



The Social Democratic Party of Sweden

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Key speech on Swedish Foreign Policy

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Check against delivery!

I would like to start by thanking *Folk och Försvar* for their work carried out over 70 years. This is my first time here, and I hope that another 70 years will follow. For the debate on defence and security policies, and the way of widening it and making more people participate in it, Folk och Försvar has played a decisive role.

First, I would like to say a few words on the situation in Haiti. Surely, I am not the only one with ghastly impressions that keep flashing before my eyes. This is something that affects us all. There is a need for continuous dialogue on ways of struggling against poverty, on working for democracy and for cooperation efforts to reach countries like Haiti.

When natural disasters strike in the manner that has now occurred in Haiti, they become security policy issues on a large scale— far beyond Haitian borders.

I believe that discussions on operational forces must be given a different frame and different contents, when it comes to efforts similar to the ones that will be required now, after the terrible disaster in Haiti.

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Today, I am addressing you as leader of the Social Democratic Party but also as the leader of the center-left opposition which is now one out of two distinct government options before the elections to be held within eight months.

I have no memories from the military service to share with you, as I have not done the military service, nor has the Defence Secretary Mr Sten Tolgfors, and therefore we can both look at the defence with fresh eyes!



However, today we, the center-left, are announcing our joint agreement on security and defence policies, conflict prevention, export controls of military equipment, disarmament and women in conflict areas.

This is a crucial announcement before the elections, and it is of vital importance to inform about defence and security policies in any electoral campaign, including the present one.

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From our point of view, defence and security policies must rest on four cornerstones. I would like to go through and then passing on to foreign policy. I will give you a considerable amount of detailed information, because I believe there is a need for that.

The speech I am about to deliver will rather be a traditional key speech about defence, foreign and security policies.

The four cornerstones are as follows:

- the military non-alignment,
- increased cooperation with the Nordic countries, and especially, with the countries bordering the Baltic Sea,
- increased cooperation with the EU, and
- the strengthening of the United Nations.

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The first cornerstone is the military non-alignment.

It has served us well and will continue to do so. I am convinced of the advantages of military non-alignment.

The description of Swedish security doctrine given in 2002, a doctrine which was widely endorsed by the parties of the Swedish Parliament the Riksdag, still stands.

Over the years, Sweden has shown very clearly that it is possible for us to actively assume responsibility for our own safety as well as the safety of others in combination with a military non-alignment.

This does not mean being passive – it is just the other way round.

There are many important reasons why Sweden's military non-alignment must be safeguarded:



- Sweden should not desist from its own freedom of action.
- Sweden should be a credible stakeholder in the global work for disarmament.
- Sweden should make its own decisions as regards the extension, aim and direction of our defence.
- The military non-alignment is widely supported by the Swedish people, which is also the case of our security policy position on military non-alignment.

It has been interesting to follow the development process that NATO has undergone, still is undergoing and will be undergoing for many years to come. From being a defence organisation, the principal aim of which was to defend Western European territory, NATO has gradually adapted itself to facing the global security issues of the new era, something that all persons present are aware of.

This change of direction has been necessary. It has also resulted in Sweden co-operating today with NATO in an excellent way.

In order to enable Sweden to participate in crisis management on an international level, it is vital that our soldiers are trained and drilled jointly with soldiers of other countries, which is predominantly done in cooperation with NATO itself. We will continue to be actively committed to the international work within the frames of the UN, EU, NATO and OSCE.

However, in our opinion Sweden should never participate in a military NATO operation based exclusively on NATO's Article 5, which is the clause related to the safeguarding of collective defence among NATO members.

We – the center-left – agree on every aspect mentioned above. The 2002 agreement on security policy is still to be applied.

On the other hand, unlike the Government we firmly decline any participation in NRF (NATO Response Force), primarily because we believe that the Swedish defensive forces need to focus on present engagements.

For us – the center-left – Sweden's military non-alignment is a crucial element of our security policy.

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The second area refers to the Nordic countries and to a highly active Baltic Sea policy.

