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**The Policy of 1812:
Swedish foreign policy from the Congress of Vienna
to the outbreak of the Crimean War**

The title of this article probably requires a few words of explanation. The term, "the policy of 1812", is used by Swedish historians to describe a particular phase in the history of their country's foreign policy. In the first instance, it relates, as its name suggests, to the foreign policy programme adopted in 1812 and pursued during the following two or three years. However, the term is also used to describe the cardinal feature of that programme, the new relationship with Russia which it implied. The term is therefore applied in addition to the following forty years or so during which this new relationship may be said to have persisted. The purpose of this article is to discuss not the initial, dramatic phase of the policy of 1812 between 1812 and 1815 but its longer, second phase from the Congress of Vienna to the outbreak of the Crimean War.

Before turning to foreign policy proper, it is desirable to say a few words about Sweden's domestic affairs and about how foreign policy was formulated in Sweden during these years. In 1809 the king of Sweden, Gustaf IV, was deposed and succeeded by his uncle, Carl XIII. This *coup d'état* was followed by the introduction of a new constitution, which established the separation of powers as the guiding principle for the government of the country. Executive power was vested in the crown, assisted by ministers whom the king appointed and dismissed but who could also be removed from office by parliament through the procedure of impeachment. Parliament, which consisted of four estates, had the power to vote taxes and pass legislation, but it only had to meet once every five years. The formulation and conduct of foreign policy was clearly placed in the hands of the crown.¹

During the period covered in this article, the Swedish throne

was occupied by men well able to exploit to the full their constitutional powers over foreign policy. Carl XIII was elderly, unwell and childless, and in 1810 the Swedish parliament elected as his heir Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals. First as crown prince and then, from 1818, as King Carl XIV Johan, Bernadotte – or Carl Johan as he should more properly be called – was the effective ruler of Sweden and the architect of the country's foreign policy from 1810 to his death in 1844. He was succeeded by his son, Oscar I, who reigned until the late 1850s and who kept an equally firm grip on the formulation of foreign policy. For almost fifty years Swedish foreign policy was controlled by two men of French birth, the elder of whom never managed to learn Swedish. The foreign minister and Swedish diplomats were able to exert influence, as was parliament when it was in session and even more the press, but the ultimate power of decision resided with Carl Johan and Oscar.

In Swedish domestic politics, the most dramatic developments of this period were provided by the growth, especially after 1830, of a liberal opposition. It made its voice felt in parliament and above all in the press. As we shall see, the liberal opposition had strong views on foreign policy questions, and in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s the agitation of the great liberal newspapers over foreign policy issues made a considerable impact.²

The policy of 1812 was conceived as a response to the most traumatic catastrophe in Swedish history, the loss of Finland to Russia in 1809. Finland had been an integral part of the Swedish kingdom for hundreds of years. Swedish penetration of Finland began in the twelfth century and was accompanied by colonisation which created a sizeable Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. Sweden's absorption of Finland was the most tangible result of her involvement over the centuries in the lands along the shores of the eastern Baltic. This involvement frequently brought Sweden into conflict with Russia and led to numerous wars between them. Modern Swedish historians of nationalistic bent have presented the struggle with Russia as one of the great themes of Swedish history. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that many Swedes

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in the early nineteenth century would have subscribed to this view and regarded Russia as Sweden's hereditary enemy. The first recorded use of the term "our ancient hereditary enemy" by a Swede to describe Russia dates, incidentally, to the early seventeenth century.³

The loss of Finland was the result of the agreement concluded at Tilsit by Napoleon and Alexander I in 1807. One aspect of this agreement was that Sweden would be forced to adhere to Napoleon's "continental system" and to declare war on Britain. Sweden's refusal to accept these demands led to war with Russia and in the course of 1808 the Russians overran virtually the whole of Finland. Southern Finland was of considerable strategic importance to Russia, above all because of its proximity to the imperial capital, St. Petersburg, and when peace was made between Sweden and Russia in late 1809, the Swedes were forced to cede the whole of Finland to Russia.⁴

