Abstracts: Conference on Swedish Disarmament Policy

Aryo Makko, PhD, Department of History, Stockholm University
The Swedish Interest in Confidence and Security Building Measures and Questions of Disarmament
Sweden has a long-standing record of active involvement in international efforts towards disarmament. In 1932, the Nordic country participated in the World Disarmament Conference. During the Cold War, the Swedish government continued to be keen to contribute to related UN efforts. This article explores Sweden’s interest in Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and its follow-up process between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s. It argues that Sweden prioritized disarmament, stability, and peace over human rights, change, and individual freedom despite the rise and dominance of a rhetoric of morality in Swedish politics in the 1970s.

Stellan Andersson, Archivist and Historian
Some Notes on Public Opinion, Peace Movements and the Disarmament Process in the early 1980s
With a few examples I want to discuss what Olof Palme called The general principle of politics: “Without the popular movement pressuring, hounding the politicians, you won’t get anywhere, but without politicians wanting in the end to tackle the matter, and sit down with their adversaries and try to get the negotiating done, you won’t get anywhere either.” Was the pressure from public opinion, from a strong peace movement, a precondition for disarmament? Or had the peace movements and public opinion, the intellectuals, the experts and the scientists no impact at all?
How can we investigate this? How can it be measured?

Jan Prawitz, Senior Researcher at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs
In the period 1981 – 1991 was rather active in promoting arms control measures relevant to the maritime domain. But Sweden has been involved in such measures occasionally for a long time. Naval arms proposals were pursued by Sweden on three fronts: The Law of the Sea, the European Security Conference (today the OSCE), and the United Nations. These efforts were only partly successful, however. But when they were, the results achieved has had - beside their general value internationally – specific security importance for Sweden itself.

Lubna Qureshi, PhD, US Diplomatic History, University of California, Berkeley, and guest researcher at Södertörn University
Olof Palme’s Commitment to Nuclear Disarmament
My paper will explore Prime Minister Olof Palme’s philosophical approach to nuclear disarmament, as well as the efficacy of his policy. The sources will be the diplomatic correspondence found at Riksarkivet in Arninge, and the papers of Alva Myrdal, the prime minister's distinguished advisor in the field of disarmament. Eventually, this paper will serve as the basis of a chapter in my planned book on Palme’s foreign policy.
Emma Rosengren, PhD Candidate Department of Economic History, Stockholm University
*Disarmament and gender in International Relations theory*

The overall aim of my doctoral thesis is to explore the role of gender in the construction of disarmament policy during the cold war. In my conference paper, I will elaborate on different approaches to disarmament in IR theory. I will especially focus on the feminist critique of traditional IR theory and elaborate on how critical feminist theory can contribute to the understanding of the construction of disarmament. My starting point is that most dominant approaches in IR theory have a biased focus on war and armament, leading to an immanent difficulty to understand peace as more than the absence of war, and of disarmament as something more than bilateral or multilateral arms control. This bias has been further explored by anti-militarist feminists, who provide a thorough critique of traditional assumptions about state interests, sovereignty, military strength and defense inherent in (neo)realist theory. Critical feminists argue that war, armament, military strategies and armed violence are strongly connected to a masculine identity sprung from the gendered assumption that strong, armed men are supposed to protect vulnerable, unarmed women. Nuclear weapons has a central role in military doctrines since their mere existence is being defended with the theoretical assumption that deterrence a) works; and b) provides a reasonable and rational security strategy–only by possessing a larger number of nuclear warheads, with a higher capacity than that of the enemy, can states (men) protect its vulnerable citizens (women and children) from attack. These assumptions are clearly based on gender stereotypes, and thus contribute to the making of both disarmament and gender. Against this background, the aims of one of my articles is to explore the making of nuclear disarmament–the seemingly opposite of armament–from a critical feminist perspective, in order to make visible how masculinities and femininities are created and involved in the construction of disarmament policy. If armament is based on a masculine identity, is disarmament consequently connected to its contrast, to femininity? What ideologies interact in the making of nuclear disarmament policy, and how do they reflect ideas about gender?