The excellent cooperation between the Nordic countries has contributed to the present security level in our part of the world. In spite of the fact that we apply



different security policy solutions, of which we are all aware, we have managed to work together well, even in hard times. The need for this will no doubt grow over the next years.

I find that the Stoltenberg Report lays a highly interesting ground for continuous debate and development of the Nordic defence and security policy cooperation, and I hope we will be able to assume a more leading role in creating a confidence-building cooperation in Northern Europe, including the Barent's Sea and Arctic regions.

We want to take the discussions further on how to develop the Baltic Sea region into a peaceful one. Actually, the security of this area has undergone a strengthening process in the last decade, especially thanks to the fact that the security policy requirements of the Baltic countries have been met.

In the regional security-building work there is also a need for constructive participation on the part of Russia. Even if some positive elements are to be seen in the development of Russian society, there are reasons to be very cautious. The more and more authoritarian governance of Russia, combined with its ever increasing aggressive behavior towards certain neighboring countries, are cause for alarm. It has also to do with the attacks on journalists and the situation for the press and freedom of speech in Russia.

In order to strengthen our own security, Sweden must combine its explicit reactions to unacceptable parts of Russian politics with a real intention to make Russia cooperate more closely, which is something that Sweden is able to do. No one has anything to gain by isolating Russia, absolutely no one.

The EU needs to elaborate a common policy towards Russia, especially within the energy policy field. To use energy supplies as a political means of exerting pressure, is unacceptable.

As you all know, the center-left opposition would have preferred the planned route of the Russian-German gas pipeline North Stream to follow quite a different direction. The extension of the gas pipeline and the increase in oil shipments on the Baltic Sea transform our sea into a region of large financial and security policy interests.

The Swedish government's approval of the gas pipeline could open for Russia to move forward its military positions in the Baltic region. It also underlines the importance of supervising the Baltic ourselves, as well as the significant role played by the island of Gotland.



Now efforts must be made to prevent the gas pipeline from being used as an excuse for increasing the military presence in the Baltic region – which the Russian leadership has already announced. Sweden should take the initiative of civilian monitoring of the gas pipeline and – together with all states bordering the Baltic Sea, especially Russia – try to reach an agreement on this matter, which has priority over others.

The center-left opposition also wishes to preserve the competence developed by the Swedish Naval Forces and naval industry. It is imperative that we have sufficient capacity to protect our territory, both with regard to its surface and its underwater zones, and – as is well known – a very large part of our territory consists of coasts and waterways.

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The third cornerstone is a strengthened cooperation within the EU. Naturally, in this respect I agree with Prime Minister Reinfeldt on many of the things he described regarding the development of Europe.

Today, a unique cooperation between European countries is taking place. We share each others' problems and we participate in each others' successes, and we do this within our common decision-making space. However, Europe is still not a unified and free region, which is just as true. Let me mention two aspects.

On the EU level too, there must be a harder control of racist and xenophobic tendencies. The Swiss referendum on minarets, as well as the ongoing debate and concerns within large Muslim groups in Europe, are clear indications of this. Europe must stand very firm against extremists and fundamentalists, no matter what kind they are. As it happens, in Sweden such a simple thing as Somali girls having the right to dance on a Monday night in the Rinkeby community house can be a question of human rights. This is also a question of security policy, as well as European policy.

The second aspect refers to the fact that the enlargement of the EU must continue. This is also a matter of importance to the Swedish Government in office, which is a positive thing.

The remaining problems of the Balkans can only be solved by manifesting, clearly and distinctly, that the door to the EU really is open. Democracy is not safeguarded beyond the present Eastern border of the EU. In the future, these countries will continue to require contacts, cooperation programs, development agreements and active international support for their democracy-building processes. Sweden should assume a considerable part of the responsibility for this work.



Hopefully, we will also be able to welcome more countries as EU members, which of course is the particular case of Turkey. The question is not whether Turkey actually can become a member, but when it will be possible for Turkey to gain membership, and this, in turn, is determined by the pace of development in Turkey.