The catastrophic turn taken by the war provoked the *coup d'état* which deposed Gustaf IV and led ultimately to Carl Johan's selection as heir to the throne. Carl Johan had been chosen mainly because it was hoped that his election as crown prince would improve Sweden's relations with France and enhance the prospects of regaining Finland with French support.⁵ The nature of Carl Johan's own views when he arrived in Sweden in October 1810 on the course Swedish policy should follow is unclear, but he was aware of the hopes placed in him and realised that his chances of succeeding to the Swedish throne depended on achieving a striking success. The evidence suggests that from the outset his overriding objective was the conquest of Norway rather than the reacquisition of Finland. Norway had been a province of Denmark for many centuries and control of Norway had conferred on Denmark the great advantage of being able to attack Sweden from the west as well as the south during the numerous wars between the two countries. The idea of breaking Danish semi-encirclement of Sweden by conquering Norway had long attracted Swedish statesmen, and Carl Johan was quick to take it up. His attitude to Finland was more flexible. He was prepared to accept Finland and indeed parts of Denmark

proper in addition to Norway if they could be obtained, but Norway was always the essential price for his alliance. Throughout 1811 Carl Johan kept in touch with both Napoleon and Alexander, but early in 1812 he chose a Russian alignment. Under the terms of the Russo-Swedish alliance concluded in April 1812, Alexander promised to support the acquisition of Norway by Sweden in return for a guarantee by both countries of the other's territorial possessions, including Finland, and Swedish military assistance against France. This agreement was later supplemented by an Anglo-Swedish treaty which pledged British subsidies and support for Sweden's aspirations in Norway in return for Swedish participation in the war against Napoleon. The Russo-Swedish alliance was the core and foundation for the "policy of 1812". It implied that Sweden had forever renounced all hope of regaining Finland and would seek friendly relations with Russia, while satisfying her national aspirations in Norway.

As a result of these agreements with Russia and Britain, a Swedish army under Carl Johan's leadership participated in the campaigns of 1813-14 against Napoleon and early in 1814 Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden. Carl Johan's relations with his allies were often soured by mutual distrust during these years. He knew that they were more sympathetic to a legitimate monarch like the king of Denmark than to a dynastic upstart like himself, and he feared that they would cheat him of his reward. For their part, the other members of the anti-French coalition were intensely irritated by his insistence on diverting his army from the main theatre of operations in order to attack Denmark and by his later intrigues to prevent the restoration of the Bourbons and to make himself the next ruler of France. Through it all, the personal friendship he had established with Alexander and Alexander's fundamental, though not unwavering, loyalty towards him remained his most valuable asset.

Carl Johan claimed that the policy of 1812 had permanently created a new basis for Sweden's relations with Russia and more generally for Sweden's position in international affairs. He argued that in the long run the loss of Finland was not reversible. Even if Finland could be temporarily regained, it

could not be held. Continuing Swedish aspirations in Finland would lead to perennial conflict with Russia and Sweden lacked the resources to sustain such a struggle. By accepting the loss of Finland as permanent and recognising Russia's frontiers, Sweden had renounced her traditional involvement in the eastern Baltic and removed all grounds for future conflict with Russia. The union with Norway had immeasurably strengthened Sweden's strategic position and had made her part of a semi-insular state whose only land frontier lay in the remote and inhospitable far north. Carl Johan's analysis of his achievement between 1812 and 1814 implied that Russo-Swedish relations would be marked by natural harmony in the future. His critics, who often included the British minister in Stockholm, suggested that Russia demanded more of Sweden than the renunciation of Finland and that Carl Johan was subservient to Russia. In fact, it is not appropriate to speak of either natural harmony or subservience without making two important reservations. The first is that there was a period of strained relations between Russia and Sweden in the 1820s, culminating in quite a serious crisis in 1825. The second is that Carl Johan never felt able to ignore Britain and to adopt an exclusively Russian alignment.

