

# Foreign Policy Statements

**Statement of government policy in the parliamentary debate on foreign affairs,  
Wednesday 12 February 1997**

*Unofficial translation, check against delivery*

Madam/Mr Speaker,

Sweden's foreign policy shall be characterized by solidarity, cooperation and responsibility.

1. This applies in the UN system, which is the prime instrument for achieving international peace and security, for dealing with the global threats to people's security, and for assuring sustainable economic development.

2. This applies in the context of Europe where the breadth and depth of integration offers unique tools for creating welfare and prosperity and increased security on our continent.

3. This governs our cooperation with our closest neighbours. In the Nordic countries and the Baltic and Barents regions, there are special opportunities for realizing our vision of common security and lasting prosperity.

Each of these cooperation systems gives Sweden a unique opportunity to participate and exert influence in 1997.

Sweden is a member of the UN Security Council.

During the coming year, Sweden will be involved in making decisions of crucial importance for the shaping of a unified Europe.

This year we will fulfil our ambitions in Baltic Sea cooperation and, at the same time, we are chairing the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

Madam/Mr Speaker,

For over 50 years UN cooperation has been a corner-stone of Sweden's foreign policy. Radical changes in the world community are putting new and heavier demands on the UN, but these are not being met by adequate resources and political support from member countries.

The UN's crisis should, inter alia, be met by clearly defining the UN's mission to achieve international peace and security in a new era. The World Organization

provides the legal and political framework both for tackling the global threats to the survival of mankind and for efforts towards international justice, human rights, disarmament and democracy.

The Government's work in the UN Security Council in 1997-98 will have a long-term perspective and in practice be guided by a programme which includes, amongst other things, the following:

- \* The UN's capacity to prevent and intervene at an earlier stage in conflicts - both within and between states - must be strengthened.
- \* A new generation of UN peace-keeping operations must be developed. The UN system's political, military, policing, humanitarian, economic and social sectors must work together.
- \* The Security Council must become more "democratic". Greater openness is needed in the work of the Council and there should be more bridges to the General Assembly. Cooperation between the UN, the regional organizations and non-governmental organizations needs to be expanded. The countries that contribute troops to peace support operations must be given more say in decision-making.

The everyday business of the Security Council is about reacting more rapidly when crises flare up - for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Caucasus or the countries around Africa's Great Lakes. The Council's work requires close cooperation with all the parties concerned and a readiness for team work in a spirit of pragmatism.

The advances achieved in the major UN Conferences in the 1990s must have a clearer impact on the work of the UN. In June, a summit meeting will be held to review the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Decisions will be taken at the summit to promote the development of ecologically sustainable societies that can increase food production and secure prosperity for growing numbers of people. Sweden is a driving force in these endeavours.

For some time efforts to modernize and strengthen the UN and make it more efficient have been sluggish. However, we now see a window of opportunity opening. Sweden welcomes the determination to tackle reform issues shown by the new Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and also by the President of the General Assembly, Razali Ismail. Following President Clinton's statement to the United States Congress that the United States intends to pay its debts to the UN, we have reason to hope that the deadlock to which these debts contributed in the reform discussions, will be broken.

Sweden is in a good position to help to give concrete shape to the work of reform. The Government agrees with the analysis of global development and the need for UN reforms expressed in the report "Our Global Neighbourhood" presented by the Commission on Global Governance. In the economic and social sphere, Sweden and the other Nordic countries have presented jointly a number of concrete proposals, which include joint UN offices in the field and better financing of development assistance. The report of the Nordic UN project was presented to the UN Secretary-

General last month. We have gained a hearing for this work in the EU context, and at a series of regional meetings held in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Our multilateral work, in the UN system, in the World Bank and in other organizations, constitutes an important framework for the responsibility undertaken by Sweden in international development cooperation. For decades, Sweden's development assistance has been innovative and, in spite of the cutbacks of recent years, continues to be strong. Our emphasis on a long-term perspective and the fight against poverty is of central importance. Development assistance is an effective instrument for the Government's overall policy in support of peace, democracy and justice, sustainable international economic development and the rights of the poor.

