveries. On December 19, the protocol was supplemented by a general German-Swedish economic agreement concerning trade between the two countries in 1942.

Toward the end of 1941, Hitler became convinced that the British were planning an attack on Norway with the object of recapturing Narvik and threatening the Swedish ore fields. He ordered defenses in Norway strengthened, and also planned to increase the naval and air forces in that area. On January 22, 1942, at a Fuehrer conference, Hitler reported that an Allied attack seemed imminent and that Sweden could be expected to support the Allies in return for "Narvik and ore deposits near Petsamo." Hitler also foresaw a threat to German shipping in the Baltic if the British established a foothold in the North.

Germany at that time had several capital ships, including the battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and the cruiser Prinz Eugen, stationed at Brest on the northwestern coast of France. These vessels were needed to defend Norwegian shipping, but to reach Norway or Germany they would have to pass through the English Channel, risking possible British attack. After much hesitation, Hitler finally decided to transfer the ships. On February 11 and 12, the ships escaped undetected.

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76 Ibid., XIII, 988-989.
77 Fuehrer Conferences, 1942, p. 6.
through the Channel, making the voyage to Germany intact. The German naval forces in Norway were reinforced in the spring of 1942, and Hitler's fear of a British attack in that area diminished for the time being.

It was during 1942 that signs of friction between Germany and Sweden became evident. The German build-up in Norway convinced many Swedish military leaders that this activity pointed to an invasion of their own country, and in February Sweden's forces were mobilized to meet an expected attack. The Swedish military establishment had been vastly enlarged since 1939, with increased appropriations being spent for armaments and war material. While no German invasion materialized during the crisis in February, many Swedes continued to fear Germany's designs on Sweden, and at several times during the war fears of invasion led to immediate mobilization.

That Hitler was becoming increasingly displeased with Sweden's attitude was evident. In July, 1942, the German SS Chief, Himmler, informed his personal physician and confidant, Dr. Felix Kersten, that Hitler had requested him to approach the Finnish government with the proposition that Finland should invade and occupy Sweden. Himmler stated:

'It is an impossible situation, this of having a neutral foreign body in the midst of Adolf Hitler's Greater Germany. It gives our enemies too many opportunities for countering our aims. Sweden is the happy hunting ground of English spies. Part of the Swedish press is openly anti-German. Sweden withholds from us many of her valuable stores of riches, owned, some of them, by foreign capital. With the monopoly of those stores, Germany's war effort would be greatly strengthened.78

78 Felix Kersten, The Memoirs of Doctor Felix Kersten (Garden
In return for her cooperation:

Finland would receive the northern half of Sweden, the areas with a Finnish population and the Norwegian harbour of Kirkenes, while Germany would annex central and southern Sweden to the Greater German Reich.79

The Finnish foreign minister, Witting, was horrified by the proposal and refused to consider such an idea, but he kept the Germans waiting for an answer by stating that the question could not be decided until the Finnish Parliament met in November.

The attitude of the Swedish press was one thorn in the side of German officialdom which at times became particularly irritating. The Swedish government did bring pressure to tone down anti-German publications at the beginning of the war, and the Germans exerted their own influence by cancelling advertisements of German firms which regularly appeared in the Swedish papers. However, censorship was not complete; news of the treatment of Norwegians by German occupation troops led to much irate criticism in the Swedish press, and the general tone of the articles became increasingly anti-German in 1942 as Germany experienced military reverses in the Soviet Union and North Africa. The failure to control Swedish public opinion was grudgingly acknowledged by Dr.


Dr. Kersten was a Finn who practiced a form of medicine which he referred to as "Psycho-Neural Therapy," which consisted of the manipulation of the nerve endings aimed toward relaxing the nerves of the patient. Himmler came to rely heavily upon this treatment and Kersten used his position to aid various Scandinavian and Jewish prisoners of the Reich. This will be dealt with more extensively in the next chapter. This book is the narrative account written by Kersten at the close of the war.

79Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, 1940-1945 (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1956), p. 143. This is a different edition dealing with the same material, but published later by Kersten in diary form.
Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister, when he wrote on April 21, 1943:

The Swedish press, especially the section hostile to the Axis, is indulging in language that it dares to use only because our military position is not very secure at the moment. But one day there will be a change—and then we can talk differently to Sweden.80

The motion pictures shown in Sweden also exhibited a disregard for the wishes of Dr. Goebbels. Most productions were either Scandinavian, English, or American in origin, in spite of a ready availability of German-made films.

The unsympathetic attitude increasingly displayed by the Swedish press and public opinion toward the Nazi cause was an indication of a gradual trend in German-Swedish relations, a cooling off of the cooperation between the two governments which had been displayed up through the beginning of 1942. Although Germany still remained the predominant power in the North and was able to exact certain concessions from the Swedish government, each German military setback left the Swedes with a measure of doubt in the wisdom of a policy tied too closely to German interests and a renewed desire to resist further encroachments on Sweden’s neutrality.

The Swedish government did not make any sudden moves to throw off German influence, however, and most of the changes in policy came about as a gradual evolution. It was not until August, 1943, that the Swedes actually defied the Führer by suspending the major provisions of the transit agreement, or until 1944 that trade between Germany and Sweden was significantly reduced. By then Hitler was on the defensive

and could do little more than include Sweden as a target of his polemics. By the beginning of 1944, an active German policy toward Sweden had been largely superseded by one of reaction, and as German threats increased in volume, their effectiveness was lost as Sweden turned her attention to Allied counter-arguments.
CHAPTER IV

THE DECLINE OF GERMAN INFLUENCE

As the fortunes of war continued to turn against Germany in 1943 and an eventual Allied victory seemed assured, Sweden's policies also underwent a transformation. While German forces were busy attempting to recoup their losses in Russia and North Africa, the Swedish government had to reconsider whether its best interests lay in bowing to Allied pressure and withdrawing some of the concessions which had been granted to Germany following the Norwegian invasion in 1940. The Swedish government finally announced on August 5, 1943, "that an agreement has been reached with the Reich, suspending German transit privileges for war materials and for troops, effective August 15 and 20 respectively."\(^1\) This did not apply to the transit of non-military goods or civilian passenger travel, which was permitted until the following April when even this was discontinued.

By September, 1944, the only German traffic allowed through Sweden consisted of hospital cars from northern Finland crossing Swedish territory enroute to Germany.\(^2\) The concessions granted to Germany for the flight of courier planes over Sweden were also severely curtailed.

