Swedish Foreign Policy, 1809–2019

A Comprehensive Modern History

Graeme D. Eddie

Starting with 1809, Sweden's 'year zero' and a period of deep national trauma, this book studies the relationship between Sweden and its environment, and foreign policy and overlapping security and defence policies. The book displays the pattern to Swedish foreign policy behavior, at times solidarity and involvement, at times disengagement and isolation, depending on the actions of larger powers in the neighbourhood. The author examines Sweden's independence from, dependence on, orientation towards, and then acquiescence in Europe, and the release of a 'revolution' in Swedish foreign policy from the early 1990s. The author also studies a process of steady Swedish Europeanization and the emergence of a post-neutral stance. The book's endpoint is the European Parliamentary election 2019, which resulted in a stemming of the populist tide in Sweden which had grown from disconnection between a Europe-reluctant electorate and Europe-enthusiastic politicians. The book also looks towards Swedish policy ambitions and prospects for the 2020s and continuation of the 'revolution'.

Graeme D. Eddie has worked and studied in Sweden, and his political science research in Stockholm contributed to a PhD (Aberdeen University). He has published in *The World Today*, RIIA, London. He was a librarian/archivist at the Centre for Research Collections, Edinburgh University Library, of which he is currently an Honorary Fellow.

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Figure P.1: The Swedish Foreign Ministry. Source: Sjöberg Bildbyrå

Arvfurstens palats [Palace of the Prince Royal, or Princess Royal, also known as the Palace of the Hereditary Prince, or Princess] is located at *Gustav Adolfs torg 1* [1 Gustav Adolf's Square] in Stockholm's Old Town and is today the seat of the Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry. The neoclassical-style Palace—photographed here in 1914, probably by the studio of Axel Theodor Lindahl (1841–1906)—was designed by Erik Palmstedt (1741–1803). Palmstedt had been commissioned by Gustav III (1746–92) to provide a residence fit for his sister, Sophia Albertina, the Princess Royal (1753–1829), and it was built between 1783 and 1794 on the site of an older German-Dutch renaissance residence. The Princess bequeathed the Palace to the Swedish heir presumptive—hereditary prince—and it subsequently became the home of Oscar (later Oscar II) then Gustav (later Gustav V). From 1906, it has served as the seat of Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In front of the Ministry is an equestrian statue of Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), or Gustav II Adolf, who had brought Sweden its *Stormaktstiden* [period of great power].

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The cover illustration of Arvfurstens palats (serving as the Swedish Foreign Ministry from 1906), possibly taken by a photographer from the Axel Lindahl

studio in 1914, has been sourced from the Sjöberg Bildbyrå in Vilhelmina, Västerbotten, northern Sweden.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AB	*Aktiebolag*, Limited Company, Corporation
ABB	ABB Group, ASEA Brown Boveri
AfS	*Alternativ för Sverige,* Alternative for Sweden
ASEA	*Allmänna Svenska Elektriska Aktiebolaget*, Swedish General Electric Company
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
ATP	*Allmän tilläggspension,* General supplementary pension
AU	*Arbetsmarknadsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on the Labour Market
BALTIMAX	Term referring to the maximum laden vessel size capable of navigating the approaches and exits to the Baltic Sea
C	*Centerpartiet*, the Centre Party
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMA	*see COMECON*
COCOM	Co-ordinating Committee for East-West Trade
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CRRT	Cyber Rapid Response Team

CSCE	*see OSCE*
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CU	*Civilutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Civil Affairs
DN	*Dagens Nyheter*, a daily newspaper
DÖ	*Decemberöverenskommelsen,* December Agreement, 2014–15
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EC	European Community, European Communities
ECB	European Central Bank
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EDI	European Deterrence Initiative
EDC	European Defence Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EES	*Europeiska ekonomiska samarbetsområdet*, *see EEA*
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EG	*Europeiska gemenskaperna*, *see EC*
EMC	European Medical Command
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EOP	Enhanced Opportunities Partner
EP	European Parliament
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative
ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism
EU	European Union
EU NAVFOR	EU Naval Force
EU-nämnden	Committee on European Union Affairs
EUR	Euro €
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
EUROFOR	European Rapid Operational Force
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EU-SSA-N	European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network
EUTMCC	EU Training Mission Competence Centre
FFA	*Flygtekniska försöksanstalten*, National Aeronautical Research Institute
FFV	*Försvarets fabriksverk,* former industrial component of the Swedish Armed Forces
FI	*Feministiskt initiativ,* the Feminist Initiative

FiU	*Finansutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Finance
FMV	*Försvarets materielverk,* Swedish Defence Materiel Administration
FN	*Förenta Nationerna*, UN
FOA	*Försvarets Forskningsanstalt*, National Defence Research Institute
FOI	*Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut*, Swedish Defence Research Agency
Fp	*Folkpartiet,* People's Party, earlier manifestation of the Liberals in Sweden, *see L*
FPL	*Folkpartiet liberalerna, FPL*, or Liberal People's Party, *see L*
FRA	*Försvarets radioanstalt*, National Defence Radio Establishment
FöU	*Försvarsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Defence
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HAW	Heavy Airlift Wing
HNSA	*Värdlandsavtalet,* NATO Host Nation Support Agreement
HSwMS	*Hans/Hennes Majestäts Skepp,* His/Her Swedish Majesty's Ship
IEPG	Independent European Programme Group
IF Metall	Swedish trade union formed from the merger of *Industrifacket* (Swedish Industrial Union) and *Metall* (*Svenska Metallindustriarbetareförbundet*, or Swedish Metalworkers' Union)
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISP	*Inspektionen för strategiska produkter*, Swedish National Inspectorate of Strategic Products, 1996–, successor to KMI
JAS	*Jakt Attack Spaning*, Hunter (air-to-air), attack (air-to-ground) and reconnaissance jet plane
JEIS	Joint European Intelligence School
JuU	*Justitieutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Justice
KD	*Kristdemokraterna*, the Christian Democratic Party
KMI	*Krigsmaterielinspektionen*, Inspectorate General of Military Equipment 1935–1996, *see ISP*
KrU	*Kulturutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Cultural Affairs
KU	*Konstitutionsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on the Constitution
L	*Liberalerna*, the Liberals, Sweden's Liberal Party
LO	*Landsorganisation*, the Confederation of Trade Unions in Sweden
LRF	*Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund,* Federation of Swedish Farmers
M	*Moderaterna*, or *Moderata samlingspartiet*, the Moderates, Sweden's Conservatives