Lars Ingelstam, Professor emeritus
*A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand - Swedish disarmament policy and weapons exports, investigated from a Large Technical Systems perspective.*

The period of Swedish neutrality (strictly speaking: non-alignment with the purpose of staying neutral in case of war) extends from the late 1940s into the beginning of the 1990s. Disarmament Policy (in a precise sense) was a strong element of foreign policy and national identity during the same period. The neutrality principle also influenced industrial policies and technical development in many fields, not only aircraft and nuclear engineering, but also e.g. ICT and agriculture. The hard core was, however, weaponry for the national defence. Strong industries were built under close private/public partnership: Saab, Bofors, Kockums, Hägglunds… One important actor (FFV) was 100 % state owned. Exports were allowed and to some extent encouraged, but under very strict rules and under a doctrine that stated that Swedish defence interests had absolute priority, and that recipients had to fulfil very strict criteria (jokingly described as “they must prove that they do not really need weapons”). The economic logic was that Swedish arms producers needed longer series in order to spread development and production costs. There seems to have been a general consensus that disarmament policy (both in a strict and a more general sense) did not in any way contradict the arms exports policy. One factor might have been that the former dealt primarily with nuclear weapons, while Swedish weaponry and exports (with only insignificant exceptions) consisted of conventional weapons. The first significant rupture in that consensus seems to have come with the two “Bofors affairs” (they became known 1984 and 1987 respectively; the second involved top politicians in both Sweden and India).

After the important events (the fall of the Berlin wall, the Soviet union dissolved, Sweden becoming an EU member) in the period 1989-1995 the conditions for non-alignment and neutrality changed radically,
as did the preconditions for arms production and weapons exports. The key industries became privatized and eventually foreign-owned (with Saab as a part-exception). How this happened is still, to my knowledge, an open research question. After 2000 (when disarmament was no longer a high-profile question in Swedish foreign policy) arms exports have increased considerably, and towards the end of the decade Sweden is now the largest exporter of weapons per capita (SIPRI data). Together with “the Saudi affair” (March 2012–) and renewed public attention to Human Rights weapons export issues are placed rather high up on the political agenda.

Jonathan Feldman, Associate Professor, Department of Economic History, Stockholm University

*Inga Thorsson and the Politics of Peace in Sweden*

Inga Thorsson was relatively unique in Sweden as a political and intellectual leader who championed both disarmament and conversion of defense firms in a Swedish context (Thorsson, 1984). Thorsson was part of a unique group of antiwar intellectuals and activists who favored this comprehensive approach to demilitarization. Like Olof Palme, she was influenced by her contacts with the United States, something that helped her develop a broader world view. Seymour Melman was a key figure who triggered this comprehensive approach to demilitarization. During the Vietnam War and a cycle of conversion organizing that took place in the early 1980s, Melman’s ideas gained a foothold in Europe. In Sweden, for example, long time peace advocate Bernt Jonsson, recalls Seymour Melman’s influence. Jonsson worked closely with Inga Thorsson and Maj-Britt Theorin, two of the leading Social Democratic politicians promoting economic conversion in Sweden. Thorsson was the author of the landmark conversion study, *In Pursuit of Disarmament: Conversion from Military to Civil Production in Sweden*, published in 1984. Jonsson explains that Melman “was a great asset in our discussions during the 1970s and 1980s.” The arguments in *The Permanent War Economy* were used to inform the Swedish debate about disarmament. He was “a great inspiration for us who were politically involved in the conversion discussions.” Thorsson and Theorin had close contact with Melman. These Swedish conversion leaders “met him both in New York and in Sweden.”

My main research question is first: What role did Inga Thorsson play in promoting a politics of conversion and disarmament, and alternative budget policies including policies that put pressure on Saab to think about diversifying production. According to one Saab executive I spoke with, the Swedish government’s pressure did in fact influence Saab’s planning towards diversification. What was Thorsson’s argument, generally, and how did she try to influence the following actors: a) the Social Democratic Party, b) other politicians, c) the media, d) intellectuals and the university, e) the peace movement, f) firms, trade associations. My secondary research question is what barriers did Thorsson encounter and how did she try to overcome them in the following institutions and to what extent did she succeed in overcoming the barriers to her agenda in these institutions: a) the Social Democratic Party, b) the trade unions, c) the media, d) intellectuals and the university, e) the peace movement, and f) firms. My third general question is: What were the key barriers to advancing Thorsson and the related political agenda she had that was in labor-peace movement activities to support conversion? To what extent did the following factors play a role? a) corporatist or economic ties between trade unions, defense corporations and political parties; b) the U-137 incident, Soviet actions, the Cold War; c) a strategic, under the radar alliance with the United States (cf. Robert Dalsjö’s discussion of Swedish cooperation with NATO being greater than acknowledged); d) an emphasis on Swedish nuclear weapons at the expense of a discussion of Swedish military spending and civilian weapons, e.g. such that Swedish nuclear disarmament helped diffuse pressure for a more comprehensive demilitarization politics.