The advance of democracy in many parts of the world opens up new horizons for development assistance. In future, development assistance can be based to an increasing extent on the strength and responsibility of our cooperation partners. The achievement of a true partnership is the goal. The Africa project which I presented in last year's statement of government foreign policy will be carried out during the year in this spirit.

Democracy has made it possible for Latin America to succeed in consolidating a decade of positive political and economic developments. At the same time there are considerable differences in income, and social problems. In Central America, peace agreements have given people faith in the future. But the situation is still fragile and the region is in need of continued support.

The countries of Asia demonstrate contrasts between great poverty and rapid growth. Impressive economic progress is being made at the same time as the development of democracy is being held back in a disquieting manner by authoritarian regimes in many areas. The world economy and global security will be affected to a large extent by developments in Asia in the immediate future.

The Government is actively participating in efforts that are being made to strengthen the ties between Asia and Europe. I will be travelling to Singapore tomorrow to participate in the dialogue between Asia and Europe which was initiated last year. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will take further initiatives this year to intensify Sweden's relations with Asia.

The Government will continue to support the peace process in the Middle East, inter alia, through Swedish participation in the international presence in Hebron, and substantial support to the Palestinian areas. In spite of last year's setbacks and difficulties, there is a growing awareness among Israelis and Palestinians that they must seek their future in cooperation. Through the Hebron Agreement, Israel's new government has accepted participation in the peace process. It is the responsibility of all the parties in the region and the surrounding world to ensure that the peace process is carried forward.

The Euro-Islam Project will continue. This is a peace project that is providing an opportunity for Sweden and Europe to develop relations with our Muslim neighbouring countries in the long term. At the same time, it is contributing to a

deeper understanding of the many people in Sweden and Europe with a Muslim background.

Observance of human rights has to be improved and control mechanisms strengthened. The Government is continuing its international actions against torture and capital punishment, against the exploitation of children and the repression of women and for the protection of courageous defenders of the rule of law, for example, Aung Sang Suu Kyi, who seeks to uphold freedom of thought and speech. We take action unilaterally or in cooperation with the EU and the Nordic countries, by influencing, criticizing or condemning. But also through dialogue, cooperation and educational measures. One example of the latter is the courses for public officials in China and Turkey arranged by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

As a way of counteracting the barbarism of civil wars, the Governments of the Nordic countries are working together to formulate a set of minimal humanitarian rules which should be observed by all parties and in any conflict. Together with a number of other countries, the Government is also making vigorous efforts to bring about the establishment of an international court of criminal justice at the earliest possible date. Such a court would be able to handle serious crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity.

The Government gives high priority to efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Arsenal of weapons, the risk of proliferation and nuclear weapons doctrines stemming from the Cold War are still a reality.

Disarmament work should be carried out in steady stages until we have reached our ultimate goal - a world free of weapons of mass destruction. The Government welcomes the proposals of the Canberra Commission for continued measures. One of the immediate steps recommended is that nuclear weapons be taken off alert status.

The START II Agreement should be ratified without delay and negotiations on further cuts initiated. The Government will make efforts to initiate negotiations on a ban on the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and on negative security assurances and also to achieve an international comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines.

Madam/Mr Speaker

Globalization means that Sweden's dependence on foreign trade will increase rapidly. Free trade improves conditions for Swedish exports and promotes economic growth and employment in Sweden and other parts of the world, not least among the developing countries. The aims of efforts in the World Trade Organization, WTO, are to strengthen the body of rules and to draw up an action programme for the continuing liberalization of world trade.

It is in Sweden's national interests to foster increased economic exchange. It is also of crucial importance for achieving the Government's goal of halving open unemployment. Trade brings security thanks to the positive mutual dependence that

it creates. In March, the Government plans to present to Parliament a document concerning Sweden, the European Union and trade policy for the 21st century.

Globalization calls for political tools and civic spirit that can transcend national boundaries. Social justice, democracy and human rights cannot come to a halt at a nation's border. Together with Colombia, the country which is currently chairing the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Government will be arranging later this year an international conference on the political response to the social challenges of globalization.

Madam/Mr Speaker,

1997 will be a key year in our endeavours to create a unified Europe. This will be the year when the nations of Europe can realise the implications of the end of the Cold War and make practical use of the knowledge that lasting security is created through concrete cooperation.