MED	*Medborgerlig Samling,* the Citizens' Coalition
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUJUSTH	UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINURSO	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MJU	*Miljö- och jordbruksutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Environment and Agriculture
MONESCO	UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MP	*Miljöpartiet,* the Green Party, Sweden's Greens
MSB	*Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap*, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NACC	North Atlantic Co-operation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBG	EU Nordic Battlegroup
NDR	*Nash dom—Rossiya*, Our Home—Russia
NK	*Nordiska Kompaniet*, The Nordic Company
NNA	Neutral and Non-aligned
NORDEK	Nordic Economic Union
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NRF	NATO Response Force
NU	*Näringsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Industry and Trade
NyD	*Ny Demokrati*, New Democracy
ÖB	*Överbefälhavaren*, Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, formerly the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
OUP	NATO Operation Unified Protector
PESCO	Permanent Structured Co-operation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PII	Partnership Interoperability Initiative
PJCCM	Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters
PP	*Piratpartiet*, the Pirate Party

S	*Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti,* the Social Democratic Party, the Social Democrats
SAAB / Saab	*Svenska Aeroplan AB*, Swedish Aeroplane Company Limited
SAC	Strategic Airlift Capability
SAF	*Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen*, Swedish Employers' Confederation
SAP	*see S*
SBC	Schengen Borders Code
SCB	*Statistiska centralbyrån*, Statistics Sweden
SD	*Sverigedemokraterna,* the Sweden Democrats
SEA	Single European Act
SEB	*Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB*, Scandinavian Private Bank
SEK	Swedish Kronor
SFOR	Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SfU	*Socialförsäkringsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Social Insurance
SIDA / Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
SIFO	*Svenska institutet för opinions-undersökningar*, a polling agency
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SJ	*Statens Järnvägar*, Swedish State Railways, 1888–2001
SKF	*AB SKF, Svenska Kullagerfabriken*, Swedish Ball-Bearing Factory
SKL	*Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting*, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SKOP	*Skandinavisk Opinion*
SKP	*Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti,* Communist Party of Sweden
SkU	*Skatteutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Taxation
SLOC	Sea Line of Communication
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOM	*SOM Institutet—Samhälle, Opinion, Medier*, Research institute at Gothenburg University (*Göteborgs universitet*)
SoU	*Socialutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Health and Welfare
SPF	*Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar*, National Board for Psychological Research
SSU	*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsförbund,* Swedish Social Democratic Youth League
SvD	*Svenska Dagbladet*, a daily newspaper
SVT	*Sveriges Television AB*, Swedish Television
SÄPO	*Säkerhetspolisen*, Swedish Security Service

TFCMA	Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance
TU	*Trafikutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Transport and Communications
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UbU	*Utbildningsutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Education
UI	*Utrikespolitiska Institutet*, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEF I	UN Emergency Force I
UNEF II	UN Emergency Force II
UNGOMAP	UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan
UNIFICYP	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UNIIMOG	UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group
UNISOM	UN Operation in Somalia
UNMISS	UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNMOGIP	UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNPROFOR	UN Protection Force
UNTSO	UN Truce Supervision Organization
UU	*Utrikesutskottet*, Permanent Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
V	*Vänsterpartiet*, the Left Party
WEU	Western European Union
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Swedish Political Parties[1] in May 2019

After the 2018 General Election, there were eight political parties represented in the Swedish parliament (*Riksdag*). A party must receive at least 4 per cent of the votes in a General Election to be assigned any seats in parliament. Listed here are the eight parties currently represented, followed by four which are the largest parties so far not represented, and one which burst onto the political scene in the 1990s and crashed out again just as suddenly:

Social Democrats (*Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti, S*)

Founded in 1889, making it the oldest political party in Sweden, today, it is Sweden's largest political party. Social Democrat policies are based on freedom, equality and solidarity, and the party gives priority to job creation and providing a better education for all. The Social Democrats held a very prominent position in Swedish politics between the 1930s and the 1980s.

Moderates (*Moderaterna / Moderata samlingspartiet, M)*

Founded in 1904, starting out as a conservative and nationalist party, today the party defines itself as liberal-conservative—a conservative party with liberal ideas. Freedom to choose is at the core of its policies. The Moderates also generally support low taxation and economic liberalism. The party has restyled itself in recent years, known as the 'New Moderates' (*Nya Moderaterna*) for a time and also 'The new Swedish model' (*Den nya svenska modellen*).

Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna, SD*)

Founded in 1988, *SD* is a social conservative party based on nationalism, and first and foremost associated with the issue of migration. The party believes that the country's immigration policy has been over generous, with many of the migrants placing huge strains on society and the economy.

Centre Party (*Centerpartiet, C*)

It is a liberal and agriculture political party founded in 1913 as the Farmers' League. With a focus on the economy, the environment and integration, the party believes that society should be built on responsibility towards each other and towards the environment. When Karin Söder (1928–2015) was chosen as party leader in 1985, she became the first woman to lead a major Swedish political party.

Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet, V*), led by Jonas Sjöstedt

It defines itself as a socialist and feminist political party on an ecological basis. It has been called 'the Left Party' since 1990, but the first foundations of the party were laid in 1917 in a split from the Social Democrats. It became the Communist Party of Sweden in 1921. *V* gives principal focus to jobs, welfare and gender equality. The party was against Sweden joining the EU in 1995 and it still advocates leaving.

Christian Democratic Party (*Kristdemokraterna, KD*)

Founded in 1964 and first voted into parliament in 1991, *KD* believes that stable families are the basis of society, and so family-oriented policies are prominent. It focusses on improving elderly care and giving families the freedom to choose their own childcare. To promote growth and to bring down unemployment, they advocate simpler regulations for companies and low taxation.

Liberals (*Liberalerna, L*)

Founded in 1934 as the People's Party (*Folkpartiet*), changing its name to the Liberal People's Party (*Folkpartiet liberalerna, Fp*) in 1990, and then simply 'the Liberals' in 2015, it is a liberal and social–liberal political party. The Liberals have claimed to hold a middle position in the Swedish political landscape, but over the last few years, its critics consider it to have become more conservative. The improvement of the school system is a key issue for the party, and another is joining North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and investment in nuclear energy.

Green Party (*Miljöpartiet, MP*)

It was founded in 1981 and had its breakthrough in 1988, winning seats in parliament for the first time. The principal *MP* focus is on environmental issues, particularly measures to stop climate change and to protect the environment. The party is against nuclear power, but it promotes European integration.

Feminist Initiative (*Feministiskt initiativ*, *FI*)

It was founded in 2005 with policies based on: equal rights regardless of sex, age, disability, sexual orientation or skin colour/ethnic background. *FI* has not won any seats in the *Riksdag*, polling only 0.46 per cent in 2018, and its best General Election was in 2014 when it polled 3.1 per cent. It did well in local elections and the EP election in 2014.

Alternative for Sweden (*Alternativ för Sverige, AfS*)

It was founded in 2017 with policies based on immigration issues, non-interventionism, and law and order. It wants Sweden to leave the EU and is against Sweden joining NATO. *AfS* has not won any seats in the *Riksdag*, reaching only a 0.31 per cent share of the vote in 2018.

Citizens' Coalition (*Medborgerlig Samling, MED*)

Founded in 2014, *MED* is Sweden's third largest party not to have any seats in the *Riksdag*. Described variously as right-wing populist, radical and anti-immigration, the party focusses on the rights and responsibilities of the individual. In the 2018 General Election, it won 0.2 per cent of the vote.

