

Sweden: The New Frontline Against Russia

| Torbjörn Sasserson

Is Sweden actually safer now that it has joined NATO, or has it just painted a target on its own back? With talk of American bases and a strange push for Greenland, one must to ask: is Scandinavia becoming the next war zone? Thorbjörn Sasserson is here to help with insights. He is an award-winning Swedish journalist who runs an independent news outlet. Links: Newsvoice: <https://newsvoice.se/english/> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascalottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascalottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Merch & Donations: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Intro: Is Sweden Safer in NATO? 00:07:08 Preparing for War with Russia? 00:10:47 The US-Greenland Controversy 00:20:43 Domestic Issues & Media Narratives 00:23:19 Sanctions & Energy Costs 00:29:45 Societal Decay: Crime, Economy & Infrastructure 00:35:10 Ukraine Fatigue & New Political Parties 00:45:34 Outro

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody. Today we have an update on what's happening in Sweden, the formerly neutral Nordic country that became a NATO member in 2024 and also signed a defense cooperation agreement with the USA, which now allows the hegemon to establish 17 military bases in the country. So, do the Swedes actually feel safer now? Here to help with this question is Thorbjörn Sasserson, an award-winning Swedish journalist. Thorbjörn, welcome. Thank you very much, Pascal. Well, thank you for coming online. I really would like to know what's going on in Sweden right now. So maybe my initial question: do people in Sweden, now in 2026, feel safer than they did in 2024 before becoming a NATO member?

#Torbjörn Sasserson

Yeah, to answer that question, we need to go back a few years, because Sweden used to be a country that didn't want to join NATO at all. But since 2014 and onward, there's been a lot of scare propaganda. They wanted people to feel afraid of Russia. By 2022 or so, they had managed to shift the sentiment from safety to fear. So it was time to make the decision to join NATO. But they never asked the people. They didn't ask us. We didn't have the chance to vote on it.

#Pascal

No referendum about it, right? Whether it would be about neutrality or not—yeah.

#Torbjörn Sasserson

So, are we safer? Probably people feel safer now because they're scared.

#Pascal

So, yeah, there we are. And this defense agreement with the United States—where do we stand now? My latest information from about half a year ago was that the U.S., although it has the right to establish these bases, actually hasn't acted on it yet. Where are we?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

I think that's correct. We don't hear very much. On the other hand, we don't know what they're doing—if they're preparing something, if they're moving material to these bases or not. But as far as I know, nothing much is happening, no.

#Pascal

So, what's the general development in Swedish politics when it comes to NATO and Sweden's approach to Russia?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Well, the fear-mongering is still going on. People are generally afraid of Russia. Could you ask that question again?

#Pascal

Sorry, just what are the developments going on when it comes to Sweden and NATO, and Sweden and Russia? Because we actually hear quite a lot about Finland. You know, Mr. Stubb is quite popular on the international scene and has been inserting himself in discussions with the United States. But Sweden—it's relatively quiet, actually.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Well, you mean internationally or—internationally, yes. Well, I guess so. We have our defense minister who's traveling back and forth to the Pentagon and Brussels and so on, and he's in charge of that. People just tend to read the news, see what's going on, and then there's not much debate. But also, the media we have—the established media—they don't really want debate about it. They tell us what's going on, and we should just listen, I think.

#Pascal

Where does this leave you as a journalist? I mean, what are you busy with—what issues are you working on that you think mainstream media in Sweden doesn't cover?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Well, as an independent journalist, I try to show what other countries are thinking about what's going on. For instance, we publish what the Russians are saying about it, what Orbán is saying about it. We do what we think the big media should do. We have our readers—not so many, maybe, because most people go to the bigger channels—but at least we reach some people. And we know we reach people within the government, even if they never admit they're reading our news. So if they want a more nuanced or varied picture, the politicians and decision-makers go to alternative or new media.

#Pascal

Has your view on the whole NATO issue changed at all? You know, it wasn't easy for Sweden to join NATO—not so much because of Brussels, but because of Ankara. Turkey blocked Sweden's entry for over a year. Has there been any progress in the relationship between Sweden and Turkey since then?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

You mean since we joined NATO? Mm-hmm. I'm not really sure. The reason Turkey wanted to block it was because they wanted to make a deal with us, and it was about people they wanted to get hold of in Sweden, we think.

