

(Unofficial translation)

Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, Wednesday 11 February 2004

Mr/Madam Speaker,

“In today’s world, security must be built globally and jointly, and entail freedom and security for all. Security requires democracy and respect for human rights and international law.”

With these words, spoken in the Riksdag a year ago, Anna Lindh highlighted the values that are the guiding principles of our entire foreign and security policy.

It builds on the equal dignity and rights of all people. Solidarity and cooperation, in turn, are the basis of our own security.

This is also the thinking behind the United Nations and the thinking behind the European Union.

But values are not realised by words and ideas. If they are to mean anything, values must be put into action.

At this moment, Sweden is taking action in a whole range of areas to increase security in our vicinity, in Europe and around the world. We are acting to prevent armed conflicts starting and to stop ongoing wars and limit their consequences. We are acting in states that are disintegrating as

a result of civil war or ethnic cleansing. We are acting against terrorists, traffickers in human beings and organised crime. We are acting in places hit by natural disasters. We are acting to reduce poverty. We are acting as a member of the EU and the UN, acting jointly with other organisations and countries and with civil society. We are acting in concrete ways to promote peace and security.

In Liberia – where child soldiers, boys and girls as young as eight years old, have killed and been killed, maimed and been maimed – preparations are now under way for the Swedish infantry company of 230 troops that is to form part of the 15 000-strong UN force. The purpose of this force is to safeguard the peace process to which Sweden is already contributing by means of State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hans Dahlgren's work on behalf of the EU. Sweden is also supporting the disarming of combatants and training of judges and prosecutors in Liberia.

In Congo – where more than three million people have been killed in what has been described as Africa's own World War – Swedish troops are in place. Last summer, at the request of the United Nations, an EU mission deploying Swedish and French special forces was able to swiftly stifle an incipient ethnic cleansing. This is one example of our readiness to stop serious violations of human rights – a readiness that extends even to the use of military means. We are working with African states and organisations that are taking increasing responsibility for the development of Africa and for the continent's crises.

In Afghanistan – where the Taliban and al-Qaida are stepping up their attacks – we are preparing joint action with our fellow Nordic countries and other troop contributors to strengthen security in rural areas, combat the drug trade and terrorism, and facilitate reconstruction. Sweden is already represented in the NATO-led security force in Kabul. We are responsible for educating Afghan lawyers in human rights. The

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan is supporting 500 schools as well as health care for women and children.

In the Balkans, the EU was able during the Swedish Presidency to prevent a full-scale war in Macedonia. At present Sweden is in command of the brigade in the NATO force KFOR in Kosovo to which we are contributing 520 troops. Swedish police are participating in the two EU police missions in Bosnia and Macedonia. The Government is working to strengthen the EU's role in Kosovo.

Sweden wants to help restart the peace process in what may be the most dangerous regional conflict: the Middle East. As things stand at present, the conflicting parties themselves are incapable of reaching a peace agreement or fulfilling the provisions of the Road Map. They need international help. The message sent by the Swedish Government is clear: the settlements on occupied land are illegal and the settlement policy must therefore be reversed. The so-called "security fence" on occupied territory is in breach of international law. There are no advantages to continued violence, no advantages for either side. An immediate ceasefire is needed, an international presence is essential to make it sustainable, and – perhaps most important of all – there must be hope for a political solution, a viable Palestinian state existing side by side with Israel. The occupation must come to an end. The Government condemns all acts of violence against innocent civilians, Palestinians and Israelis alike. The Palestinian suicide bombings can never be condoned. They must stop so as to enable Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and harmony. The Government's commitment to peace was exemplified by our meeting two weeks ago with representatives of the Geneva Initiative.

Sweden is acting to reduce the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, tens of thousands of nuclear weapons still exist and there are more fingers on

the triggers than ever. One promising sign is that the tensions between India and Pakistan are beginning to ease, lessening the threat of a nuclear conflict and clearing the way for regional economic development.

Sweden is putting pressure on North Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons programme and is encouraging present signs that the country wants to open up to the outside world. We are helping to give North Korea an understanding of human rights and the market economy and we are prepared to do more. However, closer cooperation with North Korea will depend on the country meeting its international commitments.

We are working for the nuclear weapons states to at last fulfil their commitments to disarm. The EU policy against weapons of mass destruction, for which Sweden took the initiative, is now to be implemented. Export controls are to be tightened and inspections further developed. Another Swedish initiative is the international Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. The Commission is headed by Hans Blix, who, a year after having to break off his UN mission in Iraq, is now being shown the appreciation he so well deserves.