Pirate Party (*Piratpartiet, PP*)

It was founded in 2006 with politics based on freedom from oppression and censorship. The party has not won any seats in the *Riksdag*, getting only 0.11 per cent of the votes in 2018.

New Democracy (*Ny Demokrati, NyD*), now defunct

The right-wing and populist New Democracy had a short political life. It was founded in 1991 and was dissolved in 2000. *NyD* policies had immediate appeal, ranging from low taxation, stricter law and order, abandonment of neutrality, Nordic- and Baltic-centred foreign policy, stricter rules on foreign aid, and anti-immigration. The party won 25 seats in its first General Election in 1991 but was out again in 1994.

Note

1. Mainly from 'Political parties in Sweden', in the official website of Sweden administered by the Swedish Institute (2013–2019), https://sweden.se/society/political-parties-in-sweden/ accessed 10 May 2019.

Introduction

Seventeenth-century Sweden was a great power and in competition with Denmark had created for itself a wide Baltic realm. In earlier centuries, expansion to the east and along the southern shore of the Baltic gave security to trade, created a defensive hinterland for the protection of Swedish domains in Finland, and provided a bridgehead into the continent. With lordship over the Baltic Sea—*Dominium maris baltici*—Sweden was able to influence not only the future development of its own environmental setting in the Baltic and northern Europe, but also that of the international system of the time. However, the Swedish imperial experience and its Baltic dominance did not last very long.

In 1709, at Poltava in central Ukraine, the Swedish army led by Karl XII suffered catastrophic defeat by the Russian army of Peter the Great. Sweden lost its prestige and position as a great European power, along with its Baltic realm in Estonia and Latvia. National trauma was re-lived a century later when, in 1809 during the Napoleonic Wars, Sweden lost Finland—part of the Swedish realm for some 600 years—and faced Russian forces on its own soil.

This new catastrophe—Sweden's 'year zero'—led to the fall of Gustav IV Adolf in a coup d'etat and a new constitution establishing a separation of the powers of the monarch from those of parliament. It also thrust onto the scene a new heir, Karl Johan—Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte—a French Marshal, chosen by the military and political elite, popular among ordinary Swedes, and certain

to win back Finland. Instead, recognizing Sweden's limitations, the strength of Imperial Russia, and the growing power of the German states, his 'Policy of 1812' envisioned a Scandinavian peninsular state, incorporating Norway and dominated by Sweden, and which would be westwards orientated, breaking the constant cycle of conflict and war with Russia to the east.

Although the peninsular state never fully came about, that same Swedish political and military elite nevertheless had accepted Karl Johan's vision. Sweden would never again fight enemy forces on its own territory, never again tried to regain Finland, and after a brief war against Norway in 1814 never again declared war against another country. The union with Norway that did come about was a Union of Crowns only, lasting until 1905.

An important legacy of the foreign policy that Karl Johan would unfold for Sweden was his adoption of political neutrality, and the principles of his policy were enunciated on his accession to the throne in 1818. Karl XIV Johan declared that the policy and interests of Sweden-Norway would always lead the two Scandinavian peoples—geographically separated as they were from the rest of Europe—to refrain from involving themselves in any dispute which did not directly concern them.

A memorandum to the Russian and British governments concerning the Eastern Question in 1834 was the first diplomatic expression of a Swedish policy of neutrality, but it would take some years before that generally recognized international image of Sweden became fixed. Over succeeding years, the evolving policy of non-alliance and neutrality—along with circumstance and luck—enabled Sweden to steer itself away from the aggression, invasion, occupation and privation that would punctuate European history well into the twentieth century. This policy choice ensured the survival of the Swedish state, and the preservation of Swedish national freedom and independence.

Twentieth-century Sweden was a small state that, far from being able to shape international developments, had to adapt to them. But then, adaption was a behavioural process undergone by all states—small and large alike. From time to time, all states have had to take stock of the external environment—perhaps a strategic one, perhaps an economic one—and the shifting conditions of that environment, as well as their own relationship to it, and then adjust and adapt foreign policy behaviour in the best way open to them. All states have had to adjust and adapt in order to survive. The environment could limit what was possible for a state, influencing foreign policy behaviour and making certain actions more or less likely.

With the emergence of the Soviet Union as the new Baltic superpower post-1945, and in an international system characterized by bloc division, Sweden

adjusted and adapted to the conditions of the new strategic environment. With Finland pulled towards the Soviet Union, and Norway pulled towards the emerging NATO, Sweden fashioned a peacetime foreign policy that avoided levels of alignment and commitment—both in the strategic and economic environments—thought likely to weaken the credibility of wartime neutrality. Until the momentous and memorable year of 1989—the Year of Revolution—only a few countries in Europe, one of them Sweden, had been able to conduct such a successful diplomacy outside the two military alliances of the postwar system.

The rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev and the unveiling of his new policies of openness and restructuring, his belief in a different road to the future, and his repudiation of the Stalinist system provided the catalyst for change across central and eastern Europe. Through his policy of self-determination in central and eastern Europe, Gorbachev set off a wholly unexpected chain of events in 1989, in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania. The revolutions of 1989 and the disintegration of the old postwar system would eventually work change on the Baltic area too, posing a particular challenge to the neutral security policies of Sweden and Finland.

As the 1980s drew to a close, Gorbachev's reform policy and its outcome constituted the strategic dimension of a dual challenge facing Sweden. An economic dimension to the challenge was presented by the growing intrusiveness and the direction and dynamism of Europe—the Europe of the Twelve. Guided by Jacques Delors in his capacity as President of the European Commission, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, UK, Greece, Portugal and Spain were headed for an inner market providing for the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital across their national boundaries.

Challenged by the reform policies and dynamism of these pivotal European politicians—Gorbachev and Delors—intense domestic debate began in Sweden, focussing on the traditional policy of neutrality, and dominated by misgivings about the credibility of that policy and, in the face of growing economic linkage with western Europe, about the future of the Swedish economy.

Hitherto, the policy line on Europe had been marked down in two major speeches on Swedish foreign and security policy given in different decades by Tage Erlander as Prime Minister and leader of the Social Democrats, and by Olof Palme as leader of the Social Democrats and in opposition.

Erlander's 'Metal Speech' before the Congress of the Swedish Steel and Metalworkers' Union in 1961 and Palme's 'Tetra Pak Speech' in 1981 at the headquarters of Tetra Pak, the multinational food packaging firm, each expressed distance from and opposition to integration with Europe.

Then in 1990, the 'Paper Speech' given by Stig Malm, chair of *Landsorganisationen LO* [the Confederation of Trade Unions in Sweden] to the Congress of the Swedish Paper-Industry Workers' Union, signalled the major reversal to traditional policy made by the Social Democrats and a readiness to join 'Europe'.

