UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

Inclusion of the baltic republics in the nordic nuclear-free zone

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/90m9p0z5>

Journal

Journal of Baltic Studies, 16(1)

ISSN

0162-9778

Author

Taagepera, R

Publication Date

1985

DOI

10.1080/01629778400000311

Peer reviewed

INCLUSION OF THE BALTIC REPUBLICS IN THE NORDIC NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE

Rein Taagepera, University of California, Irvine

A nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in Northern Europe has been discussed for several decades as an international confidence-building measure. It is usually envisaged to include Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, which presently have no nuclear weapons on their soil. Such delineation should facilitate the establishment of the NWFZ, since no changes in the status quo are required: the zone would only represent a commitment not to introduce nuclear weapons in the future. Yet nothing has come of the proposal, largely because the area proposed is lopsided: it includes two NATO countries (Denmark and Norway) and two neutral ones (Sweden and Finland), but no Warsaw Pact territories. As such, the NWFZ proposal has too little to offer to the NATO countries; it could tie their hands in some future contingency without imposing the least obligation on the Warsaw Pact countries.

A compensating inclusion of Warsaw Pact territories is difficult because the only geographically thinkable areas are the Soviet Baltic and Arctic coasts, and including a slice of a superpower's territory in the Nordic NWFZ would involve an asymmetry of its own. In the 1970s such inclusion was considered too unrealistic to be even mentioned by anyone. However, in its absence the Nordic NWFZ has remained unrealized. This is regrettable for two reasons. (1) A continued lack of tension in Northern Europe cannot be taken for granted (witness the recent submarine incidents), and the nuclear-weapon-free status quo should be formalized before frictions arise. (2) A formal NWFZ in Northern Europe would be a confidence-building measure with potential for imitation in other areas of the world.

Since 1981 the inclusion of the Soviet Baltic republics in the proposed Nordic NWFZ has become thinkable in many quarters, although the establishment of the zone (with or without the Baltic republics) remains problematic. Such inclusion was proposed in an "Open Letter" by

thirty-eight residents of Soviet Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania in 1981 and by former US presidential advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1982. These very different authors, who had not made such proposals in the 1970s, may have sensed a change in the general atmosphere which from now on made the proposal at least worth airing. The main visible change was a new Soviet willingness to discuss some nuclear deployment reduction in the Soviet territories adjoining the Nordic NWFZ.

This paper will trace the history of attitudes and declarations by various parties regarding the inclusion of the Baltic republics in the Nordic NWFZ agreement, directly or marginally.¹ Such a review is important because repeats of old proposals frequently have been interpreted as new openings, and the proposals themselves have been misinterpreted to mean more than was intended. The terms used by analysts do not always have the same meaning. Thus "the Baltic states" designate Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia for some people, but some others mean by it all countries bordering on the Baltic Sea.² When Ekeus talks of measures to be taken "in the Baltic and Soviet territories" he does not mean the territories of the Baltic states (however defined) but the Baltic Sea.³ Sometimes, however, one is not sure whether "the Baltic" means the sea, the broad area, or the Soviet Baltic territories.⁴

Within the same project, one would also like to investigate the military, political, and legal implications of an inclusion of the Baltic republics in the Nordic NWFZ. The advantages and disadvantages from the viewpoints of the USSR, the US, and the Northern European nations should be listed, described, and evaluated, with special consideration of the nature of concessions possible on any side, and their permanence. (E.g., arms withdrawn from an area can be reintroduced more easily and gradually than legal recognition, once given, can be withdrawn.) Even if a final agreement could be reached, the sequence in which one or the other side would have to make concessions during negotiations may involve serious roadblocks—another issue to be investigated.

However, as the project was started, it proved impossible to handle everything within the scope of a reasonably short article. The whole rationale for a Nordic NWFZ would have to be reviewed, and discussions of the Nordic NWFZ most often deviate into discussions of Central Europe, since everything tends to be interconnected when it comes to arm reduction in a world with two opposing camps. Apart from brief remarks, these considerations will have to be left for a further study. It is nonetheless hoped that the information presented and the ideas generated will contribute to the consolidation of a conflict-free atmosphere in an indirect interface area between NATO and Warsaw Pact blocs.

Recent discussions of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northern Europe have been published in three collections of articles: *Nuclear Disengagement in Europe* (edited by Lodgaard and Thee), published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and by Pugwash largely on the basis of papers presented at a Pugwash-convened 1982 conference

in Oslo; *Nuclear Weapons and Northern Europe: Problems and Prospects of Arms Control* (edited by Möttölä), based on papers presented at a 1983 international seminar arranged by The Finnish Institute of International Affairs; and *Security in the North: Nordic and Superpower Perceptions* (edited by Huldt and Lejins), based on a 1983 seminar arranged by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and the Nordic Cooperation Committee for International Politics.⁵ These article collections discuss European security in general but mostly focus on Nordic issues. Regarding the Nordic NWFZ they can be said to represent the present "state of the art." The general background given in these volumes will not be reviewed here.

From 1958 to June 1981

First suggested by Soviet leaders Bulganin (in 1958, for Norway and Denmark) and Khrushchev (who also offered to contribute the Baltic Sea, in 1959), and by Swedish Foreign Minister Undén (1961), a Nordic NWFZ was proposed in more detail (but in an unofficial setting) by President Kekkonen of Finland in 1963.⁶ Since the proposed scope included NATO countries but no Warsaw Pact territories, the Scandinavian NATO members remained skeptical, feeling that the NWFZ would jeopardize the Nordic balance. Suggestions were made in the 1960s that some border areas of the USSR be included,⁷ but in the face of Soviet refusal even to discuss such an inclusion it was not mentioned in the 1970s. The idea of a Nordic NWFZ sputtered on and was discussed inconclusively at the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation.

