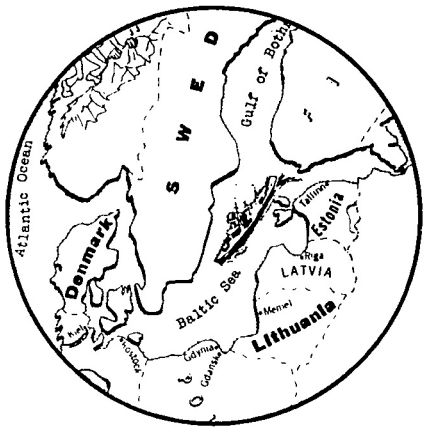
There are four factors, says the author, which aid the Soviet position in the Baltic. One is the problem of NATO defense in Scandinavia.



Baltic Defense

By Theodore Dobbs

THE most impressive advance yet made by the Soviets in the West has not been their "space age" achievements. Rather, they have gained most from territorial expansion in Europe. This began with the annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and now includes areas in Finland, Poland, Romania, Northeastern Germany, and Eastern Czechoslovakia—some 200,632 square miles and 25 million people. Under Soviet domination in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia are an additional 86 million non-Russian people and almost 400,000 square miles.

At first, domination by the Soviets brought with it even lower standards of living and less consumer goods. The past few years, however, have shown improvement in both living conditions and consumer products. The integration of these countries into the Soviet orbit did not come about without opposition from the inhabitants. But as hope of Western aid was abandoned, major active opposition ceased. In Lithuania alone, some 60,000 guerrillas were active up to 1948. Soviet authorities were quick to react, and the important government portfolios were put into Russian hands and not into those of local Communists. Only when conditions were stabilized were local Communists placed in important positions, creating the appearance of local autonomy.

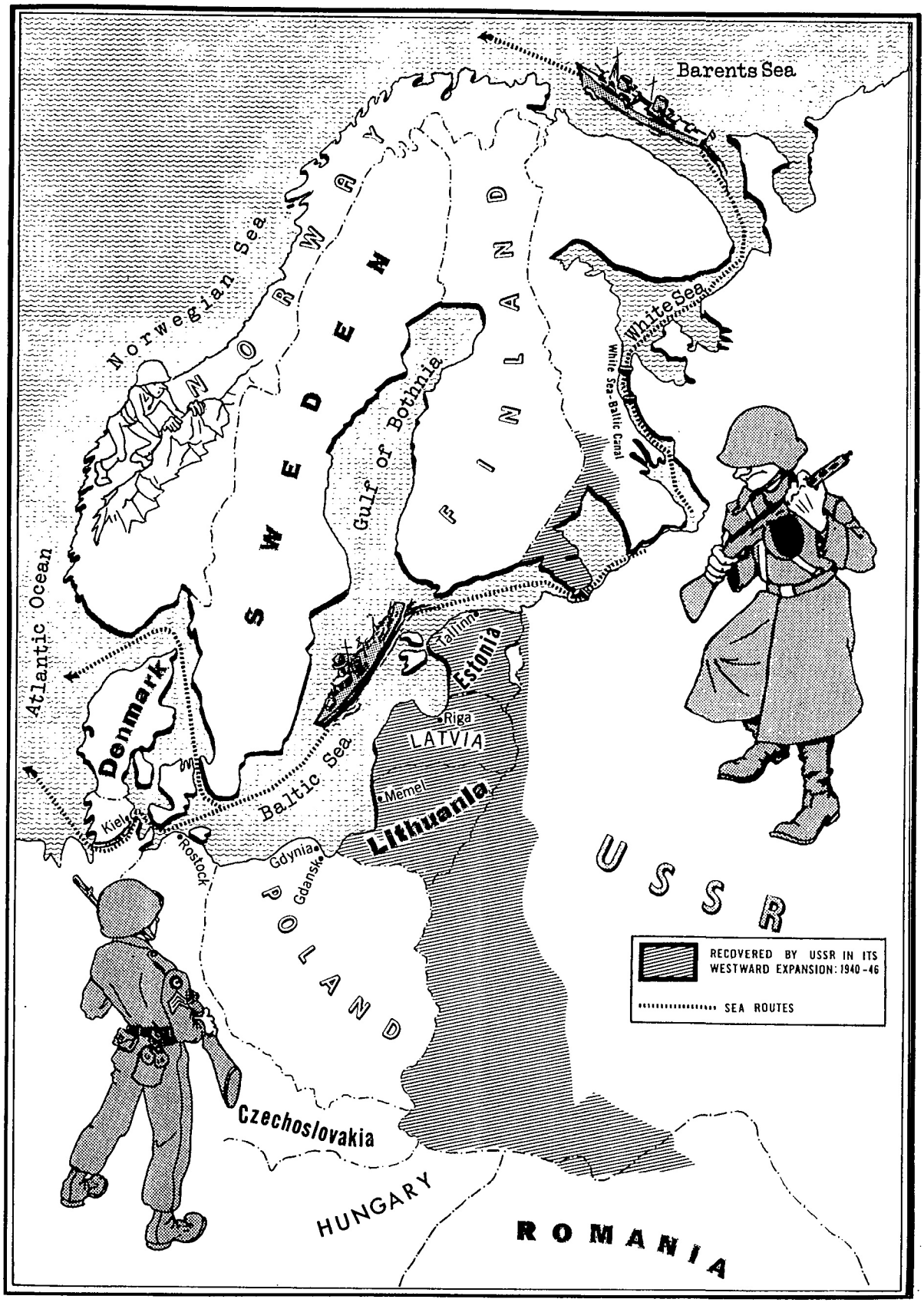
The Baltic Sea today is dominated by Soviet sea and airpower. Estimates of Soviet naval vessels in the Baltic include a minimum of 1 battleship, 6 cruisers, 30 destroyers, and 100 submarines. Other estimates range up to 7 cruisers, 50 destroyers, 30 convoy destroyers, 200 mine detecting ships, 180 fast torpedo boats, 50 fast artillery boats, 140 submarine chasers, 150 landing craft and 120 submarines.