In 1991, Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson submitted a historic membership application at The Hague, and then in Bonn also in 1991, new Prime Minister Carl Bildt described Sweden's shift to Europe as a decisive epoch-making event, one that required Sweden's traditional policy to adapt. Neutrality could no longer adequately be applied as an overall description of the foreign and security policies that Sweden wanted to pursue.

The subsequent political process towards final EU accession on 1 January 1995, punctuated by the signing of the agreement in Oporto setting up the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992 and the formal signing of the EU membership agreement in Corfu in 1994, would amount to no less than a Swedish 'policy revolution'—a revolution implemented by both Social Democratic and non-socialist governments and coalitions over two decades. It is a 'revolution' that may not yet be over.

The accession of Sweden to the EU in 1995 had been a significant moment in its history, and the magnitude of the moment would be comparable with only two other events in the history of the Swedish state. The first of these was when Gustavus Adolphus intervened in European affairs, landing in Pomerania in 1630 and involving Sweden in the Thirty Years War. This established the country, and its empire, as a significant European actor until the eighteenth century. The second was in the latter stage of the Napoleonic Wars when Karl Johan pursued his 'Policy of 1812'. This eased Sweden's elite—military and political, and still pained by great national trauma—away from the path of old conflicts in the east with Russia.

In the years following Sweden's accession to the EU, the perception of Sweden strongly profiling itself as a neutral country had hardly changed in the eyes of most trading partners and political allies, nor among the general public across Europe and the wider world. But then, 1995 was not so very long ago when set against the backdrop of nearly two centuries of such a profile and an image of long-standing created by a very strong brand.

Europeanizing Sweden had settled into its new role—one EU member among many—holding a successful Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2001, again in 2009, and next expecting to hold the Presidency in 2023. While still not involving itself in military alliances, Sweden's membership of the EU—an economic and political alliance—as well as growing co-operation with NATO

presented a substantially changed policy profile to anyone who cared to take a look and a picture of a country comfortable in its post-neutral personality.

This change in the Swedish political personality and security profile had been steadily continuous: membership of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), since 1994, and participation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC); new doctrine in 2002 committing Sweden to co-operating with other countries in response to threats against peace and security, and the dropping of any formal reference to neutrality in government statements; participation in the EU Nordic Battlegroup (NBG), from 2008; participation in the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), an initiative for NATO members and partners, also from 2008; declaration of solidarity in 2009 committing Sweden to take action if another EU member or a Nordic country suffered disaster or attack and, in order to allow reciprocity, enabling the Swedish Armed Forces to both give and to receive military assistance; confirmation of Nordic solidarity based on the Stoltenberg Report, in 2011; also in 2011, a strong contribution to the NATO Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, designated Operation Karakal; stated willingness to contribute to international efforts when the need arose, regardless of whether these were led by the UN, the EU, or NATO, since 2012; designation as a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII), in 2014; ratification of a memorandum of understanding with NATO on host nation support, in 2016; participation of several NATO countries in the large Swedish Armed Forces exercise 'Aurora 17', in 2017; welcoming of increased NATO presence in the Baltic Sea region, and the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) from the USA, in 2017; intention of joining the new Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO), part of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), in 2018; and participation of Sweden and Finland in NATO exercise 'Trident Juncture 18', simulating a NATO response to an armed attack on one of its allies, in 2018.

Sweden's particularly significant contributions to NATO operations had brought comment from some at NATO headquarters, referring to Sweden as NATO's 'number one partner', surpassing the commitment and service of several NATO allies.

With such proximity to NATO, perhaps the next logical step for Sweden had to be NATO membership itself.

This comprehensive modern history of Swedish foreign policy studies the relationship between Sweden and its surrounding environment, and the overlapping areas of foreign, security, and defence policy that it has driven. It is an analysis and description of Sweden's policy responses to the challenges offered to it since 1809 and over several international systems: post-1815, post-1918, post-1945, and

post-Cold War. It is a study of Sweden's dependence on, orientation towards, and acquiescence in Europe—a study of one EU member state among many, an initially reluctant but steadily Europeanizing state, and one which has settled into post-neutrality. Sweden's integrated 'total defence' of enmeshed foreign, security, and defence policies—and long held as a valued resource of neutrality policy—has vanished now, along with a wholly Swedish defence industry supplying Swedish defence needs. All of these have been sacrificed to a gradual Europeanization and adherence to common EU policies, not least to competition policy and to the single market.

As described above, all states—large and small—have had to take stock of their environmental circumstances from time to time and then adjust and adapt their policy behaviour to any changes observed. While it has not been the intention of this book to make comparisons between the Swedish experience and those adjustments and adaptations embraced by other European states, readers may well make these comparisons for themselves. They may turn to Denmark and the 'Schleswig-Holstein Question' and observe how the war with Prussia during the nineteenth century, and the loss of the two duchies, presented Denmark with its own 'year zero', shocking the country out of participation in conflict beyond its borders from 1864 until the crises in the Balkans in 1999. They may turn to the Netherlands and research the extent to which the national trauma of the Second World War, the loss of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), and adaptation to that loss enabled the Dutch then to embed themselves in Europe from the 1950s onwards. Or, they may turn to France and the UK, observing how their colonial empires began to fall apart during and after the Second World War but how, as two of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, neither had been able to fully adapt and adjust to a role in the world more suited to their post-war circumstances. Readers may reflect on the UK and its reluctant relationship with the EU, and the sorry saga of 'Brexit', and then cast a look back to the Suez Crisis and to the loss of India before that, and to how, for so long, the establishment, elite, and politicians of that country had failed to adjust and adapt the UK to its reduced circumstances.

Chapter One of this exploration of the Swedish experience describes the creation and then loss of the wide and protective realm that Sweden had built up around the Baltic in earlier centuries. The chapter describes how the trauma of defeat led in time to the adoption of a policy of neutrality and a small state role. It illustrates the strategic significance of the Baltic approaches and exits to both Sweden and Denmark, historically and in our own time, and the modern and vulnerable communications infrastructure connecting the region with the rest of Europe.

Chapter Two provides an evaluation of neutrality, the evolution of the Swedish variety, attitudes towards neutrality, and the resources or tools required to make neutrality work. The chapter looks at the environmental conditions of the twentieth century and how Sweden adjusted to these and arrived at the policy doctrine that would serve until the emerging post-Cold War system. It examines Swedish solidarity with smaller states, active neutrality, the notion of total defence and credible defence, and how Sweden had avoided any economic commitment with other countries.

Chapter Three illustrates the strategic and economic challenges to Swedish foreign, security, and defence policy as the Revolutions of 1989 brought an end to the post-1945 system and the European single market began to evolve. The chapter will also look at a new role in central and eastern Europe that appeared to beckon for Sweden.

Chapter Four examines the dramatic policy turnaround made by the Social Democrats and the subsequent decision by the *Riksdag* [the Swedish Parliament] to join Europe, giving focus to why the turnaround occurred when it did and why the idea of joining Europe had become fully compatible with the policy of neutrality when it had not before. It will also look at the political debate that continued in Sweden after formal application had been made.