The Government sees the EU and its enlargement as the driving force for realizing a pan-European security community. The primary task of the European Union is to secure peace through economic and political cooperation – the task for which European cooperation was originally initiated.

Enlargement of the European Union will serve to confirm the kinship between the nations and peoples of Europe. Integration will be built on everyday cooperation between governments, enterprises, organizations and individuals. Mutual dependence will pave the way for uniting that which has been divided for 50 years. Together we will build our way out of confrontation and erase dividing lines.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have made significant progress in their efforts to consolidate democracy, the rule of law and a market economy. The exacting membership requirements should spur them on to further progress. That is why the Government advocates that accession negotiations be commenced simultaneously for all candidate countries. In this way, they will gain membership on their own merits.

The EU Intergovernmental Conference is now moving into a decisive phase. The EU must be prepared for enlargement, which involves, inter alia, political and institutional reforms. It has to become more efficient, more democratic and be equipped to deal with the issues that the people of Europe find most pressing.

The third phase of economic and monetary union, EMU, which is planned to come into effect on 1 January 1999, implies a considerably deepened form of cooperation. EMU will leave its mark on Sweden, regardless of our position with regard to participation in the third phase. This question calls for debate and careful deliberations, in both a Swedish and a European perspective. Parliament will be taking a decision on this matter in the autumn.

The Government strives for a clear and transparent Common Foreign and Security Policy for the EU. Among other things, we would like to develop its capacity for conflict management. The Swedish line on the EU's development cooperation policy is directed towards bringing about genuine and effective cooperation with the developing countries, in particular through a reform of the Lomé cooperation. Sweden will work for a refugee policy based on solidarity in the whole of the EU and for transparency in the EU's trade relations with the rest of the world.

The planned enlargement of NATO will have a decisive influence on our chances of creating a unified and safer Europe. Even if we do not take part in the decision-making, we will be affected by enlargement, which is why we put forward our views. The Government continuously emphasizes that enlargement must contribute to the security of the whole of Europe.

The enlargement of NATO must not be allowed to result in new dividing lines, something which NATO has emphasized in its study of the consequences of enlargement. We want to see an undivided European continent. Mutual understanding between Russia and NATO is in the interests of the whole of Europe. Pan-European security must be built together with Russia. It is important that the security of those countries which do not become members in the first stage of enlargement also be strengthened. The process of NATO enlargement should be transparent and able to develop.

Each country has the right to make its own security policy choices and this right must be respected. We expect others to respect our choice, in the same way as we respect theirs. At the same time, it is crucial that each country's security solution also takes into consideration the pan-European security perspective.

Through cooperation in the Partnership for Peace, PfP, the security of all states, with no exceptions, can be increased. This can be achieved primarily by improving our common capacity for military crisis management, rescue services and peace-keeping. At the same time, the PfP contributes to increased trust between the defence forces of different countries and to increased understanding of the need for democratic control of those forces. In this context, the Government is planning a number of measures, for example cooperation with the countries on the Baltic Sea. The regional centre for exercise and training initiated by the Government will commence operations in 1997.

The PfP is an expression of the fact that the common security policy agenda is steadily expanding. We are developing cooperation with NATO in all areas except those involving territorial defence issues or common defence commitments. Sweden's policy of non-participation in military alliances with the aim of making it possible for our country to remain neutral in the event of war in our vicinity remains unchanged.

The international presence in former Yugoslavia is an illustration of a Europe engaged in security policy cooperation. In the Tuzla area of Bosnia, Swedish troops stand side by side with Americans, Russians and other nationalities united in a common cause – to prevent war and contribute to peace, reconciliation and the healing of the wounds that have so tragically marked this part of Europe.

Sweden's support to the work of reconstruction in former Yugoslavia continues. It contributes to the process of bonding and reconciling at grassroots level that which ruthless political leaders tore apart. Support is directed towards the promotion of democracy, the creation of independent media, multi-ethnic projects and assistance to returning refugees. The popular movements and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this context.