Destroyers appear to be for two general purposes. The *Tallinn, Kotlin, Slovy,* and *Kola* classes were designed as "fighting ships" and the *Riga* class was obviously designed for protection of coastal traffic. Also, in their luggers and fishing cutters, the Soviets have a shipping reserve. The building of these vessels in the Baltic area under Soviet domination has been strongly intensified. Whatever the correct figure for the Soviet Baltic fleet, the final number is impressive. This fleet is supported on a broad base from Leningrad to the Lübeck Bucht by the Soviet Air Force, Army, and rocket and guided missile installations.

From a historical viewpoint, the Soviets have long considered the Baltic as their private lake. At the 1921 Naval Conference in Rome, they offered to reduce the Russian Navy to 280,000 tons on condition that the Baltic and Black Seas be closed to "foreign war vessels."

Four factors aid the present Soviet position in the Baltic: first, the Baltic is a landlocked sea and can easily be defended; second, the entrance to the Baltic is controlled by nations with limited military power; third, the rimland of the Baltic is ideal for missile bases; and, fourth, the score of Russian and satellite bases, from Tallin in the north to Rugen in the south, dominate the area like a cogged wheel.

Today the USSR is the world's second greatest naval power. She is estimated to have over 500 submarines in operation. These submarines can be used against sea



communications of the Western powers as well as for missile attacks against Western cities and industrial areas. It can be assumed that at least 60 submarines stationed in the Baltic are intended for ocean warfare. Thus emerges a basic danger—the possibility of their getting out of the Baltic through the Danish Straits in the direction of the Atlantic.

Although Soviet submarine activity in the Baltic in the last war was not impressive, it cannot be concluded that Soviet submarines would not be able to put on a better performance in a future conflict. Russian enthusiasm for technical matters forms a strong allurement and modern navigation now appeals to the technical passion—apart from the fascination of handling modern weapons. Perhaps even more important is the fact that much of Germany's submarine warfare experience fell into Soviet hands after World War II.

Soviet aviation is impressive and now challenges US airpower supremacy. In the past 10 years the Soviets have become independent in most fields of aeronautical engineering. Their aircraft production potential approaches the capacity of the United States.

Exploitation of Seapower

Soviet naval aviation is land based and is under command of fleet commanders. There are an estimated 4,000 planes in the overall Naval Air Force. The Naval Air Force, however, constitutes only a small part of the 1,200 Soviet aircraft in the Baltic area.