Chapter Five describes the election victory of the non-socialist parties in 1991, the new domestic policy and revised elements of foreign policy, the drastic revision of security policy—a slow and gentle 'Swedish Revolution'—and contemporary party attitudes to the emerging common European foreign and security policy. The chapter also looks at the serious economic crisis met by the new coalition government and the emergency package that had to be applied.

Chapter Six appraises the contemporary European security architecture, taking a deeper look at Sweden's relationship with the European and Atlantic security organizations, and at the policy tasks Sweden undertook around the Baltic and in the UN. It also examines Swedish aid.

Chapter Seven provides an examination of Swedish defence policy in light of Russian disengagement from central and eastern Europe. The chapter looks at defence planning for the 1990s and towards 2000, the conflict between the needs of the military services and those of the defence industry, and the significance of the decision to invest in new equipment.

Chapter Eight gives focus to Europe, looking at the setting up of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the difficulties encountered during the negotiations for an agreement. Sweden's suitability as a member of the EU and the all-important negotiation phase are also examined, with particular attention given to neutrality, alcohol policy, the regions and agriculture, taxes, industry, and energy. The chapter

also examines a Nordic dimension to co-operation within the wider Europe, the 1994 General Election, and the run up to *Folkomröstningen om EU* [the Swedish EU referendum] in November 1994 and its outcome.

Chapter Nine describes domestic politics, as Sweden settled into its new role as EU member, first looking at the Social Democratic years to 2006, then at the non-socialist Alliance years from 2006 to 2014, and then the return of the Social Democrats and red-green minority governments from 2014. It describes renewed debate around Europe, this time on joining the euro, and how, over one generation, a drift towards populism, mobility among the electorate, and the tendency among traditional parties to take the electorate for granted had added great uncertainty to political life.

Chapter Ten illustrates Sweden the Europeanized and post-neutral state, following Swedish foreign, security, and defence policy since accession to the EU. It gives focus to parliamentary consensus on policy, the impacts of membership on the EU and on Sweden, EU Presidencies, new security policy doctrine, defence decline and defence policy planning, solidarity with the surrounding world, aid and international development co-operation, the UN and NATO, Russian revanchism and threats, destabilization in the Baltic; Nordic and Baltic co-operation; and the Swedish Armed Forces.

CHAPTER ONE

Island-Like Sweden in an Arena of Conflict

Introduction: A Ferry Journey to Europe

Only fifty odd years ago, but long before the planning for and building of *Øresundsbron* [the Öresund Bridge], a fixed link[1] comprising bridge and tunnel, older Swedes travelling across the Sound to Denmark on the old ferry services from Helsingborg, Landskrona, and Malmö would often joke that they were crossing over to 'Europe'.

This witty notion was not unlike the one offered up by British travellers as they set off on ferries across the English Channel (before the Tunnel). The joke simply reflected the notion of an almost island-like Sweden, lying on the eastern side of the Scandinavian peninsula and separated from the rest of its European neighbours and the continent by the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, and the connecting arm comprised of the Skagerrak and Kattegat, and the Sound.

Geographical location had cushioned Swedes from the strife and turmoil visited on the rest of the continent throughout much of the twentieth century, though that had not been achieved by location alone. Invasion and the levels of deprivation experienced by its neighbours had been avoided through that emphatic strand of neutrality and non-participation in alliances that had been layered through its foreign, security, and defence policy for over two hundred years. Circumstance and luck had played a part as well, of course.

The Sound is the narrowest of the stretches of water separating Sweden from Europe, and it is only four kilometres or three nautical miles at its narrowest. Until

the opening of the fixed link, ferries made frequent crossings day and night carrying passengers and goods—if not railway rolling-stock, wagons, carriages, train cars—between the two countries from ports and smaller harbours on each side of the strait. Indeed, for many decades, particularly those years between Denmark's 1973 entry to the Common Market[2] and Sweden's entry to the EU in 1995, residents on the coast of Zealand (the largest of the Danish islands) and on the coast of Swedish Skåne (Scania) would make the easy neighbourhood trip to towns across the Sound to buy the best bargains on coffee, beer and spirits, and tobacco, defined by whatever price differential made the ferry trip lucrative—as in borderlands everywhere. Today, there are still ferry services, but far fewer of them.

In early times, Scandinavian and north European history had been influenced by the fight for dominance over the Baltic Sea, and key to this was control of the strategically important Sound guarding access to the Baltic in the west and control of the expanding and lucrative trade of the eastern Baltic. From the thirteenth century until the early-twentieth century, the actors bidding for dominance over the Baltic had been the German merchants and traders centred on Lübeck and, variously and at different times, Poland-Lithuania, Denmark, Sweden, Imperial Russia, Prussia, and Imperial Germany.

During the Second World War, smaller countries round the Baltic Sea felt impact from the competition for strategic domination between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and again during the Cold War, the Baltic Sea region had been regarded as a potential theatre of war, with the strategically important western Baltic approaches and exits playing a vital role in that possible war.

In our own post-Cold War era, Sweden's Baltic neighbourhood continued to be of strategic and economic significance, not only to Sweden and its other Nordic EU neighbours, but also to the Russian Federation and to the countries of the EU straddling the southern shore. Indeed, over a number of decades, the construction of bridges and multi-element fixed links—substantial but vulnerable assets carrying vital roads and railways from Europe into the Scandinavian peninsula—have added to that strategic and economic significance.

Throughout its history, Sweden had been deeply influenced by developments in the rest of Europe, and for several centuries, it was a continental power. From the time of its intervention in the Thirty Years War until the end of the Napoleonic era, the Swedish realm had included territories to the south of the Baltic Sea along the northern German coast, to the east of the Baltic Sea in Finland, and in what is now Estonia and Latvia.

Part One and Part Two describe how Sweden had won Baltic dominance and continental influence during the seventeenth century and then lost it by the eighteenth century, while Part Three explores the strategic importance of the Baltic Sea and its approaches and exits in our own times.

Part One: Swedish Domains Won—Our Baltic Sea

The Baltic—Varangians, the Hanseatic League, and the Danes

To the Norse warriors, pirates, seafaring traders, and settlers of the ninth century, the Baltic Sea was known as *Austmarr* [Eastern Lake].

Sailing out from the coasts, bays, and fjords of Scandinavia, Norwegian and Danish Vikings settled, raided, or conquered Iceland, the Faroes, Orkney and Shetland, the Isle of Man, parts of Ireland and the Scottish mainland, England, northern France, and even Greenland and North America. Sailing eastwards from the Roslagen coastal area of Uppland, Varangians—Swedish Vikings—roved in the great bays and estuaries of the eastern Baltic, colonizing in the areas now known as Latvia and Estonia and along the Gulf of Finland, and settling in *Aldeigjuborg* [the Old Norse name for Staraya Ladoga] near Lake Ladoga. Indeed, the *Rus* from Roslagen from whom the name Russia is derived—and giving the derivation of Ruotsi and Rootsi, the Finnish and Estonian names for Sweden—founded the city of Novgorod.