Meanwhile Northern Europe stopped being just a flank of the Central European confrontation area between the two superpowers; it is now caught between Central Europe and the increasingly important Norwegian Sea anchored by the US Keflavik base in Iceland in the west and by the Soviet naval-nuclear complex in the Kola peninsula in the east. In comparison, the military buildup in the Baltic Sea has been slower, despite the introduction of Soviet submarines with nuclear missiles in 1976.⁸ About two-thirds of all Soviet naval construction and repair facilities are located on the Baltic coast, mainly around Kronstadt and Riga,⁹ in marked contrast to the absence of such installations on the Scandinavian Baltic or Atlantic coasts. Given the geography, such an imbalance is hard to avoid. While the initial goals of a NWFZ were to ensure non-possession, non-deployment, and non-use of nuclear weapons within the zone itself, the increasing possibility of overflight by outside cruise missiles and potential fallout in case of nuclear war elsewhere have now further complicated the issue.

From the viewpoint of Scandinavian countries, it has been somewhat disturbing to observe that the Soviet Leningrad and Baltic Military Districts have deployed some nuclear weapons of such limited range that they could be used only against Scandinavia (see Figure). Given the total absence of nuclear weapons in Scandinavia and the repeated Soviet assurances that they would never be the first ones to use nuclear weapons

against any country, such deployment of first-strike weapons is contradictory. The southern part of the Leningrad Military District has about a dozen SS-12 Scaleboard missiles with a range of 800 to 900 km and also SS-1c Scud missiles with a range of 300 to 350 km, while the Kola Peninsula has Scuds plus Frog-7 rockets with an 85 km range.¹⁰ The SS-12s thus could reach Sweden east of the Karlstad-Karlskrona line (with Stockholm

FIGURE. SOVIET NUCLEAR MISSILE RANGES IN NORTHERN EUROPE

well in reach), but no Central European areas where nuclear arms are deployed. The Leningrad MD (which includes the Kola Peninsula and borders on Belorussia in the south) also has other missiles of wider range which could be used against Central Europe or closer targets, but the SS-12s, Scuds, and Frogs can be used only against the present nuclear-weapon-free countries. From the Kola Peninsula the Frogs could be used only against the Norwegian border zone (and further Nordic areas in case of a Soviet ground troop advance), and the Scuds could reach only northernmost Finland, Norway (Finnmark), and Sweden (up to Luleå). The nuclear Scuds in the southern part of the Leningrad MD can reach no further than Helsinki or at most Turku in Finland. Presumably this is part of the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.

The SS-12s in the Baltic Military District (Kaliningrad oblast, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) present a more ambiguous picture. Their location is unclear. If located in Estonia, they could be used effectively only against Nordic areas as far as Oslo and Copenhagen. If located further south, they could also reach some West German areas. On the other hand, the Scuds in the Baltic MD can reach no further than the eastern coast of Sweden (including Stockholm) and Poland. They might represent second-echelon formations to be moved further south in time of war,¹¹ but they seem to be not just stored but deployed.

In view of such deployment, recent interest in Scandinavia has focused on removal of short-range Soviet missiles from their neighborhood, in exchange for a formal Nordic NWFZ agreement, rather than complete removal of all missiles. On 18 March 1981 the Swedish Government reiterated its long-standing view that any such agreement must include nuclear weapons "which are intended for targets within the zone, are stationed near the zone, and have ranges of a scale which make them best suited for targets within the Nordic area."¹² This time there was response. In an interview with Finland's *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* (16 June 1981), Soviet head of state Brezhnev not only offered "negative security guarantees" (i.e., a promise not to use nuclear weapons against the NWFZ) but also added: "This does not preclude the possibility of considering some other measures applicable to our own territory in the region adjoining the nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe."¹³ In November 1981 Brezhnev added that such measures could be "substantial."¹⁴ Brezhnev did not specify the measures in a positive way but clearly indicated that all Soviet territories discussed would be "adjoining" rather than part of the NWFZ. However, it turned out that some citizens of the USSR were willing to expand the scope beyond the one offered by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Their declaration brought a new constituency with a legitimate concern into the NWFZ debate.

The 1981 Open Letter For Inclusion Of The Baltic Republics

In response to Brezhnev's offer of June 1981 to consider some territories and measures, thirty-eight Soviet Baltic residents proposed specific ones,

in the following "Open Letter to the Heads of the Governments of the USSR, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden Concerning the Establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in North Europe," dated 10 October 1981.

The peoples and the governments of North Europe are at present considering various aspects of the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone in North Europe, as expressed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Herewith we propose to supplement the above idea by including the Baltic Sea and the Baltic countries—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—in the above-mentioned nuclear-free zone.

The extension of the nuclear-free zone to the Baltic Sea and to the Baltic countries would be logical because the area in question is actually part of North Europe. Moreover, this would render a possible future treaty all the more important because it would be a brilliant example of an equal and balanced disarmament. The extension of the nuclear-free zone to the Baltic Sea and to the Baltic countries would also be in the interest of the small Scandinavian and Baltic nations, more particularly by contributing to their future survival.