In reprisal for these measures, two Swedish fishing boats were fired upon and sunk in August, 1943, and several Swedish courier planes

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\(^2\) Scott, p. 270.
were also downed by German fire. The Gothenburg traffic was closed for a time in the autumn of 1914, when Germany refused to allow the Swedish vessels safe passage through the German blockade.

This general harassment of Swedish ships and planes in the Baltic area created much ill-feeling toward Germany in Swedish circles, and the Allies took advantage of this in their efforts to wean Sweden away from her close economic ties with Germany. On September 23, 1914, the Swedish government signed an agreement with Great Britain and the United States which if carried out to the letter would have substantially restricted Sweden's exports to Germany. Sweden promised:

To grant no further credits to the enemy except within certain defined limits to Finland, to maintain the general price level of their exports to the enemy for 1914 to an amount equal in value to at least 130 million kronor less than in 1913, and to include in this reduction specific quantities of various commodities to which the Allies attached importance. More far-reaching reductions were to take place in 1915: iron ore exports were to be limited to 7.5 million tons a year in the proportion of not more than two tons of ore for every ton of coal or coke imported from the enemy.3

The export of other types of ores and minerals was either to be restricted or prohibited entirely in 1915.

In practice, Sweden did not always adhere strictly to these quotas, and the amount of iron ore exported to Germany in 1914 was above Allied expectations for that year. However, on January 11, 1915, Sweden signed a trade treaty with Germany which was more in line with the promises made to the Allies in their 1914 agreement:

The clearing agreement to Germany would total about 700,000 kronor, of which 450,000 would be made up of export quotas for various commodities; this latter figure compared with 550,000 for 1913. The balance was to be made up by invisible exports.

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3Toynbee, p. 73.
and a credit repayment. Iron ore exports were to be limited to 7,000,000 tons instead of 10,000,000; ball-bearings to 21,000,000 kronor-worth instead of 45,000,000.4

The shipment to Germany of Swedish-made ball-bearings was one matter of particular concern to the Allies. The Swedish ball-bearings were of especially high quality steel, and while they supplied only a small portion of Germany's total needs they were essential components to such vital machinery as aircraft machines and other precision instruments of war. Ball-bearings were also manufactured in Germany, but during 1943 Allied bombers destroyed most of the German plants at Schweinfurt and slowed down production considerably. Germany was now more dependent than before on Swedish supplies, although Sweden in the trade agreement with the Allies had promised to limit her exports of this commodity to the Reich. The principal manufacturer of ball-bearings in Sweden was the Svenska Kullagerfabriken, better known as the S.K.F. During the war, the S.K.F. shipped by air nearly $20,000,000 worth of ball-bearings and machinery to manufacture ball-bearings to the Allies, which equalled nearly half the amount sold to Germany.5

This Allied buying was intended partially to preempt shipments of bearings to Germany, but the S.K.F. foiled the plan by building increased production facilities to meet the demand. In May, 1944, American and British agents flew to Stockholm in an effort to persuade the company to cut off its exports to Germany. To add weight to their arguments, the negotiators were also prepared to purchase available supplies of

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4 Ibid., p. 74.
5 Scott, p. 269.
ball-bearings from the S.K.F. During the discussions which lasted from May 13 to June 8 exports to Germany were temporarily suspended. The S.K.F. was reluctant to limit its business with Germany, but the Allied delegates were quite persuasive. The fact that the Normandy invasion took place as the negotiations were being concluded may have helped convince the Swedes that they should take a benevolent view of the Allied requests. The Allied agents purchased about six million dollars worth of Swedish ball-bearings, and in exchange the S.K.F. agreed to reduce substantially its exports of ball-bearings to Germany. 6 The company continued to abide by this arrangement, shipping only a limited quantity to the Germans until October 15, 1944, when the S.K.F. halted the exports completely.

During the last half of 1944, trade between Germany and Sweden amounted to a fraction of its former volume. In July, Hitler was still worried that a Russian breakthrough in the Baltic would interfere with his imports of Swedish ore, "which are of decisive importance for our

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6 Stanton Griffis, *Lying in State* (Garden City, N. Y.; Doubleday, 1952), p. 118; Toynbee, p. 76; and Joesten, "Phases in . . .," p. 329. These sources all report the agreement to limit exports, but give conflicting accounts of the amount of the reduction. Griffis, an American businessman turned amateur statesman and one of the delegates to the Stockholm conference, states that the S.K.F. agreed "to ship less than ten per cent of its former quotas to Germany." On the other hand, *The War and the Neutrals* asserts that "deliveries to Germany were to be reduced from 2,000,000 to 1,70,000 kronor-worth a month between 8 June and 12 October, and to satellite and occupied countries from 400,000 to 298,000 kronor-worth a month," which would be a considerably larger export figure than Griffis reports. Joesten's figures are closer to those given in *The War and the Neutrals*; he states that shipments "were limited to about twenty per cent of the total of the preceding year."
war economy, and to the construction of the new submarine force." In September, however, the Swedish government announced the closing of all Swedish ports in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea west to the Falsterbo Channel. This closure, which went into effect on September 27, resulted in a substantial reduction in Swedish exports to Germany. The Germans responded by abrogating the Gothenburg traffic agreement and declaring on November 9 that the Baltic was a zone of operations in which all vessels, including Swedish, would be sunk without warning. Sweden protested and announced that she would not hold trade negotiations with Germany for the following year. By January 1, 1945, all trade with Germany had ceased, primarily because companies would no longer extend insurance and credit to those engaged in such commerce.

From 1943 until the end of the war, Sweden also defied Hitler by extending aid to the other Scandinavian nations which were in a less fortunate situation. Sweden maintained diplomatic relations throughout the war with the Norwegian government-in-exile, which was headquartered in London, and allowed the Norwegian government to maintain a legation in Stockholm. In November, 1943, anti-German riots broke out at the University in Oslo and some of the student leaders were deported to Germany. Sweden vigorously protested this action and the following year some of the students were repatriated.

Perhaps the most defiant act of the Swedish government in support of the Norwegians was the establishment, in the spring of 1943, of a training center for a police force to be composed of Norwegian refugees

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7Fuehrer Conferences, 1944, p. 59.
in Sweden. The force was set up to provide a nucleus of trained men who could be ready to return to Norway and restore order in the event of a German evacuation of that country. At first the group was small, consisting of only 1,500 men, and was regarded as a civilian undertaking, although the training included "instruction and exercises in the use of gas, smoke bombs, and explosives with a view to active sabotage and the prevention of sabotage."8 The strength of this force was increased in both 1943 and 1944, and the training became more military in character, with operations carried out in war-like conditions under regular Swedish army officers. By the end of 1941, the Norwegian reserve force numbered 12,000 men, trained and equipped by Sweden, but under the administration of the Norwegian government in London.