The trading links that the Varangians established from Lake Ladoga down the river systems and portages of eastern Europe to the Caspian Sea and Black Sea brought them into contact with the Byzantine Empire centred on Constantinople and with the Arab Caliphate centred on Baghdad.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by which time the settlers had assimilated with the Slav population and ties with Scandinavia had long since been severed, conflict arose over the Swedish ambition to expand ever eastwards as it built a security hinterland to protect its Österland in southern Finland.[3] Conflict was joined first with the princes of Novgorod as they sought to augment their position west of lakes Onega and Ladoga, and then with Muscovy and the Hanseatic League.[4] Later on, Sweden faced challenge from Imperial Russia as it too sought expansion to the Gulf of Finland.

From the thirteenth century, the Hanseatic League—a federation of merchant cities around the Baltic Sea and the North Sea—was the strongest economic force in northern Europe. The power of the League had waned by the late-sixteenth century, and during that decline, Poland-Lithuania, Denmark, and Sweden vied with each other and fought for *Dominium maris baltici* [Lordship of the Baltic Sea] in both military dominance and economic dominance.

Vital to Denmark's drive for Baltic dominance were the fortresses of Kronborg in Helsingør (Elsinore), on Zealand, and Kärnan across the water in Helsingborg, Skåne, which was then part of the Danish realm on the Scandinavian peninsula along with the modern Swedish provinces of Blekinge and Halland.

The castles of Kronborg and Kärnan, facing each other across the Sound separating the Danish realm, controlled and protected passage through the strait and

ensured collection of the lucrative maritime tolls or dues that had been imposed from 1429. Denmark not only controlled the Sound, but it also exerted regional influence across northern Europe and sought dominance over vital Baltic trade. For Denmark's Oldenburg monarchy (1448–1863), the ambition was to reassert the fourteenth-century Kalmar Union, a dynastic union of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and therefore parts of Finland as well, under one common monarch.

Danish Baltic ambitions had brought conflict with the Hanseatic League, but as that federation waned, Denmark faced challenge from Sweden as well. The Kalmar Union that Denmark was driven to impose had been scarred by internal conflict, not least from dissatisfaction among the Swedish nobility over Danish dominance. Added to the mix was the spirit of nationalism and diverging national interests, as well as the rise and ambition of ordinary people. Dissatisfaction over taxation and hard fiscal policies came to a head in 1434 in a rebellion led by Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson (1390–1436).

Engelbrektsupproret [the Engelbrekt rebellion] was the start of Swedish national awakening, and the pro- or anti-Union question would dominate Swedish politics and the ambitions of its most powerful families for the next few decades.

The Baltic—a Swedish Lake

Swedish opposition to the Kalmar Union was never far from the surface, and conflicts culminated in the 'Stockholm Bloodbath' in 1520, when eighty Swedish nobles were executed at the instigation of the Danish union king, Kristian II, the Tyrant (1481–1559). This act provoked rebellion, which led to *Befrielsekriget* [the Swedish War of Liberation] and the overthrow of Kristian II from the throne of Sweden.

Sweden's liberation moment had come. In 1523, at a gathering of the national assembly—the *Riksdag*, Sweden's parliament—at Strängnäs,[5] Gustav Vasa was elected king, and Denmark acknowledged the independent status of its northern neighbour. The collapse of the Kalmar Union led, in the decades which followed, to the consolidation of Sweden as a territorial state.

Under the hereditary dynasty of the House of Vasa, which proved to be a long lasting one, a new era in Swedish history was ushered in, and by the seventeenth century, Danish power would become eclipsed by that of Sweden. The country's emergence as a highly centralized and militarized state was in large part due to the acumen of Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), grandson of Gustav Vasa.

After his successful intervention in the religious conflict which would become known as *Trettioåriga kriget* [the Thirty Years War, 1618–1648], Gustavus could be counted as one of Europe's most powerful monarchs. He had led his country to European military supremacy and had helped determine the political as well as

the religious balance of power on the continent. However, mortally wounded at the Battle of Lützen, near Leipzig, in November 1632, Gustavus would never see the territorial advantage gained by Sweden at war's end.

The Peace of Brömsebro (1645) with Denmark-Norway gave Sweden the Norwegian provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen, as well as the Danish Baltic Sea islands of Gotland and Ösel, and, for thirty years, possession of the Danish province of Halland.

After the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which brought an end to the Thirty Years War, Sweden was granted a share of the former Duchy of Pomerania being the islands of Rügen, Usedom, and Wollin. It got the Pomeranian towns of Stettin, Greifswald, Stralsund, Garz, Damm, and Gollnow, as well as Wismar including the districts of Poel and Neukloster. In the west of northern Germany, Sweden got Bremen-Verden, with the town of Wildeshausen.

Sweden now controlled the mouths of three major European rivers: the Oder, Elbe, and Weser. Moreover, with the territorial gains confirmed after Brömsebro and Westphalia, together with the historical Swedish realm that included Finland, Karelia and Kexholm, Ingria, Estonia, and Livonia, the greater Swedish realm—the Swedish Empire—had become the third largest in Europe by land area, surpassed only by the realms of Russia and Spain.

With the Peace of Roskilde (1658), Sweden reached yet greater territorial extent, permanently ceding Halland and also gaining the Danish provinces of Blekinge and Skåne, and then the Treaty of Copenhagen (1660) gave it the Danish island of Ven in the Sound.

This was Sweden's *Stormaktstiden* [period of greatest power]. Swedish domains now encompassed almost the entire Baltic Sea. The Baltic had become a Swedish lake, or *Mare nostrum Balticum* [Our Baltic Sea], Sweden's own inland sea.

Then, by the early decades of the eighteenth century, that great advantage had been all but lost.

Part Two: Swedish Domains Lost—Catastrophic Defeat and National Trauma

Poltava, 1709

Barely three years on the throne, and at only eighteen years of age, Karl XII (1682–1718) left Stockholm for war in 1700. It was the last time he would ever see the city again.

Stora nordiska kriget [the Great Northern War, 1700–1721] had brought Sweden into conflict with Russia, Denmark-Norway, Poland-Lithuania-Saxony,

Hanover, and Brandenburg-Prussia. Swiftly knocking Denmark-Norway out of the conflict, Karl then took the Russian tsar Peter I (1672–1725) by surprise, routing him in a blinding snowstorm at the Battle of Narva (1700). Next he rounded on Augustus II (1670–1733) of Poland-Lithuania-Saxony, occupying much of Poland-Lithuania including Warsaw and Krakow, before taking the war into Saxony. This extended campaigning had allowed Peter to regroup and to seize the mouth of the Neva, where in 1703 he began the construction of St. Petersburg, his new capital, on captured Swedish territory.