Soviet naval writers stress the influence which geography and other limitations have had on Soviet exploitation of seapower. The mission of Soviet surface elements, their Marines, and coast bound submarines in the last war was to protect the Army's strategic flanks, resting on the seas, against enemy landings. The Russian Navy did participate in several tactical outflanking operations. Most of these, however, can be described as "river crossings." Those that succeeded were leapfrog operations carried out over short or partially frozen stretches of water on the flank of the Army. This use of the Navy to secure the flanks of land armies, and the dependent relationship of the Navy to land warfare, basically distinguishes the Soviet concept of naval warfare from that of the West. This is not to imply that Soviet strategy has remained static. The Soviet fleet commander, Adm Kuznetsov, has been an outspoken advocate of offensive warfare.

Of the satellites, Poland's small Navy has been largely integrated into the Soviet fleet. The Poles have been striving to increase the capacity of their shipyards, principally the Gdansk shipyards. The capacity of the yard has been raised to 10,000-ton displacement, twice the former tonnage.

Soviet expansion into the rimlands along the Baltic Coast presents a threat to Scandinavian security. The constant aim of Soviet foreign policy has been to obtain access to ice-free seas to the West. It might be said that the Soviet policy has thus far proven successful—with one exception. Even with her ice-free ports in East Germany and the use of ports in the former Baltic States of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, the USSR does not have free access to the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean. The Soviets face a bottleneck at the Danish Straits—the only natural outlet from the Baltic. The passage is narrow and easily mined, and is under the control of an alien power, Denmark.

Copenhagen stands at the entrance to the Baltic and has a hinterland of low-lying, undulating country which gives it easy land communication. Copenhagen, an ice-free port, has the largest volume of traffic of any Baltic port. Internally, shipments are easily distributed through Denmark's excellent waterways.

In any discussion of the Baltic, the future of the Kiel Canal immediately comes into question. The reason for the construction of the canal was strategic rather than commercial. It lies on a secondary trade route and its saving of time and distance is comparatively small. The canal is only 60 miles long and 333 feet wide. The fact that the canal lies within the boundaries of Germany, where today forces of the West sit on one end and Communists on the other, presents another problem that must be solved in the near future.

Further eastward, Kaliningrad, Danzig, Stetten, Swinemünd, Peenemünde, Rügen, Stralsund, Rostock, and Wismar have been developed in recent years. The North German plain slopes gently to the sea, and, as a result, there is a continual remodelling of the immediate coastline. It is necessary to carry out dredging and maintenance of channels across the bars. With the development of the Pillau Canal, it is now possible for ships over 20,000 tons to anchor at Wismar, Rostock, and Stralsund.

Rehabilitation and modernization of the Gdansk shipyards has developed rapidly. The progress of the shipyards is matched by that of the plants producing steam engines and turbines for the vessels. Gdynia has become the principal port in the Communist controlled portion of the Baltic.

Further north, Tallinn, Riga, and Memel have been developed by the Soviets as fortified naval bases. Since the ports are ice-locked during part of the winter months, it is only reasonable to assume that the Soviets place greater emphasis on their ice-free ports to the south. From the northern areas of Soviet control it is possible to use the White Sea-Baltic Canal through the Finno-Karelian areas to the White Sea. But here, again, the canal is only useful for about six months of the year.

At one time Finland occupied, in the eyes of the Soviets, a potential threat due to her geographical position in relationship to Leningrad, Russia's second largest city. In October 1939, Russia presented Finland with a series of proposals designed to secure the safety of Leningrad, and to ensure that Finland would never be used by a third power as a base for attack on Russia. After a tragic war, Finland was forced to give up the Karelian Isthmus and other areas in order to placate the Soviets.

Imports from the Free World

Although successful in resisting Soviet plans for absorption, Finland no longer has a strong military organization. Under the peace treaty, Finland is allowed to have only 41,900 men for all branches of her armed forces. Her equipment, mostly supplied by the Germans in World War II, is now obsolete. Her Air Force is limited to 60 planes, none of which can be bombers.

Even more severe was the huge reparations debt amounting to some $570 million which the Finns were

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able to finish paying on schedule on 19 September 1952. Actually Finland is still paying reparations, in that war indemnity production facilities artificial to the economy had to be created. These industries cannot compete with Western economy and thus, by default, the Finns have been placed in a position of dependence on Soviet Bloc markets. Today, Romanian oil, Polish coal, Czech toys, and Russian autos are in abundance, although 75% of Finnish imports still come from the free world.