Sweden also gave aid to Danish refugees who managed to escape from their homeland. At first, after the Germans invaded Denmark, they attempted to establish a "model protectorate" in that country, and expected the Danes to behave themselves accordingly. However, the Danes were unappreciative of their benefactors, and by 1943, the German administrators were plagued by a growing amount of sabotage. The Germans ordered the Danish government to impose severe penalties for sabotage, and to declare a state of emergency, but the Danes refused. Hitler then ordered that certain planned measures against Denmark, known by the code name Operation Safari, be put into effect. On August 29, 1943, the Germans arrested the King, the members of his cabinet, and other influential military and government leaders, declaring a

8Toynbee, p. 191.
state of martial law. Hitler had feared that the Danish fleet might try to escape to Sweden and ordered Danish vessels seized and brought into port. However, some Danish crews scuttled their ships rather than let them fall into German hands, or managed to reach Sweden in spite of the German navy. Subsequent German administration in Denmark assumed a sterner character, and in September, 1943, it was learned that the Germans planned to round up and deport all Danish Jews. The Swedish government sent a note to Berlin protesting this action, and offered to take the Jews to Sweden instead. The Germans ignored this proposal, but many Danes hid Jewish persons in their homes, from where they later escaped to Sweden via the Danish underground. By the war's end, 18,000 Danish refugees had fled to Sweden, where they were supported largely by the Swedish government. The Swedes also trained a small Danish police force comparable to the Norwegian police.

By the middle of 1943, the Swedish government began to give thought to post-war aid to the occupied countries. What one Swedish official has referred to as a "minor Marshall plan" was set up to provide "massive deliveries of food-stuffs and other necessities after the liberation." An enormous amount of aid in the form of food, clothing and medical supplies was provided both during and after the war to such nations as Norway, Denmark, and Holland.

The Swedes were more restricted in their desire to aid Finland, for the Finns were fighting with their German allies against the

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Russians and were therefore directly involved in the war. By 1944, however, it became obvious to the Finnish leaders that they would have to seek an end to the conflict. Finland's manpower and resources were both nearly exhausted in spite of German aid, and she began in the summer of 1944 to make peace overtures to the Soviet Union. When Hitler learned of Finland's intentions, he threatened dire consequences, but Finland proceeded with her plans for a separate peace. On September 5, hostilities ceased between Finnish and Russian forces, but the fighting in Finland did not end at this point. One of the Soviet conditions, laid down before the armistice was signed, decreed that all German troops should be out of Finland by September 15 or be disarmed and turned over to the Russians. This was an impossible condition for Finland to meet, even if the Germans had been willing to cooperate. As it was, German troops in northern Finland retreated slowly toward the Norwegian border, leaving a wake of destruction behind them. The Finnish government had been aware of this possibility and ordered the population of northern Lapland evacuated. Many of the inhabitants fled across the border into Sweden, where they found refuge from the German forces. The devastation in Lapland was appalling; of 113,531 buildings existing before the war, 41,306 or thirty-six per cent were destroyed by the Germans during their retreat.10 Vast quantities of farm equipment were also destroyed and many head of livestock slaughtered. The rich nickel mines in Lapland were put out of working order before the Germans evacuated the area and rendered useless to the Finns.

On September 11, the Germans launched an attack, **Operation Tanne-Ost**, on the Finnish island of Suursaari, but the attempt to land troops was unsuccessful. A separate attack, termed **Tanne-West**, had been planned against the Aaland Islands, which are located at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia. However this was shelved because of probable Swedish opposition (the islands belonged to Finland, but the population was largely Swedish in origin). The German government feared an attack on the islands might adversely affect the "continued deliveries of Swedish ore and ball-bearings."¹¹

Following Finland's exit from the war, Sweden once more provided that country with quantities of food and other vitally needed supplies, as she had done in 1940 after the first Russian conflict.

The final year of the war saw the successful culmination of efforts by the Swedish government to aid political prisoners of the Reich. Throughout the conflict, Sweden had maintained a particular interest in the welfare of the Norwegian and Danish prisoners who had been interned in German concentration camps as punishment for their resistance. A direct appeal to Hitler seemed useless, but it came to the attention of the Swedish government that there was another important German official who might be approached.

Heinrich Himmler, the commander of the SS, was a man who habitually showed little mercy to political prisoners. But he was also a sick man who suffered intensely from stomach cramps and the only person who seemed able to relieve his pain was his masseur, Dr. Felix Kersten.

Kersten was a citizen of Finland who also had lived in Holland until the German invasion in 1940. He had treated Himmler for several years and gradually acquired a considerable influence over his patient. Walter Schellenberg, Himmler's chief of intelligence, stated that:

So great was Himmler's faith in Kersten's ability that he submitted everyone in the Third Reich whom he regarded as important to a sort of test, which consisted of a physical examination by Kersten; for Kersten claimed that through his manipulations he could feel the nature of the nervous reactions and the nervous energy of an individual, and thereby judge his mental and intellectual capacities.  

Kersten had no sympathy for the Nazi cause, but he was a shrewd bargainer who saw the advantages of his position and used Himmler's dependence on him to obtain more humane treatment for various groups of prisoners. In doing so, he made many enemies, but "he was able to bounce unharmed out of all difficulties. What usually happened was that so much confusion was created around him that you never knew where you were." Kersten's pleas met with varying degrees of success depending on Himmler's illness; when Himmler was in desperate pain, he would grant Kersten nearly anything he desired in return for his administrations.

One of Kersten's projects involved the case of seven Swedish businessmen, representatives of two firms, the Svenska Taendsticks A. B., known as the Swedish Match Trust, and the L. M. Erickson Co. The men were arrested in Warsaw in July, 1942, and charged with espionage. At their trial in Germany, two were acquitted, one was given a

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13 Ibid., p. 306.
prison sentence, and the remaining four were sentenced to death. Kersten interceded in their behalf with Himmler, who at first was unwilling to grant their release. Kersten persisted in his efforts, however, and finally managed to convince Himmler of the importance both the Finnish and Swedish governments attached to the case. When Himmler finally decided in Kersten's favor, four of the Swedes were repatriated with little delay. The remaining three were released in December, 1944, as a "sort of personal Christmas gift" to Kersten.\footnote{Felix Kersten, The Memoirs of Dr. Kersten, p. 147. Kersten's entire account of the case is set forth on pp. 133-150.}

Kersten's efforts to free the seven Swedes were also aided and encouraged by Walter Schellenberg, and Kersten states that after he discovered Schellenberg's favorable attitude he consulted the latter before "every move."\footnote{Ibid., p. 134.} Schellenberg, however, claimed after the war that "Ribbentrop and Kaltenbrunner regarded me as responsible for the pardon and liberation of the seven so-called Warsaw Swedes, and they tried to show that my intervention in this case . . . was a great political blunder."\footnote{Folke Bernadotte of Wisborg, The Curtain Falls; the Last Days of the Third Reich (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945), p. 140.} The conflict for credit in this case was apparently resolved in Kersten's favor at the Nuremberg trial of Schellenberg.