In a bold or perhaps foolhardy move, Karl marched on Moscow in 1708. The Russians had retreated, adopting a scorched earth policy destroying crops and other resources, exactly as they would do for the invading armies of Revolutionary France and Nazi Germany long after Karl. Thwarted, Karl took his army down into Ukraine with the Russians in hot pursuit. In June 1709, the Russians met up with the Swedes who had laid siege to the fortress town of Poltava, on the River Vorskla, a tributary of the Dneiper, in the very heart of Ukraine. There, outgunned and outnumbered, the Swedes suffered crushing defeat. Indeed, Sweden's defeat at the Battle of Poltava on 8 July 1709, and the subsequent surrender of the remainder of the Swedish army at Perovolochna, was the greatest military disaster in Swedish history—and still is—and marked an irrevocable turning point in the Great Northern War.

Some 10,000 Swedes had died on the battlefield, and 49 corps and regiments had been eradicated. For a country with a population of only 1,485,000 at that time, the human loss at Poltava had a terrible impact at a local level. Sweden saw the virtual extermination of the conscripted foot regiments from the core provinces of its historical heartlands of Dalarna and Uppland, the very areas that had rallied behind Gustav Vasa and the national cause that brought release from the Kalmar Union and Denmark some two centuries before.[6]

If human loss were not bad enough, around 23,000 soldiers and non-combatant men, women, and children—part of the normal baggage train accompanying armies at this time—were taken prisoner. In the winter of 1709, the prisoners of war were paraded in triumphal procession through Moscow, and from 1710, they were sent to different parts of Russia: to St. Petersburg where they were set to work in the building of the new city; to Voronezh and Samara; to prison camps at Nizhny Novgorod and Simbirsk, and at Tobolsk in Siberia, the largest of the camps; and also to Ufa in the west of the southern Ural Mountains. Only around 4,000 of the prisoners ever saw their homes again. With only 1,300 to accompany him, Karl crossed the Dneiper and marched on into neighbouring Bessarabia, part of the Ottoman Empire, setting up camp at Bender on the River Dneister (and now in modern Moldova). There, the Swedes bedded down for several years.

Almost immediately after the defeat at Poltava—after news of the Russian victory reached the north—Sweden's realm along the southern Baltic littoral

began to unravel. Russian troops had occupied all of the Baltic provinces and had moved into Finland, hoping to acquire territory to secure Peter's new capital. In alliance with Russia, Denmark-Norway attempted to regain the former Danish and wealthy province of Skåne, though this was beaten back. Hanover and Brandenburg-Prussia joined in the fray, eager to seize Swedish possessions in northern Germany.

In 1718, having taken up the war again, this time against Denmark-Norway, Karl was killed instantly while inspecting the siege works during an assault on the fortress of Fredriksten on the Norwegian-Swedish border. He had taken a shot through the head, from either the fortress itself or from one of his own troops. On the death of the king, the military campaign collapsed and Sweden sued for peace. The Great Northern War was brought to an end in a range of treaties and agreements between Sweden and the other combatants, but not before the Russians pillaged, sacked, and burned Swedish communities around the Stockholm archipelago and burned towns all the way up the coast to the north.

To Hanover, Sweden lost Bremen-Verden, and to Brandenburg-Prussia parts of Swedish Pomerania, including the islands of Usedom and Wollin, and the towns of Stettin, Damm, and Gollnow.

To Russia, the 1721 Treaty of Nystad transferred Estonia with Ösel (Saaremaa) and Dagö (Hiiumaa), Livonia (modern Latvia), Ingria (the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland), a part of Karelia (a portion of south eastern Finland around the northern and western edge of Lake Ladoga), and the fortress of Viborg. Russia returned the rest of Finland to Sweden.

After Nystad, the Swedish empire built up by successive monarchs over some one hundred and fifty years was gone, and with it 'Our Baltic Sea'. Sweden's period of great power was over. After Nystad, Russia emerged as the new imperial power on the Baltic.

All that remained of the Swedish realm in the Baltic was Swedish-Finland and those small parts of Pomerania not ceded to Brandenburg-Prussia, in effect the island of Rügen and the cities of Stralsund and Greifswald. Like Denmark's before it, the Swedish moment had passed. Swedes would have to learn to live in the long dark shadow of Russia.

Then, a century later and during the course of the Napoleonic Wars, Sweden again suffered devastating defeat, surrendering Finland and the Åland Islands to Russia in 1809—a great national trauma.

Loss of Finland, 1809

Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Sweden would see the demise of monarchical absolutism, the emergence of a two-party political system,

and an ever more resolutely neutral and pacific attitude to all conflicts outside the country's borders.

Sweden had left the stage, and with its departure, a decisive shift in the European balance of power had occurred. Nevertheless, the country would have to take a stand in the French Revolutionary Wars that brought conflict to the wider continent of Europe in the wake of the earlier French Revolution.

At first, Sweden maintained a policy of armed neutrality in alliance with Russia, Prussia, and Denmark-Norway—the 'Second League of Armed Neutrality'. This mirrored Swedish participation in the wider 'First League of Armed Neutrality' during the American War of Independence. Through its participation in the Second League, Sweden managed to avoid being drawn into the First and Second Coalitions against Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821).

Then, in 1801, when the British navy threatened the Swedish naval base of Karlskrona in their attempts to break up the League, Sweden's king, Gustav IV Adolf (1778–1837), turned aside from the policy of non-involvement and brought his country into the Third and Fourth Coalitions, during which Swedish forces saw action in northern Germany. On the collapse of the Fourth Coalition, Britain and Sweden were isolated in the war with France, with Sweden surrounded by enemies. To the west and south was Denmark-Norway, Swedish Finland was in the path of Russia, and across the Baltic was Prussia.

While Gustav remained resolutely opposed to Napoleon and his allies, Danish troops together with a French force under the command of Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte (1763–1844), Marshal of France, prepared for an invasion of Skåne, and the Norwegians were poised to cross the border into Sweden. Meanwhile, from Russia came pressure to join the Continental System (a large-scale trade embargo against Britain), and when Gustav refused, Russian troops marched into Finland. Less than a month later, war with Denmark-Norway broke out.

While Sweden managed some victories against Russia, overall its forces were defeatist, and they suffered the sudden and unexpected loss of the fortress of Sveaborg—the 'Gibraltar of the North'—almost without a struggle. With a military victory in the offing, the Russian tsar, Alexander I (1777–1825), assembled a meeting of representatives from the Finnish Estates at Borgå (Porvoo) in March 1809. At this Diet of the Four Estates, Finns were obliged to accept Alexander as the Grand Duke of Finland. Gustav had effectively lost one-third of his realm and a quarter of his population.