For two or three years after the Congress of Vienna relations between Russia and Sweden were excellent. Carl Johan remembered with gratitude the support Alexander had given him in the past, and felt the need for Alexander's continuing protection. Carl Johan's position was anomalous and he knew it. As a dynastic upstart, he was ill at ease in the new Europe and ill regarded by legitimists. In these circumstances, his special relationship with the Russian emperor was a valuable asset.⁶ However, this relationship was about to sustain a blow from which it never fully recovered. When Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden in 1814, it had been agreed that the king of Sweden would pay to Denmark a proportion of the Danish state debt commensurate with Norway's population and resources, and that the precise amount would be settled through subsequent negotiations. When these negotiations began in June 1815, it rapidly became clear to the Danes that the Swedes did not intend to be accommodating. The negotiations

made no progress for several years, largely because the Swedes pursued a deliberate delaying policy. The Danes appealed to the great powers to put pressure on Sweden and they did so with the crucial exception of Russia. Alexander refused to interfere. Once again, Carl Johan felt the benefits of being Alexander's *protégé*. However, he was beginning to push his luck. The Swedes were clearly behaving badly in the matter, and early in 1818 the Russian finally agreed to attend an ambassadorial conference of the great powers in London under the chairmanship of the British foreign secretary, Lord Castlereagh.

Carl Johan's reaction was one of surprise and anger, and throughout 1818 his exchanges with Alexander on the subject became increasingly acrimonious. Carl Johan stubbornly refused to yield to the collective pressure of the powers and by the spring of 1819 the Russians were talking about a commercial blockade of Sweden as the only means of bringing him to heel. It did not come to that. In May 1819 Castlereagh suggested to the Swedes a compromise solution, which involved a significant reduction in the amount Sweden-Norway would have to pay, and Carl Johan was quick to accept it.

The crisis was over, but Carl Johan never entirely overcame his resentment at Alexander's failure to protect him. Moreover, Britain had been quite helpful to Sweden during the final stages of the crisis. Throughout 1818 Carl Johan's propaganda in the Swedish press had claimed that great power interference in a bilateral Swedish-Danish dispute was not legitimate. He had complained bitterly that the matter was discussed at the Congress of Aix-la Chapelle at which Sweden and Denmark were both unrepresented, and compared such behaviour to Napoleon's international tyranny. This line of argument was directed equally at all the great powers, but Carl Johan's propaganda also portrayed him as the champion of small states and the ideals of liberty against reaction.⁷ Given his antecedents, this pose was a more natural one than the role of Russian *protégé*, but he only adopted it after Alexander failed to provide protection. The outcome of the crisis gave him no reason to change his tune, and in the early 1820s we find him

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frequently taking the same line. In 1823, for example, he was strongly critical of French intervention in Spain, which he portrayed as typical of the way reactionary great powers treated small nations with free institutions.⁸

This line in Swedish foreign policy culminated in an attempt to establish a much closer relationship with Britain. The occasion was provided by the events surrounding the uprising in Latin America against Spanish rule. The Swedish authorities were very interested in developing Swedish trade with the new republics of Latin America and also regarded adherence to Britain's lead over Latin America as a means of drawing closer to Britain. In May 1825 the Swedish government contracted to sell old Swedish warships to Mexico through an intermediary. This move provoked a strong Spanish protest and for their part the Russians demanded that Sweden cancel the transaction. The Swedish response was to consult Lord Bloomfield, the British minister in Stockholm, who advised the Swedes to proceed cautiously. The British government, he explained, did not want an open breach between Sweden and Russia at that time. His remarks were interpreted as meaning that no British support was to be expected and in October the Swedes gave way to the Russian demand. Carl Johan, however, refused to accept that this was the end of the matter. He was determined to persevere with his efforts to reorientate Swedish foreign policy. What he had in mind was to wipe out the humiliation he had suffered by recognising the Latin American republics in defiance of Russia. In October 1825 Bloomfield was asked whether Sweden could count on British support if the Russian reaction were a threatening one.

At this time, Carl Johan was full of vituperation against Russia, a power he described as a threat to her neighbours. If Sweden wished to maintain her independence, she would have to emancipate herself from Russia and she could only do this by developing closer links with Britain. However, the reply of the British foreign secretary, George Canning, to the Swedish overture was not encouraging. Britain, he wrote, could give no assistance if Sweden's recognition of the Latin American republics led, against all expectation, to a Russian attack, and he advised the Swedes to act with caution. In these

circumstances, Carl Johan felt unable to proceed and the proposal to recognise the Latin American states was dropped. What had gone wrong? Above all, the moment was badly chosen. In the second half of 1825, Canning had bigger fish to fry, as the Greek struggle for independence from Turkish rule pushed Britain and Russia towards a rapprochement. Canning was not inclined to endanger this development by supporting Sweden against Russia.⁹