#Pascal

They wanted some people extradited, right? People who were basically supportive of the opposition in Turkey—opposition to Mr. Erdogan.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, that's right. And also there was that one Koran burning—what's it called? The Koran burning. He was the one burning them, and he was maybe, probably targeted. I don't know, but he was murdered. So he burned some Korans in Sweden, he moved around, he was threatened, and he was killed. But the connection to the NATO thing—I don't know, but it's possible.

#Pascal

Okay, so overall, the security situation for Sweden and how it integrates with NATO—has that stayed the same as before? Or has it become more, I mean, are they putting more effort into it? Are you seeing a lot in the news about Sweden in NATO?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Sure. The Swedes are adapting to NATO's demands. What they want is better infrastructure, and they talk about using Sweden as a deployment area for a war against Russia through Finland. So they're building up the infrastructure, and the defense industry has a lot to do. They're making a lot of money right now because there's new demand for material for that.

#Pascal

This is what's so scary. I mean, aren't people now seriously afraid that, instead of being more secure inside NATO, they might become the next frontier after Ukraine—to carry out the proxy war with Russia?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yes, that's one idea we've proposed—that Sweden could actually be the next deployment area after Ukraine. I even wrote about it myself. And there are other countries like Kazakhstan and Moldova and so on; they could also become new deployment areas. But Sweden and Finland are very, very close to St. Petersburg and Moscow, so it would be a more intense war if they used us to attack Russia, because, as you know, the politicians in the EU, in Britain, and so on, they think they can actually beat Russia.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this could happen again anytime. So please consider subscribing not only here, but also to my mailing list on Substack—that's pascallottaz.substack.com. The link's in the description below. And now, back to the video. Is that something—like, is that discussion the same in Sweden? I mean, are there politicians or important people in Sweden who believe that a NATO–Russia war could be won?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Sure, yes, yes. They don't say it straight out, but it's clear that the picture they put out is that Russia is weak, that they're useless. They can't even take the whole of Ukraine—as if they wanted to—but they don't. So these people in Sweden think Russia is weak and useless. So why not take them, with the help of NATO and the United States? But now... you know, NATO may not survive much longer because of—well, I wouldn't say it's only Trump—but the Trump administration, at least, wants to take country after country, and now Greenland. And Greenland is owned by Denmark, as you know. So now Sweden, Denmark, and other countries are sending all these troops to Greenland to protect it against the United States, which is NATO. Everything is changing so fast, it's even hard to know what's going to be on the news the next day.

#Pascal

Yeah, it is. It's extremely hard right now, especially for Sweden. It's the Greenland issue. Doesn't this touch a lot of people personally too? Because Greenland is part of Denmark, and Denmark is one of the five Scandinavian countries, right? Yeah. Yes, you're not one country, but I mean, the Scandinavians do have a feeling of belonging together—of brotherhood. Does that affect Swedes even more strongly than, say, other Europeans, like the Portuguese, when the United States talks about taking away Greenland?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yes, I think so. I mean, we have Scandinavia. We haven't been at war with each other for hundreds of years. So of course, yes, people feel it has something to do with them if Denmark loses Greenland. But there are also other discussions now emerging—should Denmark really have the right to keep owning Greenland? Really, should Denmark have the right to own Greenland? Because it's... it's like a continent, Greenland. It's huge. And why shouldn't Greenland belong to the Greenlanders? So it's not only about whether the United States has the right to take over Greenland, but whether Denmark even has the right to keep it.

#Pascal

Yeah, but the independence of Greenland has been an important topic for, let's say, Denmark for quite a while, right? And Greenland has an autonomous status within Denmark, right? So what's— I mean, so far, the idea has been that if Greenland were to become independent, it would go through a public referendum there. Right. But Mr. Trump isn't talking about a public referendum; he's just talking about incorporating it, period. Isn't that scary? And isn't it also scary to the Swedes that the United States now argues the only thing that can keep Greenland safe is incorporating it? Because that's also an admission that NATO couldn't keep Greenland safe. Isn't that highly problematic?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, I think that suddenly Denmark is very eager to protect Greenland, but most of the time they've kind of forgotten about it, I'd say. It's not like they're developing Greenland very much. You never hear about Greenland in the news—ever—until now.

#Pascal

Although usually that's a good thing. Usually, you don't want to be in the world news.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Right, yes, that's true.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

When it comes to Sweden, we have this debate now about Denmark and the United States. There's one thing I remember—Trump said he was even willing to pay every single Greenlander some money to vote to join the United States. And that's quite terrible if he openly wants to buy the voters. But I'm not sure he'll actually go through with that. I don't know if you have any other information about it.