Gunnar Westberg, Professor of Medicin, Gothenburg University

*Disarmament as a humanitarian obligation*
Göran Rydeberg, PhD Historian and Archivist, Stockholm University
The ideas behind disarmament efforts – comparative studies of key actors

Jayita Sarkar, PhD Candidate, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
India and the Atom: Non-alignment, Disarmament and Nuclearity, 1954-1974
Nehru’s proposal at the UN for a “standstill” agreement on nuclear testing in April 1954 preceded the Bandung Conference of 1955 by a little over a year. The proposal although never materialized, made India the first country in the world to propose a nuclear test-ban. By then, India had already become proactive on the international fora calling for universal nuclear disarmament. Simultaneous events during the same period included the 1955 UN Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in Geneva and the 1956 Conference for the Negotiation of the IAEA Statute in New York – in both cases India played a very active role. During this period, India’s foreign policy vis-à-vis atomic energy operated as a three-pronged strategy that included (a) non-alignment, (b) advocacy for universal nuclear disarmament and (c) promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy. Nonalignment allowed it to seek assistance in atomic energy from both blocs, while disarmament advocacy coupled with its promotion of the “peaceful atom” ensured that it received nuclear technology from those promoting it. This three-pronged strategy worked very much to its advantage until its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 followed by its underground nuclear test in May 1974, when international castigation was followed-up by severe technological sanctions. The paper aims to provide a sophisticated analysis of “nuclear dissidence” in particular reference to India. In order to understand “nuclear dissidence”, a distinction must me made amongst the nuclear pariah, the nuclear citizen and the nuclear dissident, where the prefix “nuclear” denotes that we are talking about the global nuclear order and the pariah, the citizen and the dissident are in fact sovereign states. Using documents from the IAEA archives in Vienna, National Archives in Kew and the Archives Diplomatiques in La Courneuve, this paper analyses the trajectory of India’s transition from a “nuclear citizen” to a “nuclear dissident” in the global nuclear order, the nature of its “nuclear dissidence” and the usefulness of this concept in research on national and international nuclear histories.

Thomas Jonter, Professor of International Relations, Department of Economic History, Stockholm University
Explaining nuclear forbearance: a comparative study on Sweden and Switzerland, 1945-1977
How can Sweden’s and Switzerland’s nuclear forbearance be explained? Both states had advanced plans to manufacture nuclear weapons during the cold war but they abandoned these plans when they joined the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT (Sweden signed the NPT in 1968 and ratified it in 1970, Switzerland signed it 1969 but it delayed until 1977 before the Swiss government ratified it). In the planned research project, the nuclear plans of Sweden and Switzerland will be compared and analyzed using primary sources in a theoretical norms model where nuclear forbearance is explained by how social-normative influences affect policy decisions. In addition, this norm analysis model will be combined with a technical capability analysis of a state´s ability to produce nuclear weapons. In this respect, this study investigates a decisive but under-appreciated and under-researched aspect of the nuclear non-proliferation dynamics: the significance of changing norms in the decision making process (demand-side) in combination with a technical capability analysis of a state´s ability to produce nuclear weapons (supply-side) in a comparative analysis.

Ekaterina Mikhaylenko, Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations, Ural Federal University
Soviet disarmament policy during the Cold War
The article analyzes the USSR’s disarmament policy during the Cold War. Based on the official documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and speeches of two main leaders N. Khrushehev and L. Brezhnev, it analyzes the USSR’s strategy towards disarmament and peace. The article addresses such
terms as “disarmament”, “struggle for peace”, “peace movements” which were used as metaphors in the Soviet rhetoric rooted in the Lenin-Marxist theory and interpreted by the communist leaders of the USSR. The paper argues that N. Khrushchev and L. Brezhnev used different interpretation of the Lenin-Marxist theory and implemented different approaches towards disarmament issues. Analysis of these approaches demonstrates that frequently the Western community was misperceived by the real ground of the Soviet disarmament rhetoric.