For Carl Johan, the whole affair was a clear and humiliating defeat, and he felt he had no choice but to mend his fences with Russia. The death of Alexander not only made a deep impression on Carl Johan but also provided him with an opportunity for overtures to Russia. The condolences he offered and several goodwill gestures he made rapidly helped to restore good relations. The Latin American episode was a turning point in Carl Johan's life. Never again did he seriously challenge Russia or think in terms of a British orientation. His ties with Russia were reinforced by his growing conservatism. By the late 1820s his ideological attitude had changed significantly, above all because of the increasing strength of the liberal opposition within Sweden and the attacks which it made on his government.¹⁰

The change in his outlook was clearly manifested during the events which followed the July revolution of 1830. Carl Johan disapproved of the Belgian and Polish uprisings, partly because they might serve as an unfortunate example for Norway, and he generally followed the Russian lead. He clearly sympathised with Russian attempts to suppress the Polish revolt. He was becoming and sounding increasingly reactionary. He expressed disapproval of the new Whig government in Britain and of the Great Reform Bill. Essentially, he remained conservative in outlook and maintained close ties with Russia until his death in 1844.¹¹

However, at no stage did Carl Johan look exclusively eastwards. Sweden and Norway were extremely vulnerable not only to Russian might but also to British naval power. Carl Johan frequently asserted that the greatest threat to the security of Sweden would be an Anglo-Russian war in which she was forced to take sides, and he always insisted that Sweden should

attempt to remain neutral in such a conflict. It is significant that when Sweden issued a pre-emptive declaration of neutrality early in 1834 because of the crisis in the Near East which it was feared might lead to war between Russia and Britain, the terms of the declaration favoured Britain in one important respect. The declaration stated that belligerent warships might use Swedish ports, a concession that was of no value to a power with ports of its own on the shores of the Baltic. In the commercial sphere, Sweden's links were with Britain far more than with Russia and Swedish commercial interests always provided an argument for good relations with Britain. After 1825 Carl Johan followed Russia's lead, but Sweden was never a part of the Russian security system and Britain remained to some degree at least a countervailing presence.¹²

A fundamental difficulty with the policy of 1812 was that it lacked a firm foundation of popular support among the politically-conscious classes in Sweden. There was a body of opinion in Sweden which supported Carl Johan's attitude to Russia¹³, but his concept of Sweden's proper relationship with Russia was emotionally repugnant to many Swedes. The loss of Finland had snatched away a substantial and ancient portion of the Swedish realm, and Carl Johan seems not to have appreciated, perhaps because he was a foreigner, how difficult Swedes found it to accept the loss as permanent. Nationalistic resentment of this kind was a latent threat to Carl Johan's policy throughout his period at the head of the Swedish government, but it only came to the fore after 1825, when traditional russophobia became allied with new liberal currents of opinion. The liberal opposition within Sweden did not only concern itself with domestic affairs but also took a strong interest in world events. It regarded Russia as the main pillar of reaction in Europe and was bitterly critical of the Swedish government for aligning itself with Russia rather than the liberal forces in Europe. The opposition regarded Carl Johan's Russian alignment as the ultimate reason for his conservatism at home. Swedish liberals sympathised strongly with the Poles during the rebellion of 1830-31 and this produced the first serious clash between Carl Johan and the liberal opposition over a foreign policy issue. In April 1831 the main liberal

newspaper *Aftonbladet* published an article on Poland which combined a powerful mixture of concern for the ideal of liberty, russophobia, distaste for the policy of 1812 and hankering after revenge for 1809.¹⁴

In the course of the 1830s Swedish liberalism found its own foreign policy programme in the ideology of Scandinavianism. The origins of Scandinavianism were as a cultural and intellectual movement based on a growing awareness of the linguistic, social and cultural similarities of the Scandinavian peoples, but it had developed by the 1830s into a movement with political objectives as well. In its political form, Scandinavianism sought the extension of the existing union between Norway and Sweden to include Denmark and perhaps also a Finland liberated from the Russian yoke. The aim was a united Scandinavia organised on liberal principles and siding with the forces of freedom and progress throughout Europe. In the shorter term, Swedish Scandinavianists were concerned that Sweden should lend support to Denmark in the growing clash between Danish and German nationalism in Schleswig-Holstein, though some of them were extremely uncomfortable about taking sides in a dispute between two Germanic people.¹⁵