As the historian, H. R. Trevor-Roper observes in his introduction to The Kersten Memoirs:

Schellenberg tried to claim that it was he who saved the men, but as the witnesses were examined it became clear (as the Court observed) that their rescue was really the work of the then unknown Dr. Kersten.\footnote{Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, p. 13n.}
The release of the Warsaw Swedes, however, was eclipsed in 1945 by a much more spectacular rescue operation. As the Allied forces approached Germany, many neutral observers feared that Hitler would carry out his threat either to blow up the concentration camps or evacuate the inmates rather than let them fall into Allied hands. A vast rescue operation, sponsored by the Swedish government and under the auspices of the Swedish Red Cross, was planned and ultimately carried out, resulting in the release of nearly 23,000 Scandinavian and Jewish prisoners from German concentration camps. As in the case of the Warsaw Swedes, the credit for the success of the operation is claimed by more than one individual.

Once more Kersten ascribes an important role to himself. In 1943, the strain of living in Nazi Germany began to tell on him, and he requested Himmler's permission to move his family to Sweden. Himmler at first refused but later agreed to this proposal, provided Kersten promised to return to Germany at regular intervals to continue his treatments. Kersten moved to Stockholm on September 30, 1943. While in residence there, he conferred several times with Foreign Minister Guenther, who was aware of Kersten's continuing efforts to secure the release of the Warsaw Swedes. Guenther and Kersten discussed the possibility of achieving a large-scale rescue of Scandinavian and other prisoners of the Reich, and Kersten agreed to use his influence in an attempt to further such a scheme. Before he returned to Germany, Guenther gave him lists of prisoners whose release the Swedish government was seeking.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 187.
In April, 1944, Kersten again met with Guenther and reported to him on his attempts to prepare the ground for the negotiations which would be necessary before a mass rescue operation could be attempted. He was certain that Himmler could be convinced of the merits of such a proposal, but there would be formidable opposition from such officials as Ribbentrop, Goebbels, and Kaltenbrunner, the chief of the German security forces. During their meeting, Guenther disclosed the details of the projected rescue operation as he wished Kersten to present them to Himmler:

The first stage of the plan . . . was to get the Norwegians and the Danes out of the German concentration camps. Whenever possible they should be sent to Sweden, who took upon herself the obligation of interning them until the end of the war. If this could not be arranged, Sweden was also ready to construct properly enclosed camps, where the prisoners would be guarded until the end of the war by the Swedish police. Sweden would also guarantee that they did not return to Norway and Denmark before then. . . . If none of these Swedish proposals were acceptable to Himmler, at least it had to be arranged for the Scandinavian prisoners to be assembled in a part of Germany where they were out of danger from bombing. Sweden would then be prepared to feed them and supervise their health arrangements. The best way would be for this to be done under the auspices of the Swedish Red Cross.\(^\text{19}\)

When Kersten returned once more to Germany, he presented these proposals to Himmler. Himmler rejected outright the plan to send prisoners to Sweden, but he would consider the possibility of interning them in one camp where they could be looked after by representatives of the Red Cross. Extensive negotiations were necessary however before any details could be agreed upon. Kersten did succeed in persuading Himmler to release fifty Norwegian students and fifty Danish policemen

\(^{19}\)Ibid., pp. 226-227.
who were detained in German prisons and provide them with transportation to their homes in time for Christmas. 20 (Himmler apparently had a sentimental side to his nature, for he was apt to be more susceptible to Kersten's requests during the holiday season.) Aside from his interest in helping the Scandinavian prisoners, Kersten also regularly pleaded the cause of French, Belgian, Dutch and Jewish prisoners. Before leaving for his Christmas holiday in Sweden, Kersten succeeded in securing Himmler's promise to release "1,000 Dutch women, together with Norwegian and Danish women and children, students and policemen," to be transported to Sweden, and also "800 Frenchwomen, 400 Belgians, 500 Polish women and between two and three thousand Jews," who were to be sent to Switzerland. 21 Sweden would have to provide transportation for the Dutch and Scandinavian prisoners, and Himmler agreed to allow Swedish buses to enter Germany for this purpose.

While Kersten's negotiations were in progress, a similar idea had occurred to another individual. Count Folke Bernadotte was a member of the Swedish Royal family, and the Vice-President of the Swedish Red Cross, and in this capacity he also devised a plan to achieve the release of the Scandinavian prisoners following approximately the same formula as the project originally outlined by Guenther. Immediately after the war, in June, 1945, Bernadotte published a book, entitled in English, The Curtain Falls, in which he claimed a large measure of credit for the conception of the entire rescue operation. He insists that such an idea came to him around the beginning of 1945, at which time he

20 Ibid., p. 227
21 Ibid., p. 230.
conferred with other members of the Red Cross and the Swedish government who encouraged him to approach Himmler and attempt to obtain the release of the Norwegian and Danish prisoners in Germany. A Swedish Red Cross expedition was already enroute to Germany in February of 1945, with the purpose of collecting Swedish-born wives of German citizens who were now widowed or homeless, and this would make an excellent pretext for Bernadotte's visit to Germany.

Accordingly, Bernadotte flew to Berlin, and on February 12 he had an interview with Himmler, whom he described at first glance as a "quiet little man who looks like a harmless country schoolmaster." During the meeting, he proposed to Himmler that the Norwegian and Danish prisoners in German concentration camps be interned in Sweden until the end of the war, but this request met with a flat refusal. Bernadotte then suggested that members of the Red Cross might do useful work in the camps where Scandinavians were now interned. When Himmler agreed to this, he added that the work would be facilitated if "the Norwegians and Danes in question should be collected into two camps, one for each group." Himmler again proved amenable to the request and "also agreed that the aged, the sick and mothers should be allowed to return to Norway after having been assembled in the camps. He did not even raise any objection to the admission of Swedish Red Cross staffs to the camps to assist in the collection of the prisoners." Before leaving Germany Bernadotte secured Ribbentrop's consent to the Swedish proposals. Ribbentrop insisted that the transportation of the prisoners must be

22Bernadotte, p. 42. 23Ibid., p. 52. 24Ibid.
provided by the Swedish Red Cross, since Germany had none to spare, and Bernadotte promised that this would be arranged. He then flew back to Sweden and reported to the Swedish government, which approved the arrangements.