In view of Finland's overall situation, it is difficult for the United States to exert a decisive influence. This fact, combined with restrictions placed upon the Finnish armed forces through the treaty, has neutralized Finland's war potential. It is doubtful if Finland is even capable of an effective defense against aggression. Although Finland still has a favorable geographical position, she is not able to utilitze it, nor can she hope to use a third force on Finnish soil.

Swedes Are Neutral

Do the Soviets plan to use their strengthened position in the Baltic? One Soviet spokesman has explained the Communist attitude in the following statement: "The sea is that mighty route linking our country with all the continents of the globe. We are learning to use that route, and in the not distant future we shall be using it to a far greater extent than at present."

Sweden is the only nation on the "Soviet Lake" which could be considered an opponent but her small forces alone offers no hope against the Soviet military. The Swedes, like the Swiss proudly point out that Sweden has not taken part in any war since 1809. Actually, many thinking Swedes admit that the word "neutrality," as applied to Swedish foreign policy, is a misnomer. As *Atlantic Monthly* reports: ". . . . in neither the First or Second World War did Sweden pursue a genuine policy of neutrality . . . in both conflicts the Swedes pursued a policy of opportunism."

The current viewpoint of Sweden and her policy is illustrated by a statement of one Swedish statesman: "We do not want fire insurance which increases the risk of fire." The Swedish general staff reportedly is convinced that in event of war the Soviet Union would immediately occupy all of Denmark and give Russia control of the passage from the Baltic for her submarine fleet. Sweden also is well aware that the line of Soviet missile bases from Tallinn to Warnemünde, in East Germany, puts her well within range of Soviet missiles.

This does not mean that Sweden has reconciled herself to submitting to any invader. She has recently completed a six-year building program which added approximately 50 ships to her Navy. Sweden's Air Force is second among the nations of Western Europe. Her annual expenditure for defense amounts to 5% of the national income, the equal of what most NATO countries in Europe are spending.

An interesting feature of Swedish defense is an increasing reliance on underground facilities. Hydroelectric power plants, hospitals, laboratories, and fire fighting stations have been built underground in addition to military installations such as the Saab aircraft plant at Linköping, the Bofors armament works at Karlskoga, and the naval installations at Muskö.

Sweden has built the largest single oil depot in the world in an abandoned feldspar mine near Stockholm. This is a vital depot for a nation which must import all her oil from abroad. As an alternative she has made plans to use Trondheim, Norway, as a fuel base in event of a shut-off of her normal fuel supply line. Thus, for a country with a past history of neutrality (of a sort), Sweden seems to be quite cognizant of her exposed position in relation to the Soviet Union. She is making a strong effort to ready herself against any attack.

Two of the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark, have joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in an effort to obtain a satisfactory defense setup. Denmark plays a lesser role in Scandinavian defense than do some nearby countries. This is due in part to a certain psychological inertia, or traditional way of thinking, which makes political adjustment to every new epoch a slow process. Even today, nine years after Danish entry into NATO, only about 55% of the population is in favor of Danish participation.

The Soviet Union is estimated to have 65 to 70 divisions available for the European theater, with approximately 22 divisions in East Germany. The bulk of these are armored divisions and are first line troops. This does not take into consideration satellite troops in East Germany and Poland. Within the past decade Red airfields in Eastern Europe have tripled and existing airfields have been improved. The tactical air force comprises approximately 600,000 men and 20,000 planes. Important, too, is the fact that satellite air forces have been greatly improved in material and have doubled in size since 1951.

Faced with such opposition, Denmark, despite her reluctance to participate in military alliances, has good reason to be thankful she is a member of NATO. An attack on her would be considered an attack on all the Atlantic nations, including the United States. Denmark occupies a strategic position on the northern flank of NATO's continental defense line and is one of the nations controlling the Baltic outlet to the Atlantic. Her position is an uneasy one. The Russians could sweep from their nearby bases in Germany and occupy Denmark at will. Only ten minutes flying time from Copenhagen is the "Baltic Gibraltar" on the German island of Rügen.

In many ways the Danish government seems to feel that the German contribution to Western defense has already resolved several of the military problems that

face the Danes today. Although at times the Danish parliament has shown reluctance to make the full-fledged contribution to NATO that is necessary, Denmark appears to be striving for an adequate national defense. Approximately 25% of the annual budget is allocated for defense as compared to 9% before the war. A three-year program of buildup in defense, largely with American aid, was completed in 1956.