The Baltic nations have paid dearly for Great Power conflicts. Their sufferings were particularly deep during the Second World War when the front passed twice over their territories. Here it must be emphasized that the governments of the independent republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania made every effort to avoid involvement in the Great Power conflicts. The Baltic nations know, too, that the leaders of the Great Powers at that time ignored completely the wishes, the fate, and the opinions of the Baltic peoples when they divided the area into their spheres of influence. A drastic example of this is the Pact of 23 August 1939 between Nazi Germany and the USSR and its secret appendix which has not been published in the USSR to this day.

Because of the above, we consider it extremely important to devise guarantees which would help ensure the survival of small nations in case of possible Great Power conflicts.

We consider it natural and acceptable to all nations that an agreement concerning a nuclear-free zone in North Europe would ban the production and stationing of nuclear weapons as well as stationing and movements of any means (ships, aircraft, missiles) designed to carry nuclear warheads in the appropriate territories of the High Contracting Parties and in the Baltic Sea.

We hope that the NATO and the Warsaw Pact Powers will be able to guarantee the ban on nuclear weapons in the nuclear-free zone in North Europe, including the Baltic Sea and the Baltic countries. Such a ban on nuclear weapons in one area would be an important step towards the fulfillment of the greatest expectation of mankind—A COMPLETE DISARMAMENT.¹⁵

The letter was signed by fifteen Latvians, thirteen Estonians, and ten Lithuanians who probably reflected the preferences of a large proportion of the population. The desire to be included in a NWFZ has been voiced by so many people in Scandinavia, and symbolic proclamations of a local NWFZ have been undertaken by so many individual cities, communes, parishes, counties and districts in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, West Germany, and the United States,¹⁶ that it would be surprising, indeed, if no people in the USSR had skeptical feelings about the safety

of a nuclear umbrella compared to that of a NWFZ. It should not come as a surprise either that many of the signers had previously signed protest letters on other topics, too. As in the case of the West German "Greens," the various social concerns tend to fuse, and this does not necessarily detract from the merit of a particular protest or proposal. The collection of signatures from three different republics obviously presupposed some existing informal network. The names of the signers are given in the Appendix, and the background of the thirteen Estonian signers is known in some detail.¹⁷ By May 1984 at least five of the signers had been arrested and sentenced for peaceful dissent activities involving no stronger ideas or language than the ones in the letter above. At least in one case (Enn Tarto, sentenced on 18 April 1984) the indictment explicitly listed the Open Letter on the NWFZ as one of the most incriminating pieces of evidence.

What kind of views does this Letter express? Despite its shortness, several layers can be distinguished. Consider first the following "purged" version where all reference to the Baltic republics has been omitted, turning the Letter into a plea for the Nordic NWFZ to include the Baltic Sea:

The peoples and the governments of North Europe are at present considering various aspects of the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone in North Europe, as expressed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Herewith we propose to supplement the above idea by including the Baltic Sea in the above-mentioned nuclear-free zone.

The extension of the nuclear-free zone to the Baltic Sea would be logical because the area in question is actually part of North Europe. Moreover, this would render a possible future treaty all the more important because it would be a brilliant example of an equal and balanced disarmament. The extension of the nuclear-free zone to the Baltic Sea would also be in the interest of the small Scandinavian nations, more particularly by contributing to their future survival.

Because of the above, we consider it extremely important to devise guarantees which would help ensure the survival of small nations in case of possible Great Power conflicts.

We consider it natural and acceptable to all nations that an agreement concerning a nuclear-free zone in North Europe would ban the production and stationing of nuclear weapons as well as stationing and movements of any means (ships, aircraft, missiles) designed to carry nuclear warheads in the appropriate territories of the High Contracting Parties and in the Baltic Sea.

We hope that the NATO and the Warsaw Pact Powers will be able to guarantee the ban on nuclear weapons in the nuclear-free zone in North Europe, including the Baltic Sea. Such a ban on nuclear weapons in one area would be an important step towards the fulfilment of the greatest expectation of mankind—A COMPLETE DISARMAMENT.

The result of this exercise is a declaration very much in line with the shorter and simpler versions of Nordic peace appeals, regardless of whether one agrees on the technical feasibility of including the Baltic Sea. On that level the signers of the Letter are very much on the same wavelength as the mainline Nordic proponents of a NWFZ.

As the next step, reread the original text, leaving out only the third paragraph ("The Baltic nations have paid dearly . . . to this day"), and replacing "Baltic countries" by "Baltic republics." This version adds the proposal to include the Baltic republics in the NWFZ in a neutral way which antagonizes the Soviet Union as little as possible. (Some antagonizing is inevitable as long as the Soviet Union keeps viewing any initiative by its citizens as hostile.)

From the viewpoint of many Nordic proponents of a NWFZ ranging from Norway (or even Greenland) to the Baltic Sea, such a version would be awkward. It is too close to their own basic views to be mentally discarded without qualms. But if they do not discard the idea, then they would have to discuss it, and such discussion could turn off even the limited dialogue they have succeeded in establishing with the Soviet Union. Rather than aiming at an objectively "equal and balanced disarmament" on the part of NATO and the Warsaw Pact (to use the wording of the Baltic Letter) which could founder on one superpower's intransigence, it makes sense for them to aim at equal *effort* in both directions, even if it should yield more concessions from one superpower than from the other. This is the way to maximize the *total* amount of concessions made by the superpowers and hence to make headway toward a Nordic NWFZ. (One problem with this approach is that it may achieve local security increase at the cost of imbalancing the wider system, unless one assumes that the wider system is presently imbalanced in NATO's favor so that larger concessions by NATO would help to restore the balance.)