By March 12, a Red Cross expedition financed by the Swedish government crossed the border between Denmark and Germany. The expedition was under the command of Colonel Björck and included one hundred buses and trucks to transport the prisoners to the agreed-upon camp sites. During the month of March, thousands of Scandinavian prisoners from concentration camps all over Germany were transferred to an assembly point at Neuengamme, near Hamburg, from where they were later evacuated to Denmark.

While the Scandinavian prisoners were being collected, negotiations were also in progress aimed at saving the prisoners of other nationalities who were still interned in Germany. As Allied forces approached, Hitler ordered that the prisoners should be evacuated to other parts of Germany or blown up with the camps rather than let them fall into Allied hands. Both Kersten and Schellenberg attempted to persuade Himmler that the best course for Germany to follow would be to deliver the camps intact to the Allies, rather than force their evacuation. In February, Kersten had been introduced in Stockholm to Hillel Storch, a representative of the World Jewish Congress, and together they drew up a plan to save as many Jewish prisoners as possible. Kersten flew back to Germany and started discussions with Himmler which lasted for a week. On March 12, he obtained Himmler's promise that the concentration camps would be handed over to the Allies on their approach.
Hitler's orders to blow up or evacuate the camps would not be carried out, killing of Jews was to be prohibited, and they were henceforth "to receive the same treatment as other prisoners."25

Schellenberg states in his autobiography that he also persuaded Himmler to issue orders not to evacuate the concentration camps.26 However, about the first of April, he received a report that prisoners at Buchenwald were being removed. In January, 1946, at Nuremberg, Schellenberg testified as a witness that Kaltenbrunner had contacted Hitler and succeeded in countermanding Himmler's decree.27 When Schellenberg reported this to Himmler, he again intervened and ordered a halt to the evacuations.

On the night of April 20-21, an extraordinary interview took place between Himmler and Norbert Masur, a representative of the Swedish branch of the World Jewish Congress. Accompanied by Kersten, Masur had flown incognito from Stockholm to Berlin with a safe-conduct signed by Schellenberg. The meeting took place at Kersten's country estate, Hartzwalde, where they were also joined by Schellenberg and Himmler's secretary, Dr. Brandt. Masur asked for the release of all Jews still interned in Germany, and in any case wanted assurances that no more would be killed or evacuated from the camps. Himmler promised to release one thousand Jewish women from Ravensbruck to be transported to

26Schellenberg, p. 380.
27International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg, Germany: International Military Tribunal, 1947), IV, 378 and 381-382.
Sweden, although "he stipulated that they should be described as Polish women, not Jewesses, in order to get around Hitler's express orders against the release of Jewish prisoners." Himmler also promised to release certain prisoners from a list compiled by the Swedish foreign office, and reiterated his assurances that the remaining prisoners would not be evacuated. Following the negotiations, Brandt and Schellenberg both assured Kersten and Masur that they would see to it that Himmler kept his part of the agreement and would secretly attempt to raise the number of Jews to be released.

The Scandinavian rescue operation and the subsequent release and transportation of Jewish prisoners to Sweden was an operation for which the Swedish government and the individuals responsible for its success deserve the highest praise. However, after the war, a conflict appeared between those claiming credit for the achievement. Both Kersten and Bernadotte assert in their writings that they first conceived of the undertaking and carried through the negotiations with Himmler which led to the release of thousands of prisoners. However, Kersten was unknown to the general public, while Bernadotte was an internationally acclaimed figure. Bernadotte's book does not mention Kersten and scarcely credits the role of the Swedish government. The book covers Bernadotte's conferences with Himmler in which he claims to have originated the idea of a rescue mission and his subsequent negotiations to arrange the transfer of prisoners to Neuengamme, and from there to Denmark and Sweden.

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28Kersten Memoirs, p. 289.
Kersten, on the other hand, was in a less fortunate situation following the German collapse. He was living in Sweden when the war ended and immediately applied for Swedish citizenship. His application was supported by Guenther, but in July, 1945, the Swedish government fell from power. The new government refused to grant Kersten citizenship and Guenther was told that the original documents concerning Kersten had been lost.  

The Dutch, however, were not so ungrateful. In 1948, the Dutch government set up a special commission, headed by Professor N. W. Posthumus, the director of the National Institute of War Documentation, to inquire into the actual facts of the case. The committee made extensive investigations and refuted the charges that Kersten had been a Nazi or had profited financially from his efforts. They also uncovered the evidence of his humanitarian work, for which in August, 1950, he was made a Grand Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau. In 1952, the Dutch government nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, although no award was given that year.

In February, 1953, the historian, H. R. Trevor-Roper published a provocative article in The Atlantic Monthly, entitled, "Kersten, Himmler, and Count Bernadotte." Relying heavily upon the findings of the Dutch commission, he brought to public attention the failure of the Swedish government to recognize Kersten's achievements and Bernadotte's attempt to claim all the credit for the venture. Trevor-Roper asserts

30Kersten Memoirs, p. 18. From the introduction by H. R. Trevor-Roper.
that while Schellenberg supported Bernadotte's account of his expedition, Schellenberg owed him a debt of gratitude. When the war ended, Schellenberg sought asylum in Sweden and actually stayed at Bernadotte's house until he was extradited by the Allies. (He was charged with war crimes and Bernadotte later testified on his behalf at Nuremberg.)

In fact, Trevor-Roper charges that much of Bernadotte's book "had been ghost-written, at high speed" by Schellenberg, and that he "still had a copy in his possession when he finally surrendered to the Allies." 

The article in The Atlantic Monthly aroused some controversy in Sweden, and in April, 1953, the magazine published both a statement by Erik Boheman, the Swedish Ambassador in Washington, and a letter of rebuttal by Trevor-Roper. While Boheman refuted the charges against Bernadotte, he admitted that the article had caused the Swedish foreign office to re-examine the case.

On 29th April, 1953, a stormy debate took place in the Riksdag in the course of which the Swedish government's treatment of Kersten was roughly criticized as small-minded and ungrateful. Six months later the government yielded. On 30th October, 1953, Felix Kersten was admitted to Swedish citizenship.