Our vision is of a Europe beyond pacts, where military dividing lines have been replaced by a network of cooperation. This calls for further reductions in armament levels and a gradual phasing out of nuclear weapons. It is not possible to build a sustainable security order and lasting peace on weapons of mass destruction.

We want to see an order that makes war between the nations of Europe as inconceivable as it would be between the Nordic countries or the Member States of the European Union. Now that the Cold War is over we can to an increasing extent let civilian cooperation create security.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is making an invaluable contribution to the realization of pan-European security and the process towards common security. All the countries of Europe, along with the USA and Canada, participate on an equal footing. A modern, broad definition of security underlies the OSCE's measures for conflict prevention, reconciliation, human rights and the promotion of democracy. A good example of this is the work to achieve recognition of the local election results in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Similarly, the OSCE is playing a central role in the efforts towards European arms control and a new CFE treaty.

One key task is to achieve deep-seated and strengthened democracy in those countries that resumed or commenced their democratic development after the Cold War. Democracy is a prerequisite for the creation of lasting peaceful relations both within and between countries. Both the norms for and the means of giving international support to the process of democratization need to be strengthened, for example within the framework of the Council of Europe. We also welcome the work begun by the Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA.

Lasting security for Europe requires a more distinct global perspective for European security. Europe must prevent future conflicts by taking greater responsibility for global economic levelling and reducing its over-utilization of natural resources.

Madam/Mr Speaker

The people of Northern Europe share a common sea, a common history and a common culture. We have a thousand-year-old tradition of trade, cultural exchange and personal contacts. We have today the chance to live in a renascent region - characterized by democracy, cooperation, a market economy and social responsibility.

Long-term bilateral cooperation will aim at strengthening and intensifying reform processes with respect to democracy, the economy, security and the environment in north-west Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. A primary task is to highlight the need for social development in parallel with economic development.

Proximity benefits trade. Therefore it is of great importance to develop our relations with the Baltic Sea states and the approximately 100 million people who live there. This will also help make Sweden more attractive to foreign companies looking for investment opportunities. It is in Sweden's interests that both Russia and the Baltic states join the World Trade Organization, so that the Baltic Sea region can develop into a well-functioning domestic market.

Sweden's support will continue to the Baltic states to build up public functions such as the police, customs, border control and a legal framework for dealing with refugee issues. In the defence field we want to help make it possible for the Baltic states to participate in peace support activities and to develop total defence systems that are deeply rooted among their citizens.

Enlarging the EU to include the four candidate states from the Baltic Sea area is the most important means of strengthening security, economic exchange and political cooperation in the region. Swedish measures in support of the states' negotiating ability and EU adaptation will intensify this year.

A decisive issue for common security in the region is the development of cooperation with Russia. The dialogue with Russia is to be further intensified, both bilaterally and within the framework of the EU's partnership with Russia. Within the framework for these contacts it is particularly important to stimulate dialogue and cooperation between the Baltic states and Russia. It is particularly important that Russia now signs the agreement on the Estonian-Russian border issue, which in practice has now been resolved, and does not raise new obstacles on the way to such an agreement.

It is also of great importance to Baltic Sea cooperation that the USA's commitment to Europe is maintained. The American presence has been crucial for peace and development throughout Europe. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Marshall plan - an outstanding example of this commitment.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which Sweden is chairing in the current year, aims to tear down walls and promote cooperation, good cross-border relations and long-term peace building. During the coming year the Government wants to contribute to strengthening the ties between the region and the EU and to improving conditions for trade and investment. Increased nuclear safety, environmental improvements and cultural cooperation, and more extensive people-to-people contact - not least between indigenous peoples - are other important tasks.

Nordic cooperation is a living example of the possibilities of integration. This cooperation is part of the Government's European policy. It is being restructured so that it concentrates on those areas where joint Nordic solutions have advantages over national or broader international arrangements.

Madam/Mr Speaker

"In today's world, everything is the concern of everyone."

With these words Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, has captured the challenges and possibilities of the modern age.

Sweden's foreign and security policy shall contribute to peace by coming to grips with the underlying causes of conflict - economic injustices, environmental threats, human rights abuses, the absence of freedom, and a lack of faith in the future. This applies in our immediate vicinity, in Europe and globally.