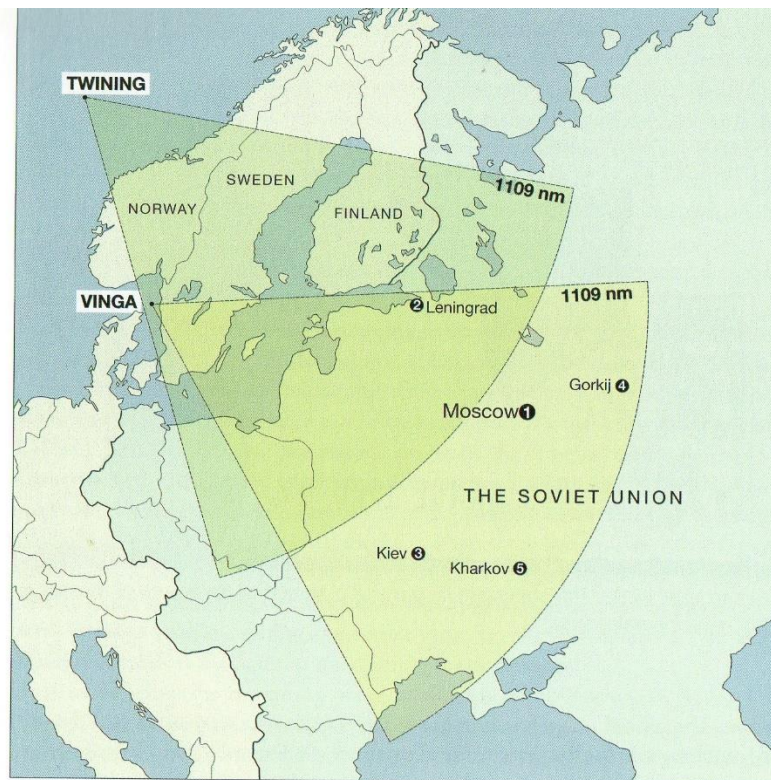


“near friendly or neutral shores”

The Deployment of the Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines and US Policy towards Scandinavia 1957-1963

(Abstract)

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A coverage comparison between Twining and Vinga launching points. The city numbers are taken from the Navy target list 1957. ILL. SAMUEL SVÄRD

The Polaris submarine, USS George Washington, went on her first deterrent patrol in November 1960. By that, the US Navy had acquired the capability to deliver a retaliatory attack upon Moscow and other cities in the Soviet Union by means of submarine launched ballistic missiles. The basic idea of this dissertation, namely the main thesis, is that there is a connection between the US attention to the defence of Scandinavia and operational needs of the Polaris submarines. A unilateral security guarantee given to Sweden and the Norwegian ship construction programme are two distinct examples of this US attention.

The Polaris A-1 missile had many technical limitations or “reverse salients” that were corrected in later versions of the missile. Before the engineers could correct the reverse salients, the submarine commanders had to use “tactical adaptations” to make the system work. The first and most obvious of these adaptations was to navigate the submarine to an area from where it was possible to reach the target. The range of the Polaris A-1 missile was 1109 nautical miles. The most suitable launching

area from where Moscow, the prime target, and also the five largest cities in the Soviet Union, were within reach was Skagerrak outside the west coast of Sweden.

The relatively low yield of the warhead, 400 kilotons, necessitated accurate navigation of the submarine. Even such a small miscalculation as one nautical mile in launching position would reduce the effect of an attack significantly. Likewise, all movements of the submarine would increase the divergence of the warheads at the target and because of that reduce system efficiency. Preparing the missile for launch was an elaborate process that took many hours. To keep the submarine hovering at a fixed launching position during long time was difficult. One tactical adaptation that nullified all these problems was to put the submarine at rest on the seabed. Inside Swedish territorial waters, several suitable resting areas could be found.



Four Launch Reference Squares on the west coast of Sweden. Suitable resting areas are indicated in red. ILL. SAMUEL SVÄRD

The short range of the Polaris missile made its theatre of operations predictable and relatively small. If the Russians were prepared to invest in an airborne patrol, which could engage in hunter-killer missions in conjunction with a Soviet first strike, it might be possible to locate and destroy the submarine after only one of two missiles had, been launched. Such a prospect would reduce the efficacy of Polaris as a deterrent and action to preserve its invulnerability was needed.

The security guarantee for Sweden was discussed at the National Security Council meeting on April 1, 1960. No motive was given as to why the US should grant Sweden such a guarantee. The Secretary of State, Christian Herter, objected strongly to the suggested guarantee. Later, after he had been informed about the need to protect the Polaris' safe haven in Skagerrak, Herter concurred to grant Sweden a security guarantee. The existence of a guarantee was unknown to Sweden but it conferred great benefits on the country. The co-operation between Sweden and the US increased. In 1960, the Norwegian Parliament decided that a new fleet should be built. The new navy was a US initiative and the US paid half the cost of building fifty new ships. The new fleet was an Anti-Submarine Warfare fleet with a high order of readiness. It was well-suited to protect the Northern entrance to Skagerrak.

In the Military Assistance Programme, no authorization existed for any US authority to enter into a costly deal with Norway. NATO Headquarters in Europe had other and lower ambitions for the Norwegian fleet. The dissertation demonstrates one way the US Navy could get the necessary authorization and cover the expenditure for the new fleet.

The military bureaucracy in Sweden was aware of the Polaris development but paid little attention to it. The intelligence focus was on the Warsaw Pact in the East. The Swedish defence attaché office in Washington never received any questions from Stockholm concerning Polaris submarines and made no inquiries on its own. The only Swedish person that asked questions about Polaris, to my knowledge, was the King and he did so during a luncheon with Admiral Burke. When told detailed information about the deployment of the Polaris submarines on the west coast of Sweden by the spy Stig Wennerström during de-briefing, the military did not believe him. Even the larger question, that the Polaris deployment made Sweden and the Swedish Air Force a target for Soviet counterattacks, was overlooked by Swedish intelligence.