Carl Johan was infuriated by the attacks of the liberal opposition on his foreign policy. In December 1838 he accused Swedish liberals of seeking a war of revenge aimed at regaining Finland and warned that this approach would destroy everything he had achieved.¹⁶ His attitude to Scandinavianism was equally condemnatory. In April 1837 he sent a circular despatch to the great powers and several smaller countries in which he rejected the idea of Scandinavian political union and emphasised the desirability of preserving the Swedish-Norwegian state within its natural frontiers. This circular was prompted by a Russian approach, drawing the Swedish government's attention to the dangers of Scandinavianist agitation.¹⁷ Throughout the next 15 years, the Swedish authorities had to take account of Russian hostility to Pan-Scandinavianist ideas when formulating their own response to the growing appeal of Scandinavianism within Sweden.

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This point was demonstrated in 1844 shortly after Carl Johan's death and the accession of his son, Oscar I. In the previous year, a meeting of Danish and Swedish university students had been held at Uppsala. Scandinavianist speeches had been made and some had been explicitly anti-Russian. Four Finnish students who attended the meeting were refused readmission to Helsinki University after they returned home, and the Russians complained to the Swedish government that it had allowed the meeting to take place. In these circumstances, Oscar thought it prudent to ensure that the return visit of Swedish students to Copenhagen in 1844 was cancelled, and he successfully applied strong pressure on the Swedish student leaders to prevent a meeting that year.¹⁸

This episode demonstrates that Carl Johan's death caused no immediate change in Swedish policy towards Russia, and this continued to be the case throughout the first 8 or 9 years of Oscar's reign. However, Oscar's outlook was not identical with his father's. He was resentful of the circumspection he was obliged to observe in his dealings with Russia.¹⁹ He was 46 when he succeeded to the throne and was ambitious to play a role, to make a mark. Political Scandinavianism might in some circumstances offer opportunities to satisfy such ambitions. The Danish royal family would clearly soon die out in the direct line; if Scandinavia were to be united, the house of Bernadotte was most likely to provide the reigning dynasty. Oscar was also far more sensitive to Swedish public opinion and the strength of Swedish liberalism than his father had been. He was unwilling to concede much to Swedish liberals in domestic affairs, but was aware that liberal opinion might to some degree be appeased and distracted by new departures in foreign policy.

Swedish policy during the first Schleswig-Holstein crisis illustrates these points but also the continuing strength of Russian influence in Stockholm.²⁰ By the end of April 1848 the Danes had been driven out of Schleswig-Holstein by German nationalist rebels supported by Prussian troops. In Sweden, Scandinavianist opinion demanded Swedish assistance to Denmark and the Danish government also requested such assistance. In the last days of April, Oscar decided that Sweden

should send a detachment of troops to Denmark. It is clear that he was influenced in his decision by public opinion and by a desire to appease Swedish liberals, who were disappointed by his domestic policies. Oscar also wanted to pursue an active foreign policy for its own sake, and often stressed that Sweden, though a power of the second rank, could not allow the fate of the Nordic region to be determined without her participation. However, what was crucial was that Russia made no objection to Swedish intervention in Denmark. Nicholas I disapproved of the rebellion in the duchies and of Prussia's assistance to the rebels. Oscar's decision to intervene was only taken after he had learnt of Russia's attitude to the crisis in the duchies. He was therefore able to combine a policy of semi-Scandinavianist activism with continued adherence to a pro-Russian line.

Early in June a small Swedish corps was transported to one of the Danish islands, but it never saw active service, since fighting on land remained restricted to the Jutland peninsula. By the time Swedish troops arrived in Denmark, negotiations were already under way for an armistice to end the fighting, and Sweden was able to play quite a prominent role in these diplomatic discussions. Oscar was careful always to act in the closest accord with Russia, and both Sweden and Russia pressed Denmark and Prussia to come to terms. The armistice negotiations were held at Malmö under Swedish mediation, and a seven-month armistice was finally concluded in late August 1848. The crisis, of course, dragged on for another four years and a final settlement was not reached until 1852. Sweden continued to play a role, but in intimate cooperation with Russia. Oscar was at pains to maintain close contact with the Russian government, to inform it of his own intentions and to adhere to its proposals. It was generally felt within Sweden that Oscar's policy during the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1848-52 represented a fairly successful excursion onto the broader international stage and that Sweden had asserted her right to be heard in the resolution of problems in the Nordic region. It had, of course, only been possible for Oscar to follow this policy because it suited Nicholas that he should do so, and Sweden's general dependence on Russia was undiminished. For example, after Napoleon III's *coup d'état* in 1851 the Swedish government

felt it necessary to consult Russia before deciding whether to recognise his imperial title.²¹