The final action of the Swedish government substantiates in large part the belief that without Kersten's intervention the Scandinavian rescue operation might not have been carried out to its successful conclusion. The recognition of Kersten's achievements, however, does not mean that Bernadotte accomplished nothing. Certainly, as an official

32Ibid.
33Introduction to The Kersten Memoirs, p. 17.
35Introduction to The Kersten Memoirs, pp. 20-21.
representative of the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish government, he was in a better position to make the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the prisoners than was a person who, although working with the Swedish government, was essentially a private individual. The unfortunate part of the whole affair lay in the fact that Bernadotte apparently, whether consciously or unconsciously, accepted the role of a hero without giving credit where it was due in other quarters.

Bernadotte did play a certain role toward the end of the war which was not directly connected with the rescue of the prisoners. As early as August, 1942, Schellenberg had come to the conclusion that Germany might not win the war and had approached Himmler with the suggestion that an "alternative solution" to ending the war should be sought while Germany still possessed the strength to negotiate with her enemies. After some hesitation, Himmler agreed that Schellenberg's arguments had merit, but he refused to commit himself to a course of action. By 1945, however, it was obvious that Germany could not hold out much longer and Kersten also was pushing Himmler to do what he could to negotiate and avoid further bloodshed. On April 21, when Himmler was at Hartzwalde for the conference with Masur, he suddenly asked Kersten whether he had "any access to General Eisenhower or the Western Allies?" When Kersten answered that he did not, Himmler requested him to "undertake to fly from Sweden to Eisenhower's headquarters and open discussions with him about the immediate cessation of hostilities." Himmler was willing to negotiate a surrender on the

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36 Schellenberg, p. 309.
37 Kersten Memoirs, p. 273.
western front, provided Germany could continue to press the war in the East against the Russian forces. Kersten answered that he did not feel qualified for the job, but he suggested that Himmler might broach the matter to Count Bernadotte at their next meeting, as Bernadotte would have more influence with the Allies.

On April 23, Himmler's emissary, Schellenberg, met with Bernadotte and asked him whether he would take a message to Eisenhower stating that Himmler wished to meet with him in order to bring about a German capitulation in the West. Bernadotte felt that "it would be better if Himmler's wishes were transmitted to the Swedish Government, who could then, if they were willing, transmit them to the representatives of the Western Powers." He thought it was improbable that the Allies would accept a surrender only in the West, but he agreed to take a letter from Himmler to Foreign Minister Guenther, provided Himmler's offer to capitulate included German troops in Norway and Denmark. Himmler was acting under the assumption that Hitler would soon be dead and that he would assume the leadership of Germany. But when Hitler committed suicide, his successor proved to be Admiral Doenitz. By then, Himmler had already been informed through Bernadotte that the Allies had refused to negotiate with him, and that any German surrender would have to include the eastern front as well as the West.

Himmler was not the only German leader to put out peace feelers via Sweden. Fritz Hesse, in the book Hitler and the English, describes a mission to Stockholm which he undertook at Ribbentrop's request in

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38 Bernadotte, p. 105.
February, 1945. While in Sweden, Hesse sounded out representatives from the West, but again they were unwilling to negotiate a peace which would not include the East. Ribbentrop then ordered Hesse to approach the Russian representative in Sweden, Madame Kollontai, with roughly the same proposal, except in this case Germany was investigating the possibility of concluding a separate peace in the East. Hitler, however, had been informed of the negotiations in Stockholm and decided that the whole idea was useless. He informed Ribbentrop at this point that any further contact with a foreign power would be forbidden, so the project was subsequently dropped.

As the war drew to a close, the Swedish government became particularly concerned over the possibility that fighting might break out in Norway. The destruction which had been caused in Finland during the German retreat led to fears that a repetition might occur if German forces evacuated Norway. Kersten reports in his Memoirs that, at Guenther's urging, he took up the problem with Himmler, pointing out to him that the Allies were exerting strong pressure on Sweden to occupy Norway; if Sweden failed to do so, there was also the danger that Russian troops might invade Norway, which would be a worse fate for Scandinavia. Himmler was impressed by Kersten's reasoning and discussed the matter with Hitler, who flatly refused to consider the surrender of German troops in Norway.

Hitler also overruled his military commanders on this point. At

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40 Kersten Memoirs, p. 271.
a Fuehrer conference on March 10, Jodl reported:

A request from the Commanding General, Norway, asking for permission to withdraw from the northern Norwegian area to the region south of Narvik because of lack of supplies... The Fuehrer believes that if we evacuated Narvik we might be providing Sweden with an opportunity to enter the war against us, since she would then have excellent connections with the Anglo-Americans.

The request to evacuate troops from the area was denied.

In spite of the official cold water thrown on any plans for peace in the North, both Himmler and Schellenberg did attempt to do what they could to maintain the status quo in that area. Toward the end of March, Himmler informed Kersten that he had sent orders to the SS in Norway "to avoid opening a new theatre of war in the North."

When Doenitz took over after Hitler's death, he conferred with Schellenberg:

Schellenberg suggested that we should offer to surrender Norway to Sweden and ask at the same time that the German army of occupation should be allowed to enter Sweden and be interned there... In the course of the discussion it was disclosed that through Schellenberg, Himmler had sometime before raised this question with Sweden and that that country had expressed in confidence, its willingness to agree to the internment of troops on its territory.

Doenitz was not in favor of this plan since he felt that surrendering to a neutral nation might endanger future negotiations with the Allies, and at any rate, there was always the possibility that Sweden might hand German prisoners over to the Russians. He told Schellenberg that he might investigate the matter further, but he was thankful when the

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41 Fuehrer Conferences, 1945, p. 75.
42 Kersten Memoirs, p. 272.
final capitulation which he arranged with the Allies "put an end to these vague, under-the-counter negotiations."\textsuperscript{44}

The end of the war found Schellenberg in Stockholm, attempting to arrange a German surrender in Norway, but meeting with little success. (Doenitz apparently neglected to inform the German commander in Norway, General Boehme, as to Schellenberg's authority in the matter.) On May 7, Germany capitulated and Sweden finally broke off diplomatic relations with the Reich. The Swedish government refused to have anything more to do regarding the situation in Norway, "for obviously both the Norwegian and the Danish problem were part of the surrender negotiations as a whole."\textsuperscript{45}

Sweden emerged from the war relatively unscathed and maintaining her position as a neutral nation. Alone of the northern European countries, she had escaped German invasion and conquest, although for six years her politicians had walked a tightrope, precariously balanced between German demands and Allied pressure. Throughout the war, Germany's leaders had weighed the value of Swedish exports in their plans, and undoubtedly debated whether it would not be simpler to invade Sweden and enjoy the fruits of their conquest, than to rely on the whims of a government which could be swayed both by public opinion and Allied requests to deny certain items to Germany. In any account, Sweden was allowed to ride out the war virtually unmolested in comparison to her northern neighbors. Why this was the case, and whether the course of the war could have been changed by a German invasion of Sweden, are subjects which will be examined in the conclusion.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 457 \textsuperscript{45}Schellenberg, p. 411.
CONCLUSION

Following the Norwegian invasion, many European observers wondered why Sweden had been spared when her western neighbors had suffered the fate of German conquest. The answer to this is composed of several factors, but in general it may be said that an invasion of Sweden at that time would have been both unnecessary and costly to Germany. In 1940, Sweden was already supplying Germany with iron ore, ball-bearings, and other items vital to a war-time economy. But in the event of an invasion these supplies would be at least temporarily interrupted, and in the case of the iron ore, the plants which furnished power to the northern mines and to the iron ore railroad would have been blown up by the Swedes themselves rather than left intact for the Germans to utilize. In this respect, Hitler stood to lose more than he could gain by an invasion.