In face of such a dilemma, the third paragraph of the Open Letter (plus its pointed use of "countries" instead of "republics") comes as a real godsend: the document can be branded "revanchist" and "secessionist" and thus can be ignored without qualms by the Nordic NWFZ proponents and can be used by Soviet authorities as a pretext for jailing the signers. In this sense, the inclusion of the third paragraph was a mistake on the part of the authors of the Open Letter. Factual accuracy is here not an issue.¹⁸ The problem is that, accurate or not, the third paragraph detracts attention from the main issue. The case for including the Baltic republics in the Nordic NWFZ does not depend on what happened or did not happen in 1939 but on considerations of geography and strategic balance.

Due to lack of open discussion, statements both by Soviet officials and dissidents tend to be lacking in nuances and abound in repetitions of standardized main themes, and the third paragraph topic has been a staple theme for the Soviet Baltic civic activists. Despite that, the Open Letter acutally represents a novel breaking out from the customary mold of Baltic (and Soviet Union-wide) activist thought toward joining the worldwide peace movement mainstream. Sergei Batovrin, a founding member of the unofficial peace group in Moscow, has confirmed that the Baltic Letter was the first peace action by private Soviet citizens.¹⁹ As such, it represents a landmark: the first Soviet statement analogous to those of various US communities in favor of a local NWFZ. It differs from the latter in being

geographically realizable, in principle. These observations remain valid despite the composition flaws indicated. Thanks to the efforts of the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations (BATUN), a New York organization, the Open Letter has been made part of the official United Nations documentation on disarmament. To decide on whether the Letter has had any impact on decision-makers, one has to consider later developments.

Post-1981 Discussion Of The Inclusion Of The Baltic Republics

The Open Letter seemed to reach the West in late January or early February 1982. By 5 February it was broadcast by Radio Liberty. In March Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to President Carter, used a breakfast with reporters to urge President Reagan to take new initiatives to "reduce the level of East-West military confrontation" in Central Europe, with a possible follow-up in the form of a nuclear-free zone to include Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.²⁰ In an article of his own in the *Los Angeles Times*, Brzezinski discussed again the mutual arms reductions in Central Europe, then continued:

Subsequently, if the first steps prove feasible, it could be followed by negotiations for a Nordic atom-free zone, to be comprised of Norway and Denmark, both NATO members, neutral states Sweden and Finland, and the Kola peninsula and the Baltic states within the Soviet Union. I have no illusion that such a program could be quickly implemented or even accepted by the Soviet side. But we in the West have the obligation to think in historically timely terms, to fashion a response to the current crisis in Europe that is not only addressed to the Polish problem but which also deals particularly with the need for American-West European ties to be based on shared aspirations. Let the Soviets assume the burden for reigniting the Cold War; let the Soviets reject constructive proposals for peaceful change, carefully calibrated not to upset existing security arrangements.²¹

Brzezinski's use of "Baltic states within the Soviet Union" could be pondered for deep nuances of meaning, if he were not manifestly hurried in also using "atom-free," a term which has gone out of circulation because of its diffuseness: atoms and inter-atom reactions are not that unusual around and within us, to put it mildly. But this term will be seen as a useful tracer element in some subsequent discussion. Brzezinski changed both terms when he returned to the topic after Brezhnev's death:

With progress on Poland and with some thinning out of forces in Central Europe, it would then become possible to envisage follow-up discussions on some regional security arrangements. One such scheme might be a Nordic nuclear-free zone, spanning Denmark and Norway on the NATO side, Sweden and Finland as the in-between neutrals, and the Kola Peninsula and the Baltic Republics on the Soviet side. At the very best, this is a long-range project. But movement in that direction would be timely and constructive in the event of a positive Soviet interest in resolving some of the disagreements over Afghanistan and Poland.²²

Brzezinski was probably aware of the Baltic Open Letter when he made his first proposals, but there is no evidence that this is what inspired him. He expects that some disengagement in Central Europe must take place before the Nordic NWFZ can be seriously discussed. The Baltic Letter, like most other proposals for the Nordic NWFZ, views it as feasible independently of Central European developments (with disengagement in either sector being helpful regarding the other).

In May 1983 Soviet Communist Party leader Andropov responded to questions posed by "visiting representatives of various Finnish social organizations," one of which asked about Soviet guarantees for a Nordic NWFZ. Andropov promised not to use nuclear weapons against the NWFZ—a rather redundant addition to the general Soviet non-first-use declaration. He then proceeded:

Taking into account the wishes expressed in various Scandinavian countries, the Soviet Union would be willing to discuss some measures, and substantial ones at that, regarding its own territory adjacent to such a zone, in order to contribute to the consolidation of a nuclear-free status for Northern Europe.²³

Practically identical to what Brezhnev had said in 1981, the statement did not say that the Soviet Union would be willing to discuss the *inclusion* of any Soviet territory in the NWFZ. Like Brezhnev, Andropov rather specified that any Soviet territory would remain *adjacent* and hence not included. But the vague expression "and substantial ones at that" left the door open to all sorts of hopes precisely because it lacked any specific substance. By this time, several of the signers of the Baltic Open Letter (Heiki Ahonen, Ints Cālītis, Lagle Parek, and Arvo Pesti) had already been arrested.