However, Oscar's close adherence to Russia between 1848 and 1852 was to prove the swan song of the policy of 1812. During the Crimean War Swedish foreign policy was to be radically revised and the long standing link with St. Petersburg broken. A detailed account of Swedish policy during the Crimean War would fall outside the framework of this article.²² Oscar's aim during that conflict ultimately became to enter the war on the side of the western powers and to reconquer Finland from Russia. Sweden did not in fact enter the war, largely because the western powers did not regard her adherence to their cause as sufficiently important to justify meeting the guarantees Oscar sought, but Sweden's behaviour during the conflict proved a decisive and permanent break with the policy towards Russia adopted 40 years earlier. Why did this change occur? One reason was undoubtedly resentment at Sweden's subordination to Russia, and there was intense irritation within the Swedish political leadership that the Russians often felt entitled to express an opinion about the domestic policies pursued by the Swedish government.²³ Secondly, it was clear to Oscar that any policy of territorial aggrandisement could not be followed if Sweden continued to be aligned with Russia. There were only two directions in which Sweden could expand, Finland and Denmark, and Russia would oppose expansion in either direction. The semi-Scandinavianist policy pursued between 1848 and 1852 in relation to the crisis in the duchies had only been possible because the question of political union with Denmark had not been raised.

A third reason is the attitude of Swedish public opinion. The policy of 1812 created a cleavage between the government and the people. Anti-Russian sentiment in Sweden took two forms. One was ideological and arose from liberal aversion to Russia as the champion of reaction in Europe. The other was nationalistic and often led to revanchist feelings and dreams of reconquering Finland. These two forms of russophobia were nearly always intermingled and produced a potent combination. The widespread russophobia among Swedish

public opinion, especially liberal opinion, was a constant source of difficulty as long as the Russian alignment was maintained. The abandonment of that alignment would remove the difficulty and also increase the popularity of the government.

Another factor in Sweden's policy during the Crimean War was the growth of anxiety about Russia's intentions towards Sweden and Norway. The policy of 1812 only made sense if there were mutual confidence that both parties had no further territorial designs on the other. It was not enough that Sweden renounced all thought of regaining Finland; Sweden also needed to be convinced that Russia was satisfied with the territorial status quo in Scandinavia. From the early 1830s onwards the Swedes and Norwegians were alarmed by indications that this might not be the case. The fortifications which the Russians began to build at Bomarsund on the Åland islands were seen as a potential threat to Sweden, and even Carl Johan in the last decade of his life expressed some anxiety on this point.²⁴ There were also signs of Russian interest in Finnmark, the northernmost region of Norway, and this fuelled fears that the Russians might wish to acquire the ice-free ports of northern Norway.²⁵ Finally, the Russians seemed to show considerable interest in the Baltic island of Gotland. All the evidence suggests that Russian intentions towards Sweden and Norway were essentially innocent, but it is clear that Swedish and Norwegian apprehensions were genuine.²⁶ There was no intense or immediate fear of Russian aggression, but the Ålands, Finnmark and Gotland prompted a nagging anxiety over a long period of time, and this anxiety was reinforced during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Crimean War by what the Swedish authorities regarded as Russia's high-handed and aggressive behaviour towards the Turks.²⁷

Since the 1830s the British authorities had to some degree shared Swedish apprehensions over Gotland, the Ålands and above all Finnmark, because of the potential threat to British maritime supremacy involved.²⁸ With the outbreak of the Crimean War, Britain became more prepared to act on such apprehensions. The Russian fortifications at Bormasund on the Ålands were destroyed by an Anglo-French naval squadron

operating in the Baltic, and under the terms of the Treaty of Paris which concluded the Crimean War in 1856 Russia was obliged to agree that the Ålands should remain unfortified in the future. In November 1855 the western powers guaranteed Sweden and Norway against Russian attack in return for an undertaking by the united kingdoms of Sweden and Norway not to cede any of their territories to Russia. What the western powers were not prepared to do was to guarantee the reacquisition of Finland or financial and military support on a large scale in order to bring Sweden into the war. However, the essential point is that the Crimean War led to British naval activity in the Baltic and above all to heightened British interest in the Nordic region. This interest was not great enough to bring Sweden into the war, but it did make the Swedish government feel that there was now a far more effective counterweight to Russia in the Nordic region.