#Pascal

I mean, as far as I know, Greenland has about 50,000 inhabitants, something like that?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, 57,000 or something like that, yes.

#Pascal

57,000. So even if you offered each one of them half a million dollars, it would still only be around \$36 billion. I mean, that's more or less pocket change for the United States, which is now looking at a defense budget of \$1.5 trillion. It's utterly insane. I mean, a couple of billion dollars—you could just do that. I mean, that's even thinkable.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

I think Trump is thinking like that. He's thinking about all the money he can make from the minerals and whatever oil is there, and so on. So I had this idea that he might want to get hold of Greenland to get hold of the minerals, so he can build or construct some kind of industry for semiconductors. Then he could take all the industry he needs from Taiwan and move it to Greenland, and it would be safer, closer. I don't know.

#Pascal

It's just a weird moment. But now, if you read the newspapers in Sweden and Norway, I mean, does this create again this kind of insecurity? Because, I mean, Sweden in this sense has joined NATO probably at the worst possible moment—when, on the one hand, NATO is escalating a proxy war with Russia, and on the other hand, it's on the verge of collapse. Because this is a serious threat. This is probably the most serious threat to NATO since its establishment—that the United States is now talking about, you know, attacking another NATO member.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, there's actually one Swedish politician—she's the leader of one of the parties—and she said, "What's stopping Trump from taking over Sweden?" Some people think she just wanted to draw attention to her party, but I don't think anyone really believes Trump would take Sweden. I mean, they already have Sweden, because we're in NATO, they're in NATO, and we have the DCA agreement, which allows the United States to have all these soldiers on 17 bases, as you mentioned.

#Pascal

Yeah, but the question is very legitimate. I mean, in the US, NATO also has Denmark—it has Greenland, right? It's already part of that. US troops are already stationed in Greenland. And when it comes to stationing rights, there's really nothing. I mean, the Danes will tell them, "Yeah, whatever you want, just put it there—but don't take it away." But he's talking about taking it away.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, that's really strange when they put it like that. It's strange because they already have all these influences, and they have the rights to keep their stuff, their materials, here and there. So why do they want to take—I think it's about something else. Yeah, it could be. He said, Tom says it's about, you know, keeping Russia and China away from Greenland. And to do that, they need to own the whole island. Or maybe it's just about the money, the minerals, and the natural resources on Greenland.

#Pascal

It's probably a mix of those, right? Or all of it together—you could make a lot of money if it just belonged to you. Plus, you have all these new, shiny options. But while I don't think Sweden is under direct threat from the United States, at least not of being taken over, there is a Scandinavian country that might be. Because, you know, right next door to Greenland, there's Iceland. Did you hear anything from Iceland—people freaking out about this? Because for them, this should be extremely scary. Also, during the Second World War, it was the Brits and the Americans who occupied Iceland. It's often forgotten—against Iceland's will—which at the time was still part of Denmark.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, that's right. And Iceland is also a Nordic country. But we don't hear anything right now, let's say, from Iceland—what they're thinking. We forgot one thing, though: why would they take over Greenland? And that's the missile defense, of course. They can shoot down all those missiles that might come in from Russia. But Russia doesn't seem interested in attacking the United States at all. So... every year again.

#Pascal

It's very modern. Yeah, it's utterly bizarre. But then, inside Sweden, do you see the debate about NATO reigniting again? I mean, are the left and the right talking about whether this is a good decision, or is the NATO membership decision kind of set in stone?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

I think people really don't know what to say right now. What I notice is that the connections between Brussels, other European countries, and Sweden are quite good and strong. So I guess they maybe want to keep NATO, but without the United States—or create a new kind of NATO in Europe. I think people want to have this kind of military defense system. And Ursula von der Leyen talks about some kind of new European defense. So we'll see what happens. But I don't think people really know what they want right now.

#Pascal

Yeah, and what the future might bring. What's your take? What's being watched most closely in Sweden right now when it comes to the country's development and its place within Europe? Are there any hot topics that people are talking about a lot?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Right now, the media are mostly discussing Greenland. I don't want to go back to that subject because we've covered it, but I'll just tell you that Sweden has a tendency—Swedish media, Swedish people, and Swedish politicians—to look more to other parts of the world. They want to save the planet because it's threatened by the climate, so they talk about carbon dioxide. And they think that, for some reason, Sweden is very important. Still, it's a very, very small country, and we don't produce much carbon dioxide. I think I even saw a report saying that Swedish forests are growing so fast that the carbon footprint is negative—we're actually absorbing more carbon dioxide than we've produced in recent years.

