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Neutrality: an expensive adventure

by Lloyd DeVincenzi

Former Swedish Prime Minister Ola Ullsten dismisses arguments that Canada's defence costs would in any way decrease if our country adopted neutrality.

Ullsten, who now serves as Sweden's ambassador to Canada, was speaking at the University of Alberta last Wednesday. He said that his own country's experience had convinced him that "... neutrality is a rather expensive adventure."

In an unemotional and staid delivery, the ambassador made clear that in order to ensure its neutrality, Canada would have to devote greater resources to the armed forces and its defence industry.

Ullsten believes that a neutral country's failure to do this would only weaken confidence in its ability to defend its neutrality and also result in an unhealthy dependence on foreign arms. (Seventy per cent

of Sweden's military equipment is manufactured domestically.)

Speaking on Sweden's decision to maintain armed neutrality, Ullsten pointed to two main reasons.

First is the historical basis for neutrality, which has kept Sweden out of a war for 200 years and which has thus remained a very popular concept among the Swedish population. (Accordingly, no major contemporary party in Sweden proposes abandoning neutrality.)

Secondly, Sweden regards armed neutrality as an effective instrument of national security policy which allows it to remain independent.

In this same vein, Sweden decided against joining the European Economic Community (EEC) or the nonaligned nations movement. It does not wish to have its foreign or domestic policies harmonized with any regional or international body.

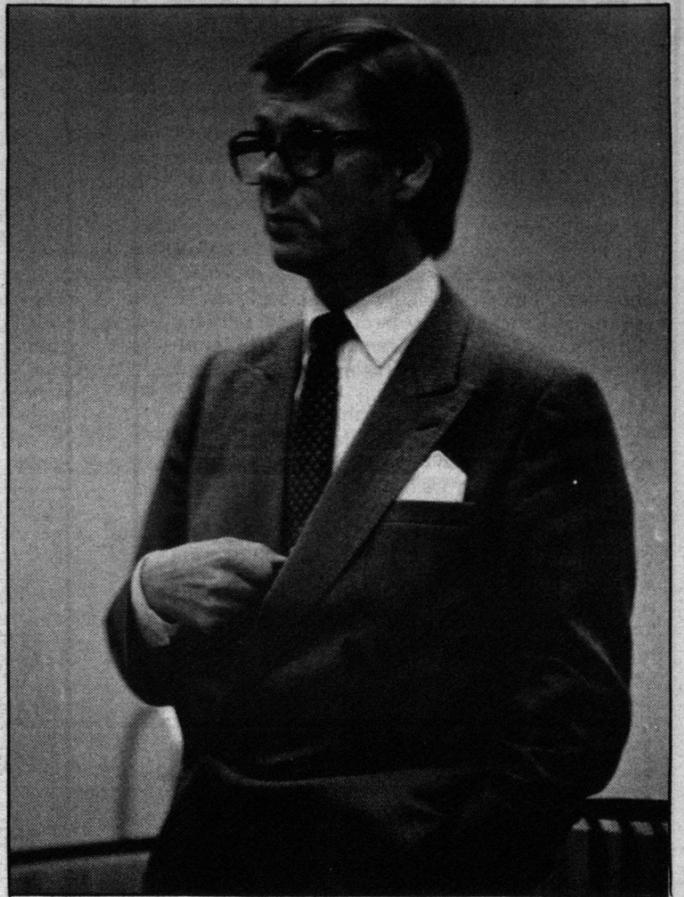
Comparing Canada's strategic situation with Sweden's, Ullsten said that Canada's shared political values, as well as its common border with the United States, made its decision to join NATO a natural move. He noted that Sweden's lack of a common border with a superpower gave it greater flexibility in foreign policy than Canada or Finland.

Although evenhandedly criticizing the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. throughout his speech for their lack of international leadership, Ullsten made no comparisons between the two. He twice characterized the Soviet Union as a "totalitarian state". Ullsten also described NATO as a "... genuine alliance", adding that this was not the case with Warsaw Pact countries.

The ambassador recognized the importance of factors such as geographic location in shaping foreign policy, but he insisted that a nation's national security policy and its activities in international affairs should flow from its national philosophy, one based on democracy and respect for human rights.

Ullsten believes that events which take place within the national boundaries of superpowers, such as the Chernobyl incident and the setting of U.S. interest rates, have ramifications too important for smaller countries like Canada and Sweden to ignore. "There is a role for small and medium sized countries," he said.

"In an interdependent world where the margin for any country to decide its own policies without regard to their international consequences is limited," asserted the ambassador, "... let us make our concern action-oriented."



Ola Ullsten, former Swedish prime minister.

Ullsten served as Liberal Prime Minister of Sweden from 1978-79 and has held several ministerial portfolios in the Swedish government during his political career.

Panel discussion capital punishment

by Greg Halinda

This Thursday a sociologist, a lawyer, and a priest will lead a panel discussion on the contentious issue of capital punishment.

A video presentation (a recording of CBC's *The Journal* dealing with the topic) will be followed by the panel discussion, with James Creechan from the department of Sociology, Rick Stroppe, a lawyer, and Father Timothy Scott of St. Joseph's College participating.

Timothy Hartnagel, a sociologist who helped arrange Thursday's

seminar, says the video "surfaces all of the issues like retribution, vengeance, and deterrence" that arise when people discuss capital punishment.

Creechan will deal with statistical updates from the video. Stroppe is active in an Edmonton coalition opposing capital punishment and Scott will discuss the Catholic Church's position on the subject.

The show goes at 7:30 p.m., March 26, in the Newman Centre of St. Joseph's College.

Calgary and PS funding

continued from p. 1

U of C Student Union to show us evidence of this supposed inequity, and all we get is verbal rhetoric, no facts, no figures, nothing on paper," Hunter said. "They refuse to take into account the extra faculties that we have, like Dentistry and Agriculture, and the huge cost associated with training someone in these fields."

Although they are the major combatants, the study being conducted is not only concerned with discrepancies in funding between the U of C and the U of A, but also between SAIT and NAIT, Grant MacEwan Community College and Mount Royal College.

"People in Calgary seem to feel

that they continually get the short end of the budgeting stick," said Jane Simmons, Director of Communications for the Department of Advanced Education. "Mr. Russell has instituted a study that

will encompass all aspects of post secondary funding."

Simmons expressed hopes that information garnered from the study would put the issue to rest, at least for this year.

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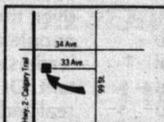
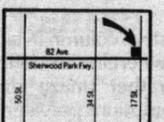


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