Even then, the war with Russia was not over. In the north of Sweden, the town of Umeå had been captured, and the Russians had driven the Swedish army south, to Härnösand, and were harrying the Stockholm archipelago. The country's economy was in ruins; the people were in misery, beaten down by war, inflation, taxes, disease, and poor harvests; and it was even rumoured that through the Congress

of Erfurt, Napoleon and Alexander had agreed that Sweden should be shared between Denmark-Norway and Russia with the border between them at Motala *ström* [the river system flowing from Lake Vättern].[7]

In the field though, hoping to achieve a better negotiating position in the anticipated peace talks, the Swedes planned both a frontal attack on the Russians and an attack by sea at their rear. With ships from the British fleet keeping the Russian navy at bay, the two sides engaged each other in engagements around Umeå—at Hörnefors to the south of the town, and at Sävar and Ratan to the north. The battles were fought on two consecutive days and were the last to be fought on Swedish soil, and the last to be fought between Swedish and Russian forces. Although won overall by Russia, the battle at Ratan went to the Swedes who forced the enemy northwards and prevented Alexander from defining the River Kalix as the new border between Sweden and Finland.

The loss of Finland was confirmed in September 1809 by the Treaty of Fredrikshamn (Treaty of Hamina), as was the loss of the Åland Islands at the southern end of the Gulf of Bothnia. Parts of the northern provinces were ceded to Finland, and the River Torne and River Muonio now became Sweden's northern border with the new Imperial Russian Grand Duchy of Finland. The loss of Finland after some 600 years had also brought the fall of Gustav in a coup d'etat on 13 March 1809.

In December 1809, the Treaty of Jönköping ended the war with Denmark-Norway, and in January 1810, the Treaty of Paris brought an end to the war with France. Sweden was now compelled to join the Continental System, and its ports were closed to British trade.

'Year Zero', 1809

National defeat and the loss of Finland was a moment of great trauma for Sweden, a moment unparalleled since the catastrophic Battle of Poltava in 1709 and the territorial losses in its wake. The year 1809 had surely been Sweden's 'year zero'.[8] The once great power was a drifting wreck on a stormy sea. Sweden was 'without master, without sail, and without compass'. All its familiar landmarks had gone 'and the smoking swirl of war darkened the horizon'.[9]

Through traumatic experience of such magnitude—whether caused by revolution, war, invasion, defeat, a dramatic external event, or a series of events—the foreign policy and security policy behaviour of any country could be altered and a new model of behaviour articulated. Devastating loss or other national trauma could bring about sudden shifts and changes to previously held beliefs, practices, or procedures.[10] Open to discussion was how long it might take for the new behaviour—the new model, pattern, or paradigm—to emerge. In Sweden's case, it took a full

century from the catastrophe of 1709 to the new trauma of 1809, before political and military elites had grasped the extent of the country's diminished status and inability to compete with the new powers rising in the Baltic neighbourhood. Indeed, aftershocks from the glory days would continue to be felt well after that.

After the skies had cleared somewhat, and at a gathering of the Riksdag on 6 June 1809 (now the National Day of Sweden), a new political order was established. Gustav and his direct descendants were disinherited, and his uncle, Karl, Duke of Södermanland, was elected king on the condition that he accepted a new Constitution limiting royal power, giving more authority to parliament, and establishing a separation between the two.

The failing health of the new childless king, Karl XIII (1748–1818), also prompted Swedish elites to search for an heir. The thinking among military circles in Sweden had been influenced by the French Revolution, and there was a desire for a strong and radical man of action to lead the country. This new leader would restore Swedish confidence and perhaps even regain Finland. There were a number of candidates[11] including minor Danish and German royals and several French Marshals of the Empire, and from these were chosen Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte, Marshal of France, and Prince of Pontecorvo, the son of a prosecutor from Pau on the northern edge of the Pyrenees.

Bernadotte, the military commander who had taken a Swedish surrender in Lübeck in 1806, during the Fourth Coalition, and who was to have led the Franco-Danish invasion, was already known and respected in Sweden. Importantly too, he was a legendary figure among captured soldiers that he had repatriated back to Sweden from northern Germany.

Bernadotte was the popular favourite among Swedes, but there were other candidates better suited to the interests of and favoured by, Denmark-Norway, Napoleon, Russia, and Karl XIII himself. Nevertheless, on 21 August 1810, Bernadotte was elected as the new crown prince, and he arrived in Sweden on 20 October 1810 after crossing the Sound from Helsingør to Helsingborg. Before leaving Helsingborg for Stockholm, Bernadotte had received an envoy from Karl with his commission as Supreme Commander of the Swedish forces—Generalissimus—and on his arrival in Stockholm, he was presented to the Riksdag as Prince Karl Johan.

'Policy of 1812'

While it was assumed by many of Karl Johan's supporters in Sweden that he would lead the country into war with Russia and regain Finland, he instead established friendly but unprejudiced relations with Alexander, the tsar.

Recovering Finland, he judged, would return Sweden to a new cycle of conflict with its powerful eastern neighbour, since it was unlikely that Russia would accept the loss of its recently acquired Grand Duchy.[12] Even before he had arrived in Sweden, Karl Johan had wanted to achieve an entirely different policy, one envisaged in the plans of earlier Swedish leaders—a policy aimed at the acquisition of Norway.

In spite of enjoying its 'own Baltic Sea' by the mid-seventeenth century and enjoying a secure eastern rearguard, Sweden felt continually threatened by Denmark-Norway which at that time almost completely encircled it from the south (the Danish provinces of Blekinge, Skåne, and Halland), from the west (the Danish province of Bohuslän), and from the north-west (the Norwegian provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen).

To extinguish this threat, Karl X (1622–60) had wanted to subjugate Denmark completely, intending to make Denmark and Norway mere Swedish provinces to diminish the status of Copenhagen and to raise the status of Malmö in Skåne which had then only recently become Swedish. Later, Karl XII had targeted Danish Norway, invading it in 1718. The acquisition of Norway would provide Sweden with direct access to the North Sea and would compensate for losses elsewhere. Later again during the eighteenth century, Gustav III (1746–92) would consider handing Finland over to Catherine the Great in return for Russian help in taking Norway from Denmark.

Aggrandizement of Sweden at the expense of its neighbours was again reflected in a policy envisaged by Karl Johan. His plan would turn Sweden's interests away from the Baltic and towards the western seas and the maritime commerce of the wider oceans. Karl Johan favoured a union of the nations of the Scandinavian peninsula, binding Sweden and Norway together in a westwards-oriented state and possibly including one of the Danish islands (Zealand with the capital Copenhagen).

In the world that was laid out before him in 1810, Karl Johan believed that there was a greater chance of achieving this change of policy—this re-orientation of Sweden from the east to the west through a partnership with Russia rather than with France which was allied with Denmark-Norway. His idea might soothe Sweden's upset at the loss of Finland by presenting the country with Norway instead.

In April 1812, an alliance was concluded with Russia in St. Petersburg, giving diplomatic expression to what became known as *1812 års politik* [the Policy of 1812]. Through this alliance, each party guaranteed to respect the territorial possessions of the other, meaning that Sweden would refrain from any attempt to win back Finland.