This brings us to the final and quite decisive reason why Sweden abandoned the Russian alignment during the Crimean War. All the factors mentioned so far provide motive rather than opportunity. The crucial consideration was that from the start it seemed unlikely that Russia would win the war. To put it another way, the Swedish government broke with Russia during the Crimean War because for the first time in decades it felt it could afford to. Similarly, the Swedes could perhaps have renewed the Russian alignment after the Crimean War, but they did not do so, because they did not need to. And they did not need to, because Russia emerged weakened from the Crimean War. The course taken by the Crimean War made it possible for the Swedes to think about acting upon fears, resentments and ambitions which would otherwise have had to be suppressed.

These observations about why the Russian alignment was abandoned lead naturally to some general remarks about the policy of 1812, which may serve as a conclusion to this article. The policy of 1812 survived for about forty years and its life span coincided with the period in which Russia and Britain were the two preponderant great powers in Europe, and nowhere was this more true than in the Nordic region. Given Sweden's geographical position and her weakness, the only

alternative to a Russian alignment was a British one. Britain did provide some sort of counterweight, but – as the crisis of 1825 demonstrates – the British government did not find it desirable or necessary to assert itself strongly in the Nordic region. In these circumstances, the relationship between Sweden and Russia during this period is perhaps precisely what one would expect it to have been. It did no more than reflect the distribution of power within the Nordic region at that time, and it came to an end when Russia was effectively challenged during the Crimean War. Seen in this light, Sweden's Russian alignment was not fundamentally the product of the choices Carl Johan made in 1812; it was the result rather of the position in Europe which Russia achieved between 1812 and 1815.

The new relationship with Russia which Carl Johan claimed to have created did not therefore prove durable. The anti-Russian sentiments of Swedish opinion with which the policy of 1812 had had to contend remained strong and were taken over later in the century by conservative circles in Sweden. Russophobia flourished secure in the shadow of German power, and the new united Germany provided the main sources of cultural, economic and political influence on Sweden. Nor did Carl Johan solve Sweden's Finnish problem. Finland was never reunited with Sweden, but the complications of Finland's relations with Russia proved an enduring cause of concern to Swedish statesmen. With the benefit of hindsight, Carl Johan's abiding achievement lay to the west, not to the east, in the separation of Norway from Denmark. That has endured, even if the Swedish-Norwegian union has not. As for Sweden's Russian alignment, it proved no more than a transient phase in Swedish foreign policy, a natural, perhaps inescapable response to the particular circumstances in which it was pursued.

Notes

1. For the constitution of 1809, see the succinct account in Sten Carlsson/Jerker Rosén, *Svensk historia*, vol. 2, *Tiden efter 1718* (4th. edition,