However, the support is not to be given unreservedly, not to any country. The Turkish Constitutional Court's resolution to ban the Kurdish party DTP is a step in the wrong direction, because it favours extremist forces in an utterly dangerous way. This is exactly why it is so important for the EU to manifest, leaving no room for doubt, that the Turkish membership is still viable in the future. At the same time, the reforms required in Turkey are the strongest foundation for strengthening the rights of the Kurds and other minorities in Turkey.

The EU has grown into a very important global actor and should, just as Prime Minister Reinfeldt said, both cooperate with and support the UN in a very active way. To develop the crisis and conflict management capacity of the EU is something that I would like to prioritise on the political agenda, also with regard to regions beyond EU borders. This is where the experience of what is now occurring in Haiti must affect the way in which that debate is being conducted.

The center-left parties believe that the EU is a foreign policy arena of vital importance to Sweden. We also stand united behind the solidarity clause of the Lisbon Treaty and the extended solidarity declaration that includes all the Nordic countries.

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The fourth cornerstone is a stronger United Nations. It goes without saying that global security presupposes the existence of a solid legal framework on a global level.

The Human Rights and international law situation, as well as the possibilities of countering global threats, presupposes that the UN not only is reorganised, which is well needed, but also strengthened.

Unfortunately, the UN Security Council – especially the permanent members – has shown a serious lack of responsibility. Genocides have not been stopped, and disputes between the great powers have resulted in deadlocks by the use of vetoes or veto threats.

It is imperative that the restructuring of the UN Security Council is carried on. Its structure must reflect, in a different way, the world of today, not only the world as it looked nearly 70 years ago. And – not least – the principle of protection responsibility needs to be given another role in the UN's specific work.



The peace-keeping missions of the UN are becoming more and more complex, something that we all well know. It is obvious that there is a need for strengthening the UN's own competence in this area. This is the reason why other organisations like the EU, NATO and the African Union have been entrusted with leading many peace-keeping operations.

The EU has enhanced its capacity of leading increasingly complex and intricate operations. We have participated in practically all EU efforts and we will continue committing ourselves actively. However, it is essential to point out that for every peace-keeping operation in which Sweden participates, there must exist a clear mandate by virtue of international law.

We – the center-left – also expressly declare that we wish to strengthen the Swedish commitment to a strong and restructured UN. It is imperative that the UN is allowed, is provided with and makes use of the prerequisites, so that the organisation is able to cope with its new tasks.

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In Afghanistan, the UN Security Council has given ISAF, the International Security Assistance Force, the mandate of supporting Afghanistan's transition into a stable country with a democratic government.

The present situation is difficult, which can be deducted from what our Prime Minister told us regarding the attack on the Swedish contingents today, as well as the suicide bombings in Kabul that we could hear about this morning.

I would like to point out that the purpose of ISAF's activities in Afghanistan always has been that the Afghan authorities as soon as possible should be able to assume responsibility for the security of the Afghan people, without the presence of international military forces. To achieve this goal a competent and functional Afghan administration is required; they also need the support and aid of the international community for the reconstruction and development of the country.

Not until this is achieved, and only then, can the international forces be withdrawn. I would like a review to be made of the total Swedish commitment in Afghanistan, as we have proposed in the Parliament. This review is to be completed by autumn 2011 and lay the foundation for future parliamentary resolutions on a possible prolongation or pull-out of Sweden's military presence in Afghanistan. This is especially important now when US President Obama has expressed himself in the same terms.



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All this having been said – a government led by the center-left will naturally focus primarily on the work aimed at preventing conflicts. The purpose of any foreign policy must be to prevent conflicts. When we fail to do so, a strong and distinct military element is required. Then the foreign policy and the security policy will form a whole.

There are some grand words that are always used when foreign policy is discussed: liberation of man, freedom, security, responsibility for succeeding generations. The subject of interrelation between security and development, both short-term and long-term, which the Prime Minister touched on, is indisputable. It cannot be divided in two.

It is a question of struggling constantly against economic and social inequalities, of making solidarity spread and of really contributing to a world where poverty and impotence belong to the past.