Had Hitler decided to invade Sweden, he would also have had to expend considerably larger forces than had been necessary in the Danish and Norwegian invasions. Sweden had a large land area and her army, although small, was well equipped and would certainly have put up a stout resistance. Moreover, as one Swedish authority has since pointed out, a large-scale operation in the North would have delayed for some time the main attack in the West which Hitler was anxious to launch.¹

An additional factor to be considered was the attitude of the Soviet Union. On April 13, 1940, Molotov informed the German ambassador that the Soviet Union would not look kindly upon any attempted invasion

¹Hägglöf, p. 160.
of Sweden, since the continued neutrality of that nation was definitely in the Soviet interest. \(^2\) Hitler could not afford to anger Stalin, since he needed Russian support for the present.

The fact that the balance of power in the North was tilted in Germany's favor has been cited by some authorities as one of the reasons Hitler was able to wring so many unneutral concessions from the Swedes without resorting to an invasion of Sweden. The Swedish diplomat, Gunnar Hagglof, has written that "the basic condition of neutrality is the existence of a balance of power." \(^3\) In September, 1939, the Swedes were among the first to proclaim their neutrality in the struggle between Germany and the western powers. At that time, Sweden did not feel threatened by either side, but was determined to carry on normal economic and diplomatic relations with all the belligerents. In December, Sweden concluded trade agreements with both Germany and Great Britain. Although more Swedish exports were shipped to Germany than to the West, this was not an unusual situation, since the Germans customarily purchased large quantities of Swedish iron ore and provided Sweden with the coal and coke which she imported for home consumption. In spite of difficulties arising from Germany's refusal to recognize the Swedish four-mile zone, good relations between the two countries generally prevailed.

During the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland, Germany kept silent while Sweden assisted Finland with weapons and humanitarian supplies. Hitler was concerned, however, with the attempts

\(^2\) Sontag and Beddie, p. 140.

\(^3\) Hagglof, p. 166.
of the western Allies to intervene in the Finnish dispute, since he correctly interpreted the Allied gesture as a pretext to establish enemy troops in the vicinity of the northern Swedish ore fields and halt the shipments of iron ore to Germany. With the conclusion of peace in March, 1940, the Allies had no immediate excuse for intervening in the North, but as Hitler's military advisors were quick to point out, a new pretext for stopping the ore traffic would soon be found. The Norwegian invasion in April grew out of Germany's need to insure the continuation of Swedish exports as well as the desire of the naval commanders for bases in Norway. The Norwegian invasion had the effect of cutting Sweden off from the West and, as a result, the Germans were able to exact concessions from the Swedish government for the transit of both troops and war material to Norway. Although the Swedes continued to proclaim their neutrality, the historian, Bruce Hopper, has observed:

"It will always be difficult . . . to understand why the Swedish government did not admit that the transit agreement was a violation of neutrality, accepted under the threat of force majeure. Allied forces certainly could not at that time have supported Sweden . . . . Further, the Balance of Power in northern Europe had ceased to operate; the neutrality principle went into abeyance."

This was acknowledged on the German side by Minister zu Wied in Stockholm when he reported on May 8, 1941, that Sweden "fully recognizes the realities of the power situation in the Baltic area." As Hitler had predicted in his plans for Operation Barbarossa, Sweden allowed the transit of a German division across Sweden to Finland, permitted the

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5DGPP, XII, 735.
use of Swedish territorial waters for the transportation of troops and supplies, and granted extensive concessions to the German air force and navy.

From 1940 through 1942, the Swedish government did make some efforts to maintain an independent policy. After the first concessions, it refused to allow the transit of additional German troop divisions through Swedish territory and resisted attempts to have the Norwegian ships in Swedish harbors returned to the Norwegian owners. Although the German authorities grumbled at these measures, they were reluctant to apply sanctions against Sweden since the Swedes had met the majority of German demands, and in a sense, Germany had become dependent on Swedish goods and services. During this time, however, there was never any doubt that Germany controlled events in the North, and Sweden's resistance was partially a token gesture to convince the western powers and the rest of Scandinavia that Sweden had not become totally subjected to Hitler's demands.

Toward the end of 1942, Hitler suffered several military setbacks and the inevitability of German victory seemed to diminish accordingly. Although until Finland's capitulation Germany maintained a dominant position in the North, Hitler was soon too deeply committed in other areas to give serious consideration to his relations with Sweden. The northern balance of power, which had largely vanished from sight after Norway's capitulation, began to show new signs of life, and the Swedish government did not hesitate to take advantage of the situation. Beginning in 1943, the concessions were withdrawn one by one until by 1945 Sweden had completely thrown off the Nazi yoke, and Hitler was reduced
to issuing dire warnings which the Swedes knew would not be implemented. Trade between Germany and Sweden also came to a standstill as the Swedes responded to Allied pressure to halt their contributions to Germany's war industry. Toward the end of the conflict, Sweden was able to implement her own policies, using the Nazis' fear of Allied retribution as a tool to pry loose thousands of Scandinavian prisoners from Hitler's concentration camps.

A hypothetical question, but one which deserves an examination, is whether it would have been to Hitler's ultimate advantage to have achieved an outright occupation of Sweden. Although there is some evidence that a German invasion of Sweden was contemplated at various times during the war, few of the German leaders seem to have taken the idea very seriously. Hägglöf mentions the fact that early in 1940 a memorandum containing a plan for the occupation of Luleå and the iron ore railway circulated among the higher-ranking German officers, but it seems "to have been dismissed by the German leadership without comment." If Hitler had invaded Sweden in 1940, exports to Germany of iron ore and other commodities would not have been reduced as they were by the Swedes in 1944. (This, however, is assuming that the facilities at the northern mines had not been damaged beyond repair.) Germany's war effort would certainly not have been so severely hampered at the conclusion of the war by shortages of material. The Germans also could have made free use of Swedish territory without the necessity of prolonged bargaining sessions at the conference table. These advantages, however, must be

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6 Hägglöf, p. 160.
weighed against the initial expenditure of troops necessary for a successful invasion and the necessity of maintaining an occupation force to guard against sabotage and rebellion. The end result of an invasion of Sweden would have been to tie up, for the duration of the war, valuable German troops which could have been used more profitably elsewhere. Even free access to the supplies of Swedish ore would not have been likely to compensate for an overall decrease in the number of troops available to fight a two-front war.