Although Norway is not situated on the Baltic Sea, she is one of the powers controlling the Baltic exit, and her defense activities under NATO are in alliance with Denmark and others of the Western powers. Her military situation is plagued with many of the same problems that face Denmark. Norway has given assurance to the Soviet Union that she will not open her military bases to foreign powers as long as Norway is not attacked or subjected to threats of attack. Her border constitutes one flank of the NATO defense, and occupies about one-third of the line dividing the East and West. She is isolated in that Norway has no direct overland connection with any other NATO country. Thus Norway is in a truly isolated position, both from geographical and psychological viewpoints. She is heir to an historical background of "economic neutralism" at a time when there is no division of opinion about Norway and Denmark being faced with the most serious naval and air threat in the entire NATO area.

After World War II Norway had to start rebuilding her forces very nearly from scratch. Her strenuous efforts to rebuild her economy and prepare an adequate defense endangered her balance of trade. For a time it was necessary for Norway to reduce her military budget. Yet the spirit of Norway's desire to maintain an adequate defense is shown in the fact that 10% of her entire male population are members of the Home Guard, a supplement to the conscript army.

Coastline Too Long

It is apparent, however, that Norway is a "deficit country." Her coastline is too long, her population too small, and her economy too dependent on foreign trade to support a fully effective defense system. Although one-third of her budget is allotted to national defense and defense still claims top priority, Norway's defense must be based on foreign assistance. During a six-year period from 1951 to 1957, Norway received 4,645 million kroner ($652 million) from the United States and NATO as economic aid and to assist in building radar warning systems, airfields, and equipment. In addition she received 4,000 million kroner ($561 million) through the Mutual Defense Association (MDAP) to purchase arms and equipment and to train Norwegian personnel abroad. To counteract "armament fatigue," the United States, acting through the NATO agreement, has furnished the Norwegian Air Force with first line jet equipment which is serviced and manned by Norwegian personnel. On the other hand, there appears to be opinion that the land military threat is the most serious. As a result, certain elements of the navy are too old for efficient use and little has been done to secure adequate replacements.

One aspect of the NATO alliance in this area may lead to positive results. This is the possibility of cooperation between Norway and Western Germany in that their navies appear to have the same interests. Two-thirds of West Germany's navy is to be based in the Baltic. Consequently, West Germany argues that her navy cannot fulfill its defensive role in the Baltic if it is restricted to ships of less than 3,000 tons. West Germany also needs acoustic mines that would be laid in case of war to prevent the Soviet fleet from breaking out of the Baltic.

Thaw in the Cold War

The NATO alliance is the cornerstone of Scandinavian defense as well as that of the whole Western military alliance. Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is responsible, under the general direction of the Standing Group, for defense of the Allied countries of continental Europe. For purposes of collective defense, the members have agreed that an armed attack against one member shall be considered an attack against all. The treaty provides that, in the event of an armed attack upon a member, each member shall take, either individually or in concert, such action as it deems necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

It appears today that the impetus has gone out of the drive for rearmament of Western Germany. Many political and psychological problems still beset the West German government's rearmament plans. Fear of a revival of militarism or Nazism, the idea of turning Germany into a nuclear battlefield, the Berlin crisis, the hope for a thaw in the cold war, and particularly the desire for unity of East and Western Germany, have delayed and handicapped rearmament plans.

Five years ago one disillusioned NATO officer said "We don't have more than 16 divisions between the Baltic and the Alps and barely 10 more could be in the front lines by M-plus-five (mobilization day plus five days)—just when it looks like the atom powers have tacitly decided against all-out nuclear war and just when we need conventional troops more than ever." This problem still plagues NATO today.

The problem of NATO defense in Scandinavia, as well as that of the rest of Europe, does not present a rosy picture. Until NATO forces in the area are supplemented by German troops, NATO must continue to base its plans on using nuclear weapons in its collective defense. USMC

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No Argument There

A member of a Marine Barracks proficiency pay board at Pearl Harbor was questioning nominees about their knowledge of history, age-old customs and traditions.

In an attempt to rattle a young staff sergeant who seemed to have all the answers, he asked: "Sergeant, why is the bugle call 'taps' traditionally blown at a military funeral?"

Without hesitation the staff sergeant answered: "Because Chapter Three of the Landing Party Manual tells you to, sir!"

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