We ought to be able to take the values of human rights and international law for granted. But in practice numerous violations occur, as is clear from the annual reports compiled by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

By publishing these reports on the Internet, we contribute to the transparency that is the perpetrators' worst enemy. State sovereignty can no longer be a legitimate defence behind which massive breaches of human rights are allowed to continue.

International terrorism is a growing threat to the security of us all and to fundamental rights and freedoms. Reports of new, appalling acts of terror reach us constantly. Sweden is participating actively in the international cooperation that is a prerequisite for fighting terrorism.

Respect for human rights and international law is vital if this fight is to be successful.

Sweden demands the release of the Swedish citizen who is being held at the Guantanamo Bay base, as the United States has not been able to demonstrate any legally tenable reason for his internment. Obviously in this case the Swedish and American governments differ in their view of what is permissible under international law. Regrettably, this is also true of our views on the International Criminal Court. The example of Slobodan Milosevic shows how important it is that those who bear the greatest responsibility can also be brought to court. More of his like should be brought to The Hague. This is why the International Criminal Court was established.

Although the governments of Sweden and the United States at present take different views of certain issues, this must not overshadow the fact that the active involvement of the United States is essential to meet all the challenges facing the international community. No country can deal with these challenges on its own. The United States needs the world and the world needs the United States. The relationship with the United States – the “Transatlantic Link” – is crucial for Europe’s security and development. Even if we sometimes have differences of opinion, we share essential basic values of democracy and human rights.

Another important question is how we should deal with the fact that respect for human rights is making slow progress in countries such as China. The question is whether it is enough that China’s vigorous economic development is lifting large parts of the population out of poverty and increasing contacts with the outside world. The Government’s stance is clear: we shall not back off in our criticism of the breaches of human rights that occur in China. For this reason, not least, we need dialogue and cooperation in areas where we have a real

opportunity to influence this major country, such as environment and the development of the legal system.

It is a human right to seek asylum. We want to create an asylum policy in which those seeking protection from persecution are met by legal certainty and predictability and those who need it can obtain refuge. This policy must permeate our international work, not least within the EU. By strengthening human rights around the world, we can prevent people being forced to flee.

Our values call for a coherent policy.

A development policy based on solidarity must take a holistic approach. The foundation has been laid for a coherent and consistent Swedish policy, which we shall also actively pursue in the EU and UN. This has been done by establishing a new overarching goal encompassing all policy areas: the goal of fair and sustainable global development. In the rights perspective and the perspective of the poor, poor people are not just passive recipients of aid measures but individuals with the strength and determination to create development themselves. The oppression and discrimination of women is a fundamental obstacle to development.

Open and fair world trade is an important engine for growth, employment and development throughout the world. Economic cooperation contributes to stronger networks between states and more consensus internationally. Developing countries must be able to sell their goods and services. Barriers in industrialised countries to imports of agricultural goods, textiles and clothes must be torn down. It is unacceptable for Bangladesh exports to the United States to be weighed down with as heavy tariffs as French goods, despite Bangladesh selling only a tenth as much as France.

For many developing countries export income from these goods is essential. But they cannot compete and get their economies moving when the industrialised countries put up tariff barriers and subsidise their own agriculture by amounts exceeding two-thirds of the GDP of the whole of Africa. The rich world must radically reduce its support to its own agricultural sector. The EU has now taken a first step towards reforming its agricultural policy. Sweden will be proactive in pressing for further reforms. Developing countries must also facilitate trade among themselves if poor countries are to be able to integrate into the world economy. Our development cooperation is of major importance in increasing the ability of developing countries to take part in international trade.

Global growth and development in poor countries depends on the continued improvement and reform of today's trade system. Sweden is therefore working for a resumption of negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as soon as possible. We are trying to rebuild confidence through cooperation with Brazil, India, South Africa and other African countries, and through bilateral and regional cooperation. On a Swedish initiative, the OECD is going to examine ways in which the industrialised countries can open up trade in sectors that until now have been protected.

Globalisation calls for greater responsibility. In the Global Responsibility initiative the Government encourages Swedish enterprises to live up to and promote fundamental principles concerning human rights, the environment, working conditions and the fight against corruption.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Development cooperation plays a major role in Sweden's contacts with the rest of the world. During this term of office, a decision will be taken to raise development assistance to one per cent of GNI.

Four areas of development cooperation will be given priority:

Conflict prevention – since it is impossible to bring about sustainable development in a country at war.

The fight against drugs – since drugs are both an obstacle to development at global level and a serious social problem in Sweden.

