

NATO in the UK and Nordic countries, 23rd of March 2024, Global Women United for Peace Against NATO, IPB Speech by Karin Utas Carlsson, Sweden. Women for Peace.

The Swedish society reacted very strongly to the Russian invasion in Ukraine on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. The Social Democratic Party, then in power, changed opinion in a few weeks from being against NATO membership to joining the conservatives in their support, and the application for membership was submitted without discussion in the public on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. There was strong opposition in the Social Democratic party to the elite in the party. This was overlooked. The peace movement had hoped for a debate during the election to parliament that year, but the politicians and media were definitely not interested in letting any opposition be heard.

Also in secret the government negotiated the Defence Cooperation Agreement with US. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December last year we were presented with the treaty when it was signed by the two foreign ministers of US and Sweden. To the public it was out of the blue, and we in the peace movement did not react to any extent until after the Christmas and New Year vacations.

The media also did not make much of it. We have noticed, however, some change after the 7<sup>th</sup> of March this year when Sweden after Hungary's acceptance entered as a full member of NATO. Not that the media does much to inform about the DCA-treaty or the consequences of it, but there are now some well known people writing very helpful articles, and the peace movement gets through with more texts. It might be an open window for us to reach out.

The DCA-treaty is very similar to the ones in the other Nordic Countries. However there is no restriction, or even mention of nuclear weapons.

You see a map of Sweden and the Nordic Countries where there are red dots showing the areas of military defence. There are in Sweden 17 areas from the very north to the south which US will share with Sweden. These are regiments, air flotillas, harbours, exercise fields, and Vidsel large airspace testrange in Lapland. Esrange, not far from Kiruna – one of the bases – is the world's biggest downloading station from satellites. Wars are fought through information from satellites, and Esrange is important to US warfare. It was from the beginning presented as a civil project but they are cover for broad spy satellite military programmes (see [www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org)). Sweden is important to US also as a partner in interception from Russian military cables. Information is sent to US and Great Britain from Lovön close to Stockholm. Lerkil south of Gothenburg, is a satellite communication and listening station which in secrecy copies and analyses private, secret individual communications which are sent via private international telecommunication satellites.

There are parts of the 17 bases that are exclusively for the US military staff and families. There they will keep armory and vehicles, ammunition, and store goods. Sweden will have no right to enter and to inspect. This applies also to transports. The US military will have free excess to the country, and infrastructure will be improved and developed.

Of course it is extremely frightening that we have nothing to set against a great power like US if they will want to put nuclear weapons in these bases or transport them through our country. From Russian standpoint it is obvious that we now definitely come out as enemies. Gotland has been named an unsinkable hangar. Visby in Gotland is one of the US bases. The military in the bases in the far north will be working with the Norwegian and Finnish ones very close to Kola peninsula with Russian naval base. The Arctic Sea is becoming of increasing interest since the ice is melting.

Our government is unbelievably naïve when they are asked whether there will be nuclear weapons positioned on our territory. They say that the US knows that we do not want them. The US principle is never to answer questions if they transport nuclear weapons.

The jurisdiction regarding American soldiers and families will be according to US law. The text is not clear since there are special cases and exceptions in the following articles. There is a risk of many disputes in the future.

There are many groups and people spreading flyers and talking to people in the street. We notice lack of knowledge. This needs to be changed quickly since the Parliament will get the proposition on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May and might vote on the treaty before the summer holidays. People feel the NATO membership is decided and all opposition is too late. Also important parts of the peace movement think that all we can do is to try to get a law against nuclear weapons. We do not have one and Sweden has joined NATO expressing full support including the nuclear doctrine. Like the other NATO countries Sweden has not signed the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, TPNW.

The main political parties in the parliament are now for NATO, having changed after the Russian invasion in Ukraine, and at the moment it is only the Left Party saying no to the DCA-treaty. The Green Party does not declare their position even though they have been against NATO like the Left Party.

On the 1 st of March peace activists started an nation-wide campaign for a referendum about US bases and nuclear weapons in Sweden. We want to postpone the ratification of the treaty and get through with information so people will realize what is happening, an extremely risky change of politics. The treaty on US bases in Sweden threatens our self-determination more than the NATO membership since now US will be right inside the country, not having to get permission from other NATO countries. Also, there is still a chance to affect the outcome since the parliament has not yet ratified the treaty.

We inspire groups in different parts of the country to get together to perform activities. We meet weekly in internet to inspire and coordinate. There are digital as well as physical name collections. The idea of the physical ones is to talk to people, discuss and inform them. That is time consuming. We use the media, also the social media, and we have a website [www.folkomrosta.nu](http://www.folkomrosta.nu). We are offering material for information. We need to get out to many new organisations, like the trade unions. We write letters and postcards to parliamentarians. Only the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society has got the status of a referral body, but every Swedish citizen may send in referral texts to the government. And this we have done, many of us, individuals and organisations. We find it outrageous that the Sami people have not been informed and has not got the status of a referral body. By law as indigenous people they should be consulted.

Our sovereignty is threatened. People do not realise that there is no lasting security in nuclear deterrence – and definitely no peace. Threatening Russia, a nuclear power, means less security, not more.