And still, they want to talk about the climate and carbon dioxide. I don't think carbon dioxide is a problem at all. We have a tendency to... The media are still very focused on climate, and they're focused on, you know, HBTQ questions, of course. They can't drop it. And they also have a strong tendency to criticize people who criticize mass migration. So as soon as that's the topic, they tend to say the right-wing people are the problem, not mass migration. Still, mass migration is going on. As soon as the figures point downwards, they're very keen to mention that we're bringing in fewer people—but still, a lot of people come in. And when there's an increase, they want to move the attention to something else.

#Pascal

Okay, so these topics haven't changed that much over the years. May I ask you, just out of personal curiosity, about the sanctions—the Russia sanctions imposed by the European Union—which have recently started to include EU citizens? Is that something that worries people in Sweden, or in your circles in alternative media? Are people talking about it? I mean, in Germany and in Switzerland, it's become quite important because the European Union has sanctioned two Swiss citizens, one of them living inside the EU. Does that discussion also reach the Nordic countries?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

People in Sweden—I don't think they know. They're not very aware of these sanctions. But we, of course, have followed your work, and we've published a few articles based on what you found. Uh, and, um, what I know is that there are certain individuals who are afraid of being sanctioned. There are. But most people have no idea at all that there even exists a sanctions list on an EU site. But there are people who are afraid, and they're kind of going silent, at least for a while, to assess whether they can continue to criticize things like NATO and so on. Yeah.

#Pascal

Okay, so, about the rest of the sanctions—you know, we know that in Germany, the Russia sanctions are actually leading to quite a bit of deindustrialization, and the fact that Germany is cut off from Russian oil, at least from the direct supply of it. Are there negative repercussions for Sweden as well from the sanctions that the EU is putting on Russia as a state?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, that's a very good question, because I don't know how much—we don't think we import Russian oil anymore. Or maybe we do, because sometimes business goes on as usual when there's a political storm about these things. What's obvious is that the price of electricity is skyrocketing. Right now it's quite expensive, and that has to do not with Russia, but with turning Sweden green. They're implementing a lot of wind power here, and there's a lot of debate about it, because it's not giving us as much electricity as we thought, even when it's windy. So what I know is that we're trying to become more self-sufficient.

For instance, we have the island of Gotland, which is a big island in the middle of the Baltic and belongs to Sweden. It's also very strategically important militarily. I've met some people there who are trying to create an electricity system based on solar power. Instead of using lithium batteries, they want to store the energy with hydrogen. So there are these kinds of attempts. We also have the electric cables running from Gotland to Sweden, and people are afraid that the Russians—of course, always the Russians—might cut them. That's why they need this self-sufficiency on Gotland. So we're trying to rely more on our own ability to produce energy, while also buying electricity from Europe.

#Pascal

Right. And I suppose Sweden still has access to oil from Norway, since you're direct neighbors, right? So Sweden's energy security must be a little better off than the rest of Europe.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, I think so. Also, we have a lot of forest, so in the wintertime we can always create heat by, you know, burning firewood. Right, right. So people have bought a lot of stoves for that reason, and the prices of stoves have gone up because there's increased demand.

#Pascal

Yeah, maybe just to explain for people who aren't familiar with this—recently in Europe, entire heating systems that use wood have become quite popular. They can be quite efficient. So it's not just a stove in the kitchen; it's a big boiler unit in the basement that uses these little briquettes and such to heat the house.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

For instance, we have a country house with two levels. In the basement, we have a sauna and a wood stove. So when I go out to this place, I start by burning firewood down there. The heat expands, fills the lower level, and then rises to warm the second floor. It actually works pretty well—you can really heat a whole house with firewood if you want.

#Pascal

Right, right. So in this sense, Sweden has a bit of a different way of dealing with the cold, which of course is a huge issue in Northern Europe. But let's just, overall—if you had to tell us, what is currently keeping Sweden's news busy, and also its politicians very busy—what's the thing that everybody should know about Sweden, how it works today?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Oh, that's a very general question—a broad one.