HIV/AIDS – since this epidemic continues to spread apace, now in Asia and Eastern Europe as well. The most seriously affected countries in southern Africa are threatened by collapse in one or more sectors of society. Sweden is acting at all stages, from vaccination research and prevention to treatment and medical care. The Government has appointed a special HIV/AIDS Ambassador for this purpose.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights – since many young women are infected and die, and since we are experiencing a setback in international work on these issues. Homosexual people are oppressed in many countries. Issues concerning sexuality and partnership, sexual equality, maternity care, access to birth control, safe, legal abortions and the position of women must not be condemned to silence. Sweden and the EU must continue to press for more progressive and effective international efforts.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The realisation of our foreign policy calls for an administration meeting the highest international standards. The Foreign Service is currently undertaking a broad programme of modernisation and renewal. A new embassy will open in Bratislava in May 2004. We also plan to open a new embassy in Cyprus. We are hopeful that the resumption of negotiations on the UN plan will lead to a united Cyprus being able to join the Union

on 1 May. This would mean a solution had been found to a forty-year old conflict, a solution supported by the UN and within the framework of the European Union.

Preparations are also underway for staffing the embassy in Baghdad. Special efforts are being made to enable missions abroad to promote export and investment that allow growth and employment in Sweden, and to strengthen their EU work. The Foreign Service must be an effective instrument for the Government as a whole.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our membership of the European Union is central for translating our values into concrete action.

On 1 May, a new page will be turned in the history of Europe. Ten new member countries will join the EU. The continent's history of war and conflict in the name of nazism, fascism, communism, nationalism and colonialism is receding further and further into the past. The means we now employ to solve our internal problems and conflicts is peaceful cooperation. And together we want to help create a better world, based on the values of freedom, human rights and democracy. Hardly any other country has done as much as Sweden to press for enlargement. Now we shall make use of the opportunities presented by the enlarged EU by an active policy and by building alliances, not least with the new member states and the Nordic and Baltic countries.

EU enlargement means that the inner market will expand to nearly half a billion people and 20 million companies. This opens up greater opportunities for trade, investment and a wealth of international contacts, particularly with the countries in our immediate vicinity. The transitional regulations on free mobility of labour that may be necessary will be in force for as short a time as possible.

Enlargement will strengthen the Baltic Sea region and improve conditions for Nordic–Baltic cooperation. Consultation on EU issues will increase. Today the Nordic and Baltic countries will sign an agreement making Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania full members of the Nordic Investment Bank.

The same conditions that applied to the new member states must also apply to Turkey, Croatia and other countries seeking membership of the Union. The countries of the Balkans are now entering a process similar to that undergone by the new member countries. Swedish development assistance is directed at supporting the development of closer ties with the EU, which is also the best way of fighting poverty in the long term. We shall be carefully watching to see whether the conditions concerning democracy, human rights and the principles of the rule of law are being met. In our vision for Europe of the future there is room for a range of religions, cultures and traditions, as there is in Sweden. In this respect, Europe for us has no boundaries.

The proposals of the Intergovernmental Conference on a new Treaty will make the EU more effective and easier to understand. The roles of the EU and the individual member states will be more clearly defined. There is broad consensus on the majority of the issues discussed by the IGC, and it is important to complete this important step towards a Union able to promote peace and development within and outside Europe.

The common resources of the Union are limited and must be used effectively. Strict priorities must be set. Present member countries that have been able to raise their economic standards due to financial support from the EU must now be prepared to share with the new members.

The EU contribution to global security must be strengthened. We must meet the threats identified in the EU Security Strategy: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, environmental disasters, organised crime, regional conflicts, civil war and disintegrating states. The Government wishes to make use of the feeling of community and cooperation that has grown up in the EU to deal with the underlying causes of these threats, such as breaches of human rights, lack of democracy and legal certainty, injustice and poverty.

Sweden does not participate in military alliances. This is a policy that has served – and still serves – us well. At the same time we want to be actively involved in strengthening European security and defence policy. There is no contradiction here.

We know that many lives could have been saved in the Western Balkans if the EU had been better able to coordinate its foreign policy in the 1990s. We could have done more for the besieged city of Sarajevo, where snipers were killing innocent civilians every day. We could have done more in Srebrenica, in Rwanda and in Congo. This is a painful insight. But it is a necessary one if we are to prevent similar events in the future.

The EU is particularly well equipped to prevent conflicts, since, within the Union, we have access to significant political, economic, diplomatic, military and civil instruments. We want to strengthen the capacity of the EU to discover potential crises at an early stage and to prevent them. Here in Stockholm the Secretary-General of the United Nations recently presented proposals on how the UN can be strengthened to make it better able to prevent genocide. Continuing work on the conclusions of the Stockholm International Forum will be an important task, both in the EU and in the UN.

Relations with the neighbours of the EU must be developed. Cooperation with Russia is of particular importance. The Government wants to see Russia more closely integrated into European cooperation and hopes that Russian WTO membership can soon be a reality. However, a genuine partnership, which is the ambition of the EU and of Sweden, must build on shared values. Human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected. The conflict in Chechnya must be dealt with by political means.