During a visit by Finland's President Mauno Koivisto in June 1983, Andropov used practically identical words regarding Soviet territories, but seemed to make new concessions regarding the Baltic Sea:

We would also be willing to discuss the issue of some measures, and substantial ones at that, regarding our own territory adjacent to this zone. These measures would contribute to the strengthening of the nuclear-free status of the zone. The Soviet Union could also discuss with interested parties the issue of granting a nuclear-free status to the Baltic Sea waters.²⁴

Khrushchev had offered to include the Baltic Sea in the NWFZ in 1959, but this offer apparently was not repeated by Soviet leaders later on. By 1980 deployment limitations in the Baltic Sea had become a prime goal for Sweden; however, no inclusion of the Baltic Sea in the NWFZ nor even its complete nuclear disarmament outside the NWFZ scope was considered in view of monitoring difficulties. In this sense Andropov's offer (and a slightly earlier March 1983 statement by Lt.-General Nikolai Chervov on Swedish Television) went beyond what Sweden considered implementable.²⁵

A week later US President Ronald Reagan, at a 13 June reception for

Baltic Americans, made some remarks regarding Soviet occupation of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, and then proceeded:

It seems ironic that those responsible for the repression I've been describing are now proposing what they call "an atom-free Baltic," "a Nordic nuclear-free zone," especially since unidentified submarines have repeatedly violated the territorial waters of Norway and neutral Sweden. This kind of conduct doesn't lend itself to a spirit of trust. As a matter of fact, the curious thing is, if you really stop to think about it, their description of a nuclear-free zone is that there won't be nuclear weapons in that zone. The kind of nuclear-free zones we want in the world are the zones where nuclear weapons will not be landing and exploding.²⁶

Reagan's last sentence in the quotation is comparable in quality to Andropov's "and substantial ones at that." The attempt at ridicule flew in the face of not only Andropov but also of Nordic NWFZ proponents such as Sweden's Prime Minister Palme and Finland's President Koivisto. And not only them: it flew in the face of Heiki Ahonen, Ints Cālitis, Lagle Parek, and Arvo Pesti, wasting away at that time in Soviet prisons, in part for espousing the idea of the Nordic NWFZ which would "ban the production and stationing of nuclear weapons." The odd thing is that the general context of the event at which Reagan spoke did not oblige him to take a stand on the Nordic NWFZ. The insult to the Baltic dissidents looked gratuitous.

A chat with a member of Reagan's staff indicated that they were not aware of the Baltic Open Letter and that the item on the NWFZ was inserted into Reagan's remarks at the request of an American Baltic group with ties to the Republican Party. The use of the awkward expression "atom-free" in connection with "Baltic" rather than "North European" suggests that the main target was not Andropov (who had not used those terms) but rather Democrat Brzezinski. Yet the tar brush applied also to other proponents of nuclear-free Baltic republics. The Baltic exile group involved either was uninformed to the point of lacking awareness of a major and well-publicized joint document of the dissidents of the three Baltic republics (the aforementioned Open Letter), or they were bafflingly contemptuous of these courageous people and their ideas.

Half a year later another letter touching on the Nordic NWFZ was received from Estonia, with the lengthy title "To the Participants of the Conference on Disarmament and Confidence-Building Measures in Europe, Starting in January 1984 in Stockholm, and to the Peace Supporters Organizations in the Countries Around the Baltic." Dated Christmas Eve 1983, the letter was signed by the "Estonian Peace Supporters Rally 'Neutral and Nuclear-Free Baltic Countries.'" In view of the arrest of four Estonian signers of the 1981 Open Letter the anonymity of the 1983 letter was understandable. The lengthy text mainly reviewed Estonian-Soviet relations from 1918 to the Soviet annexation of Estonia in 1940. It further described Soviet military installations in the Baltic republics, Soviet military practices in general ("In high schools even girls must be able to

disassemble a gun and to fire it, and acquire basic skills in combat tactics"), and their anti-peace movement actions in particular ("When a few years ago a working man joined the October parade with a hand-made sign 'NATO—NO, UNO—YES,' it was considered so threatening to the state that the sign was trampled to pieces and the man was sentenced to several days in jail for 'hooliganism' "). In this outspoken context, the Nordic NWFZ belittled by Reagan was given full support:

When the Nordic countries brought forth the idea of turning Northern Europe into a nuclear-free zone, this idea met a sympathetic reaction among the natives of the Baltic countries: yes, the Scandinavian countries are nuclear-free but the Baltic provinces are not. . . . For us it is disgusting and appalling to think that a situation similar to that of 1939-40 could repeat itself, and the territory of the Baltic countries could be used as a basis for air attacks and landing operations aimed at the Scandinavian states. Yet even now the bases in Estonia are among the starting points for Soviet submarines which undertake ominous raids into the coastal waters of Sweden and Norway.²⁷

The declaration wondered why Western peace supporters are not more concerned about the Soviet military build-up in Kola and the Baltics, described various civil rights issues, and listed the prison sentences meted out to four Estonian signers of the 1981 Open Letter on the NWFZ. It concluded with an appeal that the Stockholm conference do the following: declare adherence to human rights as a prerequisite for trust and security among nations; demand release of Baltic human rights activists from prison; "undertake specific measures to create a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe, to include the three Baltic states"; and accept a January 1983 recommendation by the European Parliament that the Helsinki follow-up conferences raise the issue of decolonization in the Baltic states. In sum, the demand for Baltic inclusion in the NWFZ was made in a context of much deeper changes in the status quo which rendered the memo pretty much undiscussable by most Scandinavian supporters of the NWFZ idea. Just as some Estonian civil rights workers were almost learning to focus on one semi-realizable idea at a time, they were arrested, throwing the movement back to diffuse cover-all declarations common to official Soviet and samizdat styles.