This is talking big. No society can place itself in the margin of development in any part of the world, and yet be successful. Cooperation – where the one-percent target is still to be pursued and where it is a disgrace that so few countries achieve this percentage – is but one of many tools. Others are trading, technology transference, entrepreneurship, jobs and growth. These are the things that actually create the prerequisites for building democratic and robust societies.

I was in India not long ago, where I was immensely inspired by the work with microloans to women in the Indian countryside – an essential tool for security policy. Women and children have other and larger needs than men when it comes to development and assistance in conflict areas. Women suffer the hardest impacts from conflicts. Rapes are used systematically as a war strategy, as a mass destruction weapon. These facts must be judged as war crimes.

At the same time, women have a major role to play in peace processes and reconstruction, in accordance with the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 – an incredibly important decision made lately. Also in this vital and heavyweight security policy area – women's roles in conflicts – we, the center-left opposition, embrace a firm and clear common political line.

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I have met Mexican natives who have seen their crops being destroyed by the increase in temperature. I have landed together with Chile's former President Lagos on the Antarctic ice – an ice that risks breaking adrift in just a few years' time.

I have experienced acute shortages of water on the West Bank. I have met Indian politicians who have seen, horror-struck, the waters from the Himalayan glaciers leading to inundations, famine and conflicts.

The environment is a global issue of fate – and, very much so, an issue of security policy.

Within the center-left opposition we have constantly claimed that further efforts need to be made, in order to include the large group of developing countries in the climatic work. This will require that we, in the rich countries, commit ourselves not only to providing resources for conversions but also to reducing emissions. Those who have the largest emissions must also reduce them most.

Each and every one must assume responsibility. Shifting the main responsibility on to another actor is not an option. Sweden should aim at leading this development – not the other way round.

We would like Sweden to fulfill its role in the global climate debate before the meeting in Mexico, not least by underpinning an even stronger cooperation with countries like Brazil, South Africa and India.

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Furthermore, I would like to touch on some conflicts. The first one is, of course, the conflict that affects almost all the other ones, that is, the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The war in Gaza has led to disastrous consequences. Thousands of men, women and children have died. Today, the infrastructure of Gaza remains largely devastated, and it will take an immensely long time to rebuild a functional society.

The Israeli occupation, the settlement politics, the construction of the wall on occupied land and the assaults must stop. The insufferable isolation of and embargo on Gaza must be brought to an end. It is imperative that the Palestinians expressly refrain from attacking civilians in Israel.

Last summer I participated in the Al Fatah congress in Bethlehem. My impression now – it has changed over the years – is that there is a genuine intention to work pacifically for a two-state solution.



We – the center-left opposition – want Sweden to be ready for participating in a peace-keeping force in Israel and Palestine, if a peace agreement is reached and if Sweden is authorised by the UN to do so.

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It need not be said more than once that the struggle against international terrorism affects us all. However, that struggle must be conducted with a view to the values that need defending. It is crucial to emphasise this fact. The struggle may never become a smoke curtain behind which serious injustices are committed – as done by Russia, for instance, in Chechnya.

Human rights are also violated in the US camp at Guantanamo Bay. For all those who claim to endorse the protection of human rights, it should be a matter of course to demand the immediate shutdown of the Guantanamo camp. I hope that President Obama, if not in his first year of office – because it will soon end – at least in his second year will be able to make his promise come true.

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Now that the world finally has reinitiated the discussions on disarmament, I think that Sweden under the Conservative government has maintained an embarrassingly passive attitude and policy. The world is in great need of new initiatives in the work for disarmament and control.

The present developments are alarming, as regards North Korea and Iran, but also in Pakistan. There are many good ideas that should be developed further, especially those initiated by the late Foreign Secretary Anna Lindh on the basis of the conclusions drawn by the Blix Commission.

We, the center-left opposition, wish to extend this field into an even larger arena for Swedish foreign and security policies.

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All trading with weapons and war equipment is to be controlled by strict regulations. Sweden should serve as a model in this respect. Today there is a need for investigation of the weapon export regulations, in order to really ensure that the conditions required are at hand.