An increasingly important task will be to strengthen contacts with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova as well as with the southern Caucasus countries. The future of these countries lies in cooperation in Europe. The Government wants to deepen cooperation with them in order to promote respect for human rights, democracy, economic development and free trade. One aspect of this is security-building initiatives, such as preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating accidents and disasters and training defence forces in democracy and human rights. We will cooperate closely with the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The specific strength of the OSCE lies in concrete action in the field. The Council of Europe has a central role in setting standards but it also monitors that countries fulfil their commitments with the European Court of Human Rights as the ultimate guarantee for this. Cooperation with NATO within the framework of the Partnership for Peace strengthens security and cooperation in the region.

The countries around the Mediterranean and in the larger Middle East region are assuming increasing importance for the EU and for Sweden. Increased respect for human rights, democratisation and social and economic progress benefit development and security both for these countries and for the EU. The region is therefore given special attention in the EU Security Strategy. Ever closer cooperation through the Barcelona Process and the creation of a free trade area around the Mediterranean by the year 2010 will strengthen relations between the

region and the EU. The Swedish Institutes in Alexandria and Istanbul have an important role to play in stimulating dialogue between cultures and civilisations.

Legal cooperation must be strengthened. International terrorism, organised crime and human traffickers operate almost entirely across national borders and must therefore be combated through cooperation across national borders. If we are to put a stop to the abhorrent trade in women and children from poorer countries to richer countries, including to Sweden, then we must make use of every available forum: the UN, the EU, the OSCE, with its broad new action plan and its special representative, the Council of Europe, which is drafting a European Convention against trafficking in human beings, Nordic-Baltic cooperation and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, as well as cooperation with the United Nations.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our values of peace and security, global development and poverty alleviation, the ideas of democracy and the rule of law, human rights and international law have their most explicit foundation in the United Nations.

Our security cannot be built in isolation from other countries, or in Europe alone. We are dependent on effective multilateralism for our common security. A strong UN means stronger global security.

When the United States and its coalition members decided to start a war against Iraq the UN Security Council was sidestepped. Now there is growing realisation that the UN is needed to make progress in Iraq. Even though the security situation remains critical, as shown by events like the bombing of Kurdish organisations in Erbil, and even though civilian Iraqis and coalition soldiers are being killed every day, the UN is

now returning to look into the conditions for direct elections in Iraq. If Iraq is to be a free, democratic and viable society, sovereignty must be restored. The UN has an obvious central role in this process. Sweden is contributing SEK 345 million over the next two years to the development of Iraq, including support for the training of police and lawyers.

Some clear conclusions can now be drawn following the war in Iraq:

- Efforts to develop and reform the UN must be pursued even more forcefully.

The Security Council must be enlarged to enhance its legitimacy and better reflect the present world situation.

- The Secretary-General has appointed a working group to make recommendations before the end of the year on how the UN system can deal more effectively with current threats to peace and security. Sweden will force the pace of these reform processes.

- The EU must develop its UN policy and its cooperation with the UN.

- We must strengthen multilateral instruments in order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. When Libya declares that it will scrap its programmes for weapons of mass destruction and Iran signs the supplementary IAEA protocol, it will be IAEA inspectors that will be responsible for verification.

- The UN must be better at preventing armed conflict. Last year the Security Council adopted a groundbreaking resolution on preventing armed conflicts. Sweden played a proactive role in this process and is now continuing to work actively for the UN and the EU to increase their ability to take action in this area. This demands a long-term commitment. Sweden is prepared to make such a commitment. The role of women in conflict prevention work must be strengthened, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1325.

- The UN must have a stronger role in global crisis management.

Important work is being done at present in Congo and Liberia, where

Sweden and the EU are playing central roles in complex, multi-functional UN operations for peace.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In all of these ways Sweden is taking an active part in building common peace and security. We are doing so on the basis of our non-participation in military alliances and our membership of the United Nations.

We build our action on shared values of the equal dignity and rights of every person and we draw on our broad experience from a range of peace missions.

We are seeking to strengthen our capability at national level, in the EU, between the EU and the UN and in cooperation with other organisations.

This is how we are carrying forward work for global peace and development.

Freedom and security for all were the key themes of the last foreign policy statement that Anna Lindh presented to the Riksdag on behalf of the Government. Those themes are and remain our vision.

When all human beings, wherever they live, are living in peace and freedom, when everyone, and not just the people born in the rich world, has the right to development and security, when everyone has the right to live a good life, then the world will also be a better and safer place for us.

These are values that will continue to be the hallmark of Swedish foreign policy in the future.