#Pascal

What's keeping people up at the moment in the news? I mean, what do you think are the things we don't hear about in the rest of Europe or the rest of the world—what's important to Swedes in Sweden?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Okay, what's important to Swedes in Sweden? That's definitely the money issue. People feel they're becoming poorer. Everything—prices, all of it—is going up. We were promised lower prices when we entered the EU and so on, but prices have always kept rising, and salaries aren't keeping up. So money is a big problem for Swedish people; they feel poorer. And then we have the problems with the so-called, what's sometimes called, "no-go zones," and so on—but it's not called that in Sweden.

It's called something more like "areas of consideration" or "areas of concern." So, uh, people don't feel as safe on the streets anymore—no, they don't. Especially women, I think. Younger women are more afraid of walking out alone at night and so on. And we also see other things. For instance, this winter in Stockholm we had a huge problem—I've never seen so many problems with the snow. The amount of snow was normal, but they can't get rid of it anymore for climate or environmental reasons. Usually, they used to dump the snow into the water, into the lakes, but that's now prohibited. So they can only push the snow to the sides of the roads, which makes it impossible—if you have a parked car, you can't get back onto the street.

#Pascal

But last time I checked, snow is just another form of water. So what's the problem with dumping it into a lake?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Oh, they say it's—well, it's true—it's some impurities from the tires and asphalt. Ah, okay. Yeah. So that's been a huge thing in Stockholm and other cities because it looks sloppy. And you can't walk on the sidewalks safely anymore because of all the snow and ice. I spent about two or three hours in Stockholm City a few days ago. I couldn't see a single vehicle doing snow work—plowing, or whatever it's called. It was hard to walk and to drive the car. And I was like, what the hell is going on here? They can't even control the snow at all.

#Pascal

Is this just a quirky issue with a new regulation, or is it more like an indication of a general decay in public services in Sweden?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

I actually think it's a problem with the general decay of public services. Yes. And another thing people are talking about a lot now is within social health care and elderly care—there are a lot of rapes happening. So old people are being raped by the very people who are supposed to take care of them.

#Pascal

Well, this has—you know, I've worked for a time in Switzerland's healthcare system, or at least connected to it. And, you know, actually this issue, this very sad topic of people abusing elderly and handicapped people in homes, is very scary because it's been going on for a long time. Then it becomes known, and it's absolutely horrific. But these are the kinds of topics that are currently circulating in Sweden about the problems the country has. Which one would you say is taking up more space—these internal problems with the system, or external problems like the threat from Russia, the United States, the European Union, how it all works? Which one outweighs the other for people on the ground?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Well, there's a third kind of news, and that's entertainment and celebrity gossip—what they're doing. If you turn on Swedish television, I could do it right now and check. What you'll see is that, I don't know, maybe a third of all the news is celebrity stuff and gossip. So I'd say it's maybe equal: one third about internal problems, one third about international issues, and one third about entertainment.

#Pascal

Are people still seeing Ukraine as a hot-button issue, or is it starting to fade into the background now?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

It's definitely moving into the background. It is. But there are still these activities going on. The government in Sweden just can't seem to stop sending money there. I follow that closely, and every week there's a hundred million to Ukraine, fifty million to Ukraine—it goes on like that. Maybe we'll see if that starts to slow down. But generally, the Ukraine issue is fading into the background right now. And it's a lot about Trump—a lot about Trump. They can't... I mean, they're fixated on Trump instead of talking about the United States as a whole. They have this tendency to always say it's Trump's fault all the time, just like it's always Putin's fault or Xi Jinping's fault. So they make it personal instead of seeing the bigger picture of governments, lobbyists, and huge companies working together.

#Pascal

Right. I mean, we see this a lot—we see it in all Western media, I'd say—this personalization and the idea that, like in Iran, right? If you get rid of the regime, get rid of a couple of people in Tehran, then suddenly everything will be fantastic. And of course, that's not how it works. That's never the goal, but that's the general depiction of how power operates. It's a stupid idea, but okay. So

unfortunately, in Sweden too, the general discussion about world politics happens in pretty much the same categories as what we know from the UK, Germany, and so on. Yeah.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah. So I'm a journalist. I used to be more of a media consultant, and then I realized that the news is broken—it's not very good. So I became a journalist. Later I realized that to fix Sweden, we need new parties and new politicians, because the old ones—they always do the same thing. They work for themselves and want to be acknowledged in the bigger arenas, like the World Economic Forum and so on. So actually, what I did—if I may mention it—I'm part of a new Swedish party called Ambition Sweden. And they stand for, well, it's not left or right; they just stand for reason. And I think that's what's needed in Europe and in all these countries: reason, and talking about facts, not about big politics and saving the planet. People in every country need to take care of their own countries, and they need to have good relations with their neighbors in other countries. It's very simple, really. So I think that ordinary people should go into politics, actually.