After 1940, the possibility of a German invasion of Sweden diminished in proportion to the extension of German forces in other theaters of the war. In 1946, The Illustrated London News circulated a statement made to the Soviet authorities by General von Falkenhorst's chief-of-staff, Lieutenant-General Rudolf Bambler, in which he revealed that in December, 1942, he was ordered to prepare a plan for an attack on Sweden from Norway. The operation, known by the code name Polar Fox, was to take place in the summer of 1943. However, the failure of the German offensive in the Soviet Union that summer resulted in the cancellation of the plan.7 After this, Hitler could not conceivably spare the troops necessary for further ventures in the North as is evidenced by his failure to hold even Finland in check, and the Swedes, under Allied pressure and looking after their own postwar interests, proceeded to assert their independence.

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According to Bambler, he submitted the idea to Warlimont, who wanted the invasion to take place during the winter of 1943. In his book, however, Warlimont makes no mention of a planned attack on Sweden.
In the final analysis, Hitler's policy toward Sweden was one based on a realistic appraisal of Germany's position in the North vis-a-vis that of any other power or group of powers. Until his invasion of Norway, he had to be content to share the spoils with the western Allies and to restrain his demands on Sweden, but after the invasion and as long as Germany's position in the North constituted a threat to Sweden's independence, he was able to force the Swedes into an unneutral position without taking overt action himself. With the exception of flights of fancy concerning his "New Order in Europe," Hitler's policy took advantage of the existing situation without risking German involvement. Since the Swedish government was also pursuing a realistic policy, Hitler was able to achieve his aims during the first half of the war without having to invade Sweden, and after 1942 an occupation of that country would have proved inimical to the German cause. Viewed historically, German policy toward Sweden during World War Two provides a graphic illustration of the fact that a neutral nation need not be just a static element in the planning of a belligerent, and that with a realistic approach, a belligerent can utilize this neutrality to serve its own interests to the extent that the neutral fears the alternative consequences.
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For the purposes of this study, the most valuable material was included in the published collections of German documents. The Documents on German Foreign Policy proved indispensable, the only limitation being the fact that the series concludes with the entry of the United States into the war in 1941. The three sets of volumes covering the Nuremberg trials had varying degrees of usefulness. Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression is well indexed and contains a great many documents pertaining to the Norwegian invasion as well as other topics. The Nuremberg material was actually more valuable than the footnotes would indicate, since in many instances the same documents were reproduced in the Documents on German Foreign Policy, and I chose to cite the latter source instead. Other important collections of documents include
Blitzkrieg to Defeat; Hitler's War Directives and Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941. The records of the Fuehrer Conferences, reproduced on microfilm, provided a valuable account of the day to day planning of German naval operations. Other German documents, such as the White Book No. 4, were produced in the first place as a propaganda device, and must be read with some awareness of this fact.

The published diaries and memoirs of military and political personalities were another source which proved extremely helpful to an understanding of both German and Allied aims and operations. On the German side, General Halder's war journals provided brief but succinct comments on the military scene. Warlimont's book was more useful for an understanding of the organizational structure of the German military establishment. The memoirs of Admiral Raeder and Admiral Doenitz and the book by Vice Admiral Ruge provided a complete picture of the German navy in World War Two. The diaries of Ciano and Goebbels, and the memoirs of von Weizsaecker and Schellenberg were also useful and varied contributions to a knowledge of German policy. In general, the diaries of German leaders provide a truer picture of the situation than do the memoirs, which in most cases are written several years after the fact and tend to whitewash certain aspects of the war which their authors would prefer to forget.

A great deal may also be learned from the writings of the Allied or neutral observers. Events during the last phase of the war are illuminated by the works of Folke Bernadotte and Felix Kersten. A rather pro-German account is provided by Sven Hedin, and Arvid Fredborg presents the problems confronting a Swedish journalist in wartime Berlin.
The Norwegian viewpoint is provided by C. J. Hambro and Halvdan Koht, both leaders of the Norwegian government prior to the invasion. Mannerheim's memoirs are a biased, but valuable firsthand Finnish source. British policy is brought to light in the six volumes by Winston Churchill, and the Ironside Diaries provide a penetrating account of British efforts to intervene in Scandinavia during the winter of 1939-1940. The attempts of the United States to induce Sweden to break her economic ties with the Reich are explained in the memoirs of Cordell Hull and Stanton Griffis. Florence J. Harriman was the U. S. Ambassador to Norway during 1939-1940, and gives her account of the invasion. There is also a scant amount of material in the U. S. State Department Bulletins.

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There are many excellent secondary sources dealing with various aspects of the thesis. For an overall look at Swedish policy during the war, *The Power of Small States* by Annette Baker Fox and *The War and the Neutrals* edited by the Toynbees each contain a chapter which proved invaluable. There are also three articles by Gunnar Hågglöf, Bruce Hopper, and Joachim Joesten ("Phases in Swedish Neutrality") which contain interesting interpretations and analyses of Sweden's position.

Hitler's military strategy is the subject of accounts by Telford
Taylor, B. H. Liddell-Hart, F. H. Hinsley, Anthony Martienssen, and Peter Mendelssohn. The first two sources are the most authoritative and contain much pertinent information on the planning of Operation Weseruebung. Martienssen's book is a good secondary supplement to the Fuehrer Conferences.

The one outstanding book dealing with economic warfare is Medlicott's The Economic Blockade. The author is primarily concerned with Great Britain's strategy, but includes German policy in his discussion. There are two other books dealing with German economic policy, but they were both published about 1911 and so give only the general picture at the beginning of the war.

In the bibliography, I have included several basic works on Swedish history and the economic geography of the Scandinavian states which were useful for background knowledge. The general books on Scandinavia by Henning Friis and Franklin O. Scott were also quite helpful in this respect.

For current commentary on the events as they occurred, The New York Times contains a wealth of information, and the publication News of Norway, issued by the Norwegian government's press representative in the U. S., keeps the reader informed of happenings in the Scandinavian countries.