Present Viewpoints

Various decision-makers and analysts have widely divergent opinions on the desirability and feasibility of inclusion of Soviet-ruled territories in general and of the Baltic republics in particular in the Nordic NWFZ. Some recent convergence can be observed regarding partial reduction of nuclear deployment in the Kola and Baltic areas.

The Soviet Union has rejected all proposals to include any of its territories in the NWFZ, emphasizing that Kola and the Baltic area are too sensitive strategically to be included in a local NWFZ.²⁸ As for the new willingness to discuss "some measures, and substantial ones at that,"

regarding these areas, Sweden has "in vain tried to find out what concessions the USSR would be prepared to give following the Brezhnev statements on the subject."²⁹ For lack of any more detailed Soviet offer, the non-substantialized expression "and substantial at that" has been quoted in profusion not only by Soviet representatives³⁰ but also Westerners, sometimes in proper quotation marks (e.g., Törnudd)³¹ but sometimes without them (e.g., Vaahtoranta),³² as if the commentator himself saw actual substance in the vague wording. The latter comes through especially intriguingly in President Koivisto's statement of 28 May 1983: "The Soviet Union . . . has also declared her readiness to discuss the question of certain essential measures which would relate to her own areas adjacent to the Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone."³³ This is a classic example of semantic reversal: the word "certain" here seems to stand for "uncertain" or "unspecified." A Norwegian analyst has observed that Finland is not in a position to "join the claims made on the Soviet Union (which would probably be regarded as less than friendly neighbourly behaviour)."³⁴ Finland is not even publicly inquiring about the Scuds in the southern Leningrad Military District which could reach no other non-Soviet cities except Helsinki, Tampere, and Turku.

The official Swedish view finds recent expression in a 1 June 1983 speech by Prime Minister Olof Palme who stressed Swedish capability to defend its neutrality and its people's consensus that "new violations of our territory must be prevented," presumably referring to recent submarine incidents. He said that "Sweden has very tangible evidence of the fact that military operations in the Baltic Sea have increased in intensity and scale." He firmly demanded a nuclear-weapon-free Baltic Sea but did not discuss the inclusion of Soviet territories apart from deployment limitations: "We also consider that nuclear weapons which are primarily intended or suitable for employment against targets within the contemplated zone should be withdrawn from our vicinity. These nuclear weapons, both land- and sea-based, would in practice be superfluous."³⁵

The official bargaining stance of Denmark and Norway would be coordinated with NATO, and no declarations analogous to those of Palme and Koivisto seemed to be made. However, it was fairly clear that Soviet deployment concessions sufficient to satisfy Sweden would not suffice to entice Norway and Denmark to give up on the NATO "nuclear umbrella," whatever its real value might be.

Among Nordic peace researchers opinions on the inclusion of Soviet territories in the NWFZ have been mixed, but mostly it is considered unrealistic³⁶ or non-functional.³⁷ One eminently reasonable line of justification has hardly ever been voiced: "The Soviet Union would never agree to it; therefore, let's not spoil the realizable by demanding the unrealizable." The very realism involved seemed to demand that this line of reasoning not be spelled out (although analogous statements about US rigidity regarding its Greenland-Iceland bases have been voiced). Instead, a different line of thinking has surfaced: the Nordic countries would not want any Soviet

territories to be included in the NWFZ even if the USSR volunteered them. This line of thinking is not unreasonable either, but at times it has looked like a conscious effort to hide the one previously mentioned. Most often the thesis has been presented without much discussion of pros and cons:

The inclusion of Soviet territory should not be envisaged, primarily because Soviet participation would imply Soviet dominance due to the unequal weight of a Super-Power within an arrangement where the other participant Powers are small states. Secondly, Soviet territory bordering on the Nordic area includes the Kola Peninsula which contains important nuclear assets in the context of the central balance of deterrence with the United States. Denuclearization of the Kola Peninsula would appear to constitute an inequitable arrangement from the point of view of Moscow. However, since the only nuclear weapons in Northern Europe are deployed on Soviet territory, a reduction in those weapons which because of their range and deployment could only be used against the Nordic areas should be envisaged.³⁸

The Soviet dominance argument would require further elaboration, given that both Soviet and US guarantees for the NWFZ are envisaged anyway. Any Soviet influence and concessions would have to be counterbalanced by those by the US, if the NWFZ is to become a reality. In this light the argument above for excluding the strategic Kola Peninsula makes sense. One would expect that an analogous discussion of the other Soviet north-western territories would come next, but the above quote never makes it. Without further argument about the un-Kola territories, the following is proposed as one of six basic "political boundary conditions" for the Nordic NWFZ: "Avoid the inclusion of Soviet territories."³⁹

On the other hand, some Nordic peace researchers have also observed that the United States will agree to talk about a Nordic NWFZ only if concessions are made regarding nuclear weapons on Soviet territory. Furthermore: "That such position of the United States is unavoidable also seems to have dawned upon the leadership of the Soviet Union, and since 1981, its position has been modified in various interview statements."⁴⁰ The implication is that the USSR has aired the possibility of deployment reduction in its territory not so much in response to Swedish maximum demands but US minimum demands. If so, then the Soviet Union may move even further in order to achieve an agreement with the US. What is the range of acceptable compromise for the United States?