- Stockholm, 1980) (cited as *Carlsson/Rosén*), pp. 243-249.
2. For the growth of the opposition, see *Carlsson/Rosén*, pp. 295-300 and the works cited in their extensive bibliographical survey, pp. 300-303.
3. Kari Tarkiainen, "Faran från öst i svensk säkerhetspolitisk diskussion inför Stolbovafreden", *Scandia*, 40:1 (1974), p. 44.
4. *Carlsson/Rosén*, pp. 227-238, 253-257.
5. A vast amount has been written on the active phase of the policy of 1812 between 1810 and 1815. A recent succinct account is Seved Johnson, "1812 års politik", *Scandia*, 51:1-2 (1985). *Carlsson/Rosén* has a good bibliography and a discussion of the controversies among historians over the contentious aspects of Swedish foreign relations 1810-1815 on pp. 268-271 and 274-276. The most detailed account is in Torvald Höjer, *Carl XIV Johan*, vol. 2, *Kronprinstiden* (Stockholm, 1943) pp. 53-385. Höjer's book also contains a full bibliography. Seved Johnson, V.V. Dubin & V.V. Roginskij (eds.), *La Suède et la Russie. Documents et Matériaux 1809 - 1818* (Stockholm, 1985) contains an extensive selection of Swedish and Russian documents relevant to the subject.
6. For Sweden's international position 1815-18, see Höjer, *op. cit.*, pp. 423-32.
7. For the crisis over the Danish state debt, see Torvald Höjer, *Carl XIV Johan*, vol. 3, *Konungatiden* (Stockholm, 1960) (cited as Höjer), pp. 23-45 and Georg Nørregård, *Efterkrigsår i dansk udenrigspolitik 1815-24* (Copenhagen, 1960), pp. 27-109.
8. Höjer, pp. 50-51.
9. For the crisis of 1825, see Sven Ola Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik under 1810- och 1820-talen* (Uppsala, 1949), pp. 155-266 and Höjer, pp. 79-108. Some of the correspondence between Canning and Bloomfield is printed in C.K. Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830* (Oxford, 1938), vol. 2, pp. 481-486. For the Anglo-Russian rapprochement, see also H. Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-27*

- (London, 1925), pp. 345-354.
10. *Höjer*, pp. 110-113, 121-122, 231.
11. *Höjer*, pp. 231-251.
12. C.F. Palmstierna, *Sverige, Ryssland och England 1833-1855* (Stockholm, 1932) (cited as *Palmstierna*), pp. 37-60 and *Höjer*, pp. 252-264.
13. See, for example, Krister Wahlbäck, "Karl Johan och Finland" in Mats Bergquist, Alf W. Johansson & Krister Wahlbäck (eds.), *Utrikespolitik och historia. Studier tillägnade Wilhelm M. Carlgren den 6 maj 1987* (Stockholm, 1987), pp. 335-346.
14. See Allan Jansson, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, vol. III:3, 1844-1872 (Stockholm, 1961) (cited as *Jansson*), p. 10, *Höjer*, p. 246 and Jean Göransson, *Aftonbladet som politisk tidning 1830-1835* (Uppsala, 1937), pp. 40-99.
15. See Åke Holmberg, *Skandinavismen i Sverige vid 1800-talets mitt* (Gothenburg, 1946) (cited as *Holmberg*) and *Jansson*, pp. 15-20.
16. *Höjer*, p. 364.
17. *Höjer*, pp. 286-287, *Holmberg*, p. 72.
18. *Jansson*, pp. 14-15, *Holmberg*, pp. 59-67, 73-76 and 79-83.
19. *Jansson*, pp. 11-12, 15.
20. For Sweden's role in the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1848-52, see *Jansson*, pp. 27-60, *Holmberg*, pp. 22-196. See also Hjalmar Haralds, *Sveriges utrikespolitik 1848. Ett bidrag till belysning av danska frågans första skede* (Uppsala, 1912), Erik O. Löfgren, *Sverige-Norge och danska frågan 1848-1849* (Uppsala, 1921) and Bo Lundquist, *Sverige och den slesvig-holsteinska frågan 1849-1850* (Uppsala, 1934).
21. *Jansson*, pp. 60-61.
22. For Swedish policy during the Crimean War, see *Jansson*, pp. 64-118 and *Holmberg* pp. 226-254. See also Sven Eriksson, *Svensk diplomati och tidningspress under Krimkriget* (Stockholm, 1939) and more recently Jussi T. Lappalainen, "Oskar 1:s planer 1854-1856", *Militärhistorisk Tidskrift* (1984). There are extensive bibliographies on Sweden and the Crimean War in *Jansson* and *Carlsson/Rosén*.

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23. *Jansson*, pp. 88-89.
24. *Palmstierna*, pp. 2-36, *Höjer*, p. 257.
25. *Jansson*, pp. 68-74 and *Palmstierna*, chapter IV (pp. 221-375).
26. *Jansson*, pp. 66-67 and *Palmstierna*, chapter III (pp. 158-220).
27. *Jansson*, pp. 64-66, 89
28. *Jansson*, pp. 74-75, 87-88. For British policy in the Baltic during these years, see Andrew Lambert, *The Crimean War. British grand strategy against Russia, 1853-56* (Manchester, 1990).