Sweden has been exporting weapons since the days of the Cold War, when it was a prerequisite for the reliability of our own defence to have a strong and independent Swedish defence industry.

The defence industry is still vital to Sweden. Therefore, I am pleased to see that today, we also have a common center-left policy on weapon exports and a solid Swedish defence industry.

As you all well know, the EU is an increasingly important arena also for development and research concerning weapon systems. With a center-left government, Sweden will continue to be a member of EDA, the European Defence Agency.

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Our center-left agreement presented today also covers the defence policy. When I was elected party Chair in 2007, I proposed that all seven party Chairs in the parliament should conduct deliberations on the defence, on a broad scale. This proposal was turned down by the Prime Minister.

We – the center-left opposition – have been trying to actively promote broad-based by partisan agreements on the defence policy, in the work of the Defence drafting committee, among other things.

After the parliamentary Defence committee's report was published, the government also had a unique opportunity of setting a really long-term new direction of the defence, with a broad political support. That possibility was not made use of. In recent years, the Swedish defence has undergone a process of continuous change. Naturally, it is important to create peace and quiet so that we can work and bring finances to a balance – I believe those were the very words used by Fredrik Reinfeldt.

We – the center-left opposition – wish to carry on the restructuring of the Swedish defence, from a defence against an invasion into an operational defence.

The national requirements should lay the foundation for prioritising and developing our capabilities. We should also be actively committed to international peace operations. However, the level of ambition must be realistic and based on the demands of the surrounding world, on our own needs and on the financial situation of the defence.

Today, the capacity intended for international operations is not being used. We the center-left opposition want to increase that capacity, seeing more Swedish soldiers participate in peace-keeping operations led by the UN.



We will continue to participate in the rapid response forces of the EU, but without assuming a large and expensive frame responsibility.

Our defence and security policies are, and should be, everyone's responsibility. For this reason, it is vital that they continue having a strong support among the people. They were not just something that came handy after World War II; they still play a significant role.

Presently, the number of women working within the defence is insufficient. The work for promoting equality of opportunities and counteracting discrimination must have full impact throughout the system.

Personnel supply – that is, the manning of the Swedish defence – stands for a very large portion. The system must be robust and sustainable; I believe this is the expression used by us all. It must work well, as the defensive preparedness requires that only a few out of every batch are called up for service. The system should be functional both in times of recession and prosperity, and it should ensure that the defence obtains the right supply of qualified personnel in the long run as well.

In a situation of increased defensive preparedness or war, everybody – both women and men – will be subject to doing military or Home Guard service. As you all know, we, the center-left opposition, consider it a mistake to abolish the military compulsory service now, in such haste and without a parliamentary resolution on this subject.

But I am also a realist. An exhaustive assessment of the measures that the government now seems to be taking cannot be made until the next term of office. If the Conservative government abolishes the conscription before the 2010 election, a center-left opposition government will carry out, together with the military authorities, an unprejudiced analysis of the personnel supply system within a year. There are concerns about the consequences of these measures. This is why it is so important to carry out such a thorough analysis.

In the future, the defensive forces are to consist of contracted units; likewise, it is to be established that soldiers can be called up for national military service as well as for international operations.

It is evident from numerous aspects, that there is a considerably wide consensus on the defence and security policies. Consequently we can and we should afford to conduct political debates and discussions on those matters where our points of view differ.



I have described the main features and, at some points, quite many details concerning the basic perspective that I share with the center-left opposition parties on the defence and security policies and, partly, the foreign policy.

In the world of today, everything concerns everybody and each and every one has as shared responsibility for everything. This is what makes foreign policy so viable, so exciting and so vital for the general public to get an insight into. I share the Prime Minister's view on this.

It goes without saying that for me, as Chair of the Social Democrats – whose movement has always been an international one – it is decisive that we keep promoting international solidarity and the security philosophy that we share.

This is for me the fundamental sense of the defence and security policies.

Thank you, once again, for an excellent conference.

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