From the US perspective a Nordic NWFZ including NATO countries but no Warsaw Pact territories is asymmetric, with the Soviet Union standing to gain more.⁴¹ However, few public statements have been made by US officials on how the balance could be corrected. In April 1979 Vice-President Walter Mondale voiced support for NWFZ negotiations by "all Nordic countries," subject to "some conditions" which remained unspecified. Later, Reagan appointees have pointed out that the "massive nuclear armaments in the Kola Peninsula and in the Baltic region" have been ignored (Assistant Secretary Eagleburger, June 1981) or they have even suggested that the US would not accept any NATO country joining

the NWFZ (Secretary of State Alexander Haig, August 1981) regardless of what the Soviet Union would offer in exchange.⁴² This unconditional stance came to a head with President Reagan's remarks (quoted above) of June 1983, apparently the first-ever comment on the Nordic NWFZ by a US President. A US government response to Finnish peace organizations in May 1983 charged that "The USSR has steadfastly refused, however, to consider unambiguously the inclusion of Soviet territory in a zone"⁴³ without indicating what the US counter-concessions might be if the Soviet Union changed its stance.

To some extent the lack of detailed proposals may be caused by neither side being able to take the first step. Any active proposals made by the United States (or Norway, or Finland) regarding inclusions of Soviet territory in the NWFZ would sound like interference in Soviet internal affairs, and Moscow might feel compelled to refuse on those grounds alone. The initiative should come from the Soviet side; but why would Moscow volunteer something that has not even been asked for? Here non-governmental peace researchers could be of some help in voicing new ideas.

A deeper reason for the US lack of detail is a conviction, shared by Brzezinski and the Reagan administration alike, that the Nordic NWFZ cannot be established before the Central European issues are solved. The Reagan administration furthermore believes that negotiations regarding Central Europe would become more complicated if the NWFZ happened to become a reality or even if the NWFZ were discussed too loudly.⁴⁴

Americans fear that only a (partial or total) American nuclear withdrawal from Europe can induce the Soviet Union to include important elements of their own weaponry and of their territory in such a Nordic zone agreement. In a war, however, such a zone would not reduce the major nuclear threat against the Nordic countries.⁴⁵

Conclusions

In principle, a Nordic NWFZ would be in the interest of all small nations of Northern Europe, and some support for it has been voiced among all of them (including the Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians), but its realization is making very slow progress. A NWFZ including only the neutral Sweden and Finland seems to have little appeal, and inclusion of NATO countries seems to be feasible only if some Soviet territories are involved not just in terms of vague collateral measures but formal inclusion in the NWFZ. Because of global strategic considerations the denuclearization of the Kola Peninsula is out of the question, leaving only the Baltic republics under consideration.

A serious consideration of the inclusion of the Baltic republics is still being avoided, but there is a slight trend toward facing the issue, as other promising avenues gradually are investigated and prove to be dead ends. In their different ways, Soviet willingness to discuss "substantial measures," Brzezinski's vistas of a Nordic settlement in the wake of a Cen-

tral European one, and the Baltic peace activists' Open Letter all point in the same direction.

One could conclude with some observations that might be shared by many a person in the Baltic republics:

BALTIC LIBERATION GRUNT

We are the most liberated people
of this century.
We liberated ourselves in our War of Independence.
We were liberated from ourselves by Stalin.
The Germans liberated us from the Russians,
the Russians liberated us from the Germans,
and now we can only hope
that Western missiles will not liberate us
from the Soviets and from our lives.

APPENDIX

**SIGNERS OF THE 10 OCTOBER 1981 "OPEN LETTER TO THE
LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE USSR,
ICELAND, NORWAY, DENMARK, FINLAND, AND SWEDEN
CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-
FREE ZONE IN NORTH EUROPE."**

F = Female, M = Male, E = Estonian, LA = Latvian, LI = Lithuanian.

Birth date is shown after name, if available.

- F E Eva Ahonen 1931—home searched by Soviet police authorities, 1 March 1983; interrogated later.
- M E Heiki Ahonen 1956—arrested on 13 April 1983, sentenced on 16 December 1983 to 5 years prison plus 2 years banishment.
- F LI A. Andrijauskaitė
- M E Rein Arjukese—home search and interrogation, 1 and 2 March 1983; further interrogations later.
- M LA Ivars Blankenfelds
- F LI Birutė Burauskaitė
- M LA Ints Čālītis 1931—arrested in April 1983; sentenced in September 1983 to 6 years prison.
- F LI K. Černiauskienė
- F E Ulle Einasto 1946—office search and interrogation, 1 and 2 March 1983; further interrogations later.
- M LA Gunārs Gūtmanis
- F E Ilse Heinsalu 1929—home search and interrogation, 1 and 2 March 1983; further interrogations later.

- F E Karin Inno 1939—home search and interrogation, 1 and 2 March 1983; further interrogations later.
- M E Urmas Inno 1949—home search and interrogation, 1 and 2 March 1983; further interrogations later.
- M LI A. Kazlauskas
- F LI R. Kazlauskienė
- F LI V. Kazlauskaitė
- M LI V. Kielsa (Kiela?)
- F LA Aija Krūmiņa
- F LA Inta Kārklīņa
- F LI L. Kulvietyte
- M LA Kārlis Lapīņš
- M LA Jānis Leipiņš
- M LA Ēvalds Ližberskis
- M LA Laimonis Lūsis
- F LA Astra Niedre
- M LA Juris Niedre
- F E Lagle Parek 1941—arrested on 5 March 1983; sentenced on 16 December 1983 to 6 years prison plus 3 years banishment.
- M E Arvo Pesti 1956—arrested on 13 April 1983; sentenced on 16 December 1983 to 5 years prison plus 2 years banishment.
- M LA Elmārs Prauliņš (Krauliņš?)
- F E Eve Pārnaste 1951—home search and interrogation, 1 March 1983; interrogations later.
- M E Endel Ratas
- M LA Gunārs Stefans
- M LA Pēteris Štokmanis
- F LA Māra Zīle
- M E Enn Tarto 1938—arrested on 13 September 1983; sentenced on 18 April 1984 to 10 years prison plus 5 years banishment.
- M E Erik Udam 1938
- M LI Jonas Petkevičius? (Protsevičius?)
- F LI Ona Poškienė-Lukauskaitė 1900—founding member (1976) of the Lithuanian Helsinki Watch Committee; died on 4 December 1983.