#Pascal

I mean, the systems in quite a lot of places disincentivize people from being interested in politics because they feel like they can't change anything anyway. In Sweden, luckily, I think the participation rate is still quite high, right? And for you to establish a new party—how was that process? I mean, it's still manageable, I hope.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Well, my part in that is talking about the free press, freedom of speech, and also Swedish culture—which has the right to exist. There are only about five million native Swedish people left on the planet. Not many more. It's difficult to start a party in Sweden. The parties that are in charge don't want any competition. What we've noticed is that we're not getting any room or space in the big media at all. It's like we don't exist. I think that when there's a new party—and there are many new parties trying to exist—the establishment should look at that in a positive way: "Oh, interesting, here's something new. Maybe they have new ideas, maybe new solutions. Maybe they represent the people in a new way that we haven't done. So let them speak." That's the attitude I think they should have—but they don't. It's like they treat us as if we don't exist at all.

#Pascal

It's interesting that you're saying there are a lot of new parties. The other day I talked to a former Georgian ambassador who founded a new party in Georgia. It seems that all over Europe and Asia right now, we see new people trying to influence the political process because they're unhappy with

the status quo of what we have as parties in, well, extended Europe—let's call it that. So do you think Sweden is part of that? I mean, we're at a point where new political forces might be founded, right?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Yeah, we do follow what's going on. Personally, I think Viktor Orbán is doing a great job—and also Fico in, you know, Slovakia. So there are these movements that have gone quite far. I mean, Orbán is the leader of his country, and he's kind of representing European countries—not only his own, but the people of other countries too. That's what I think. But how is Mr. Orbán treated in Sweden? Well, he's treated as a villain, of course.

#Pascal

So Mr. Orbán represents this conservative, nationalist strain of thought in Europe. I mean, closer—also in France—what's her name? Yeah, Le Pen, yeah, Marine Le Pen in France, and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, right? And we know that all over Europe, of course, you have these conservative parties and right-wing parties, but also on the right, you have those who are still fine with integrating into the EU. You have those who are fine with the pro-war course of NATO, right? So we also see a split within the right wing. So would you say that in Sweden, too, among the conservative part of the population, you now have this kind of split between pro-war and anti-war?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Right now, the Moderates are in charge, and the Social Democrats are in second place. The Social Democrats have controlled Sweden for decades—almost a hundred years, I think. They have their people in the most important positions across all the agencies, so they're still in control of Sweden to a large extent. But we do have a right-wing party, the Moderates, and also the Sweden Democrats, who are considered right-wing. They want Sweden to take control of the migration and integration problems. What's happened over the last few years, though, is that all the parties have become more or less the same, whether left or right. I'd even say some left parties are more right than the right ones. So I think we're reaching a point in Europe where we have to stop talking about left and right. We need to talk about problems and challenges, and we need to cooperate between parties to actually solve them once and for all.

#Pascal

Yeah, you know, the labels "left" and "right" make less and less sense. The problem is, we don't have good alternative labels yet to classify the problems or the party lines. Because at the end of the day, we need a little bit of structure to discuss the different visions these parties have—but we don't have a good typification yet.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

I think it's still valid, and it's okay to talk about "liberal" and "conservative," because those terms aren't as stigmatized as "left" and "right." Since most of the media and most politicians lean left, they often equate "right" with very negative words. I think it's time for them to stop doing that, and for the general population to realize that they're just trying to control the narrative by using those words.

#Pascal

I mean, anyone in power will always try to tarnish everyone else as an extremist, right? On the other side. But let's leave it there. Thank you very much for that update from Sweden. I think it's very relevant to see how the Nordic and Scandinavian countries are experiencing world affairs at the moment. Torbjörn, for people who'd like to follow you or find your writing, where should they go?

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Oh, thank you. They should go to newsvoice.se. We also have an English section at newsvoice.se /english, and we're very active on X, where we have a channel.

#Pascal

Okay. I'll link the homepage and your X channel in the description box below. Torbjörn Sassersson, thank you very much for your time today.

#Torbjörn Sassersson

Thank you very much.