NOTES

- 1 This research was supported by a grant from the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, University of California. I thank Professors Julius Margolis and Toivo Raun for research materials and Professor William Schonfeld for assistance with French. An earlier version of this article was presented in French at the Ninth Conference on Baltic Studies, 14 to 16 June 1984, Université de Montréal.
- 2 E.g., E. Ekeus, "How to Proceed Towards a Nordic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone," in Sverre Lodgaard and Marek Thee, eds., *Nuclear Disengagement in Europe* (London: Taylor & Francis, for Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1983), 245.
- 3 Ibid., 241.
- 4 Håkan Wiberg, "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones as a Process: The Nordic Case," in Karl Möttölä ed., *Nuclear Weapons and Northern Europe: Problems and Prospects of Arms Control* (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 1983), 19; J. Wiejacz, "A Central European View on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the North," in Lodgaard and Thee, 76.

- 5 Lodgaard and Thee; Möttölä; Bo Hult and Atis Lejins, eds., *Security in the North: Nordic and Superpower Perceptions* (Stockholm: The Swedish Institute on International Affairs, Conference Papers No. 5, 1984).
- 6 M. Saeter, "Nuclear Disengagement Efforts 1955-80: Politics of *Status Quo* or Political Change?," in Lodgaard and Thee, 60; Wiberg, 20-21.
- 7 Wiejacz, 72.
- 8 Toivo Miljan, "East vs. West: Political and Military Strategy and the Baltic Littoral," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 12 (1981), 209-33.
- 9 Sverre Lodgaard, "Nuclear Disengagement," in Lodgaard and Thee, 14; Johan Jørgen Holst, "A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Nordic Area: Conditions and Options," in Möttölä, 8.
- 10 Lodgaard, 33; Holst, 10.
- 11 Lodgaard, 49.
- 12 As quoted in Lodgaard, 32.
- 13 *New Times*, No. 27 (1981), 8-9.
- 14 Tapani Vaahtoranta, "Nuclear Weapons and the Nordic Countries: Nuclear Status and Policies," in Möttölä, 57.
- 15 Rein Taagepera, *Softening Without Liberalization in the Soviet Union: The Case of Jüri Kukk* (Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America, 1984), 185-86.
- 16 Jaakko Kalela and Raimo Väyrynen, "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: Past Experiences and New Perspectives," in Möttölä, 71.
- 17 See, e.g., Taagepera, *Softening Without Liberalization*.
- 18 For an overview of contemporary Baltic history, see Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1980* (London: Hurst, and Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983).
- 19 "Rahu eest võitlejad," *Side* No. 4 (December 1983), 2 (Stockholm: Estonian Social Democratic Party Section Abroad).
- 20 *The New York Times*, 20 March 1982.
- 21 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A More Punitive Policy Toward Poland is Needed," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 March 1982.
- 22 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Deal For Andropov," *The New Republic*, 13 December 1982, 11-15.
- 23 Translated from Soviet Estonia's main daily *Rahva Hääl*, 11 May 1983.
- 24 *Rahva Hääl*, 7 June 1983.
- 25 Klaus Törnudd, "Possible Rules Regulating the Transit of Nuclear Weapons Inside and Their Deployment Outside the NWFZ," in Lodgaard and Thee, 204; Lodgaard, 46, 32.
- 26 Ronald Reagan, Remarks at the reception for Baltic Americans, Washington, 13 June 1983; reproduced in *Latvian Information Bulletin* (Washington: Legation of Latvia), No. 3/83 (July 1983).
- 27 Full Estonian version in the Stockholm bimonthly *Teataja*, 4 February 1984.
- 28 Wiejacz, 76.
- 29 Ekeus, 242.
- 30 Oleg Bykov, "A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the North of Europe: A Soviet View," in Möttölä (1983), 30.
- 31 Törnudd, 203.
- 32 Vaahtoranta, 60.
- 33 Mauno Koivisto, Statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the plan for a Nordic NWFZ, 28 May 1982; reproduced in Möttölä, 82.
- 34 Wiberg, 21.
- 35 Olof Palme, "Security and Stability in the Nordic Area," speech to the Paasikivi Society, Helsinki, 1 June 1983; reproduced in Möttölä, 83-86.

- 36 Vaahtoranta, 63.
- 37 Lodgaard, 29.
- 38 Holst, 7-8.
- 39 Ibid., 9.
- 40 Wiberg, 19.
- 41 Robert E. Hunter, "Nuclear Weapons and Northern Europe: The Global Setting," in Möttölä, 46; Raimo Väyrynen, "Military Alliances, Nuclear Deterrence, and Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones," in Möttölä, 47; Kalela and Väyrynen, 69.
- 42 Vaahtoranta, 60.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Kalela and Väyrynen, 68; personal communication.
- 45 Svein Melby, "The USA and Security in the Nordic Countries," in Huldt and Lejins, 50.