

Sweden's Terrible Nuclear Weapons Mistake | Mattias Forsgren

Mattias Forsgren joins Pascal to examine Sweden's shift from neutrality to NATO and the risks of nuclear escalation in Europe. Drawing on his essay "Hegemonic Logic," Forsgren argues that American power combines military pressure, financial influence and energy dependence. They discuss Nordic defence agreements, public debate, Cold War history and the limits of dissent. The conversation also explores Europe's economic vulnerabilities, relations with Russia and China, and whether diplomacy can offer an alternative to confrontation and growing strategic dependence.

Mattias's Links: Mattias Forsgren's Substack: <https://mattiasforsgren.substack.com> Hegemonic Logic: <https://mattiasforsgren.substack.com/p/hegemonic-logic> Dissidentpodden / Dissident Club: <https://dissidentpodden.substack.com> Michael Hudson conversation shared by Mattias: <https://www.youtube.com/live/1v8q5o6iec4?t=980s> Neutrality Studies Links: Neutrality Studies Substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Support Neutrality Studies: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Neutrality Studies shop: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Time Stamps 00:00 Mattias Forsgren and the Dissident Club 02:25 Hegemonic logic and nuclear coercion 09:19 Sweden, NATO and the nuclear umbrella 14:03 How Sweden's security debate changed 19:52 Neutrality, US bases and European autonomy 32:42 Energy dependence and American leverage 40:34 Dissent and Europe's "Stockholm syndrome" 43:42 China, diplomacy and possible alternatives

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies, today for the first time with Mattias Forsgren, a biologist, a teacher, and one of the people behind the Dissident Club in Sweden. Mattias, welcome.

#Mattias Forsgren

Thank you very much.

#Pascal

Well, thanks for the good work you do, because you're also the author of a Substack carrying your name. And you recently wrote a piece that I liked, which you entitled "Hegemonic Logic." And then you're talking about the way that the United States is currently trying to deploy its schemes under new names. And I thought we should talk about this. Before we go there, maybe give us a few more words about you and the Dissident Club, actually.

#Mattias Forsgren

Well, you know, in these times when truth is so hard to pin down, you might say, I think we're in kind of an epistemological crisis because, well, I'm thinking about, for example, you've made this very, very nice interview with Ola Tunander and Dirk Polman about political murders in Europe. I mean, that's, I must say, more or less a fact that these things happened. But it's not part of the general discussion, the general understanding of how the world works. Or say the Iraq War. We know about the lies.

We know about the lies about weapons of mass destruction, or the first Gulf War, the incubator kids, or in Libya. There are so many lies, but no one is ever held responsible for it. And then when you try to understand the world, it's... you have the mainstream narrative, which sort of sets the bounds for polite discussion. And, well, that's the Dissident Club. We're trying to sort of dig deeper and try to understand and get behind the official narrative and really try to understand these, as Peter Dale Scott would say, deep events that really sort of set the tone for what's happening in the world.

#Pascal

The things that are driving global politics and global developments. And one of them is what you called in your essay the hegemonic logic. How do you make sense of that? And you gave a very nice quote at the very beginning, right? That was so... that's actually very famous in our quarters of the internet, by Keith Kellogg, right? He was saying, "If you can defeat a strategic enemy not using any U.S. troops, you are at the acme of professionalism." Maybe you want to take it from there.

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, and there's another quote that I think maybe I should have had in the article, and that's from Daniel Ellsberg. He did an interview concerning his book, *The Doomsday Machine*, and there he talks about the use of nuclear weapons. And my article is a lot about nuclear weapons and the logic of nuclear weapons and how they're employed to enforce this hegemonic logic. And in this interview about his book, he says that the nuclear weapons are being used like a pistol during a robbery. You don't want to shoot, but you use it for threats.

And he named several different locations when nuclear weapons were used, like the Berlin Crisis, Vietnam, Taiwan. But he said there's almost—he had identified 25 instances when nuclear weapons had been used to get political aims, and mostly outside the view of the public. So this is something that's done very much in secret. And that concerns this, because Daniel Ellsberg, he was a nuclear planner. He worked at the Pentagon and he was in the highest level of escalation planning, so to say.

#Pascal

But what about this logic, then, that you want to set up a system under which you can dominate globally, but without having to say so, right? Without having to make it obvious to everybody. Can you say how you see that developing?

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, it's like a secret empire. So after colonialism was officially abandoned, you had this secret empire that's very much ruled by financial instruments, and you got this economic hitman model where you put countries in debt, and if they don't comply, strange things start to happen. And if it's not enough with covert operations, the U.S. Army rolls in, and then you have to have a pretext for that operation. So, I mean, you were talking to Alex Krainer. I like his analysis very much. And I think it's the City of London, Wall Street, that's the center of the system, so to speak. And again, it's enforced by military means.

And I don't think that these guys, they won't let go. They will try everything before they let this power slip through their fingers. And of course, we can see this now with BRICS, what's happening with China, what's happening with Russia and the Ukraine war and everything. But my thesis in this article is that they're going to try to use nuclear weapons, rather not maybe shooting them off, but using them as a threat. And I don't know how much you want me to go into the prehistory of this, but I base very much of my writing on Ola Tunander's works. And he wrote a very interesting piece that's called, and that you can find on his Substack.

From U.S. horizontal escalation to Russian escalatory dominance, if I remember correctly. And in that piece, he puts forward, I think, almost an alternative explanation of how the Cold War ended, because he says that the thing that really turned the military balance was the American very, very quiet attack submarines that could sort of tail the Russian nuclear submarines, and in that way put in danger the Soviet second-strike capability. And so the logic of MAD sort of collapsed. It collapsed, yeah. And that's why the Russians backed down. And so I think that even though on the diplomatic or political stage, maybe they didn't really understand what was happening.

Like Jack Matlock, when he talks about this, he said it was our work as diplomats and all the agreements we made that convinced the Soviets to back down. But I think maybe that's—I'm sure that's part of the true story. But I think this, this what happened behind the scenes with this nuclear war threat game is very much understated when we try to understand what happened. And therefore, in the eyes of the military planners and the neocons, they really thought and had reason to think that they won the Cold War in this logic. And they had the right to the spoils. And the spoils they were picking during the '90s when they had Yeltsin in power in Russia and they looted what was left of the Soviet resources.

#Pascal

Hey, just a very quick note. The best way to support this channel is by signing up for my free Substack. You can also help with a paid subscription there, or you can get some of our new merch on NeutralityStudies.com. Links below. See you there. You know, we're seeing currently something very similar going on again because the nuclear threat is currently proliferating. Not because Iran is working on creating a bomb. To the contrary, Iran has the most consistent track record in saying we

don't want to do that, but because the so-called nuclear umbrella is being spread all over Europe. And we've seen your country, Sweden, we see Finland, and now also the Baltic states agreeing to station nuclear weapons.

And Ola Thunander explained in that podcast that you mentioned that the nuclear umbrella was never meant as an umbrella to keep the nukes away. It was the umbrella under which the nukes would be used if push comes to shove. The use of tactical nukes would happen in Germany, it would happen in Poland, it would happen in these isolated places so that, you know, all-out strategic nuclear war between Moscow and Washington wouldn't take place. Right. So this is an immediate threat. And for the longest time, Sweden, Finland, Norway, too, actually understood that you should not open yourself to this nuclear escalation. And now they are doing that. How are you witnessing that currently, sitting in Stockholm, this nuclear discourse at home?

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, that's a very good question. And just to hammer in the point on this nuclear umbrella, as long as the logic of MAD was in effect, the Americans weren't going to attack the Soviet Union directly. And during that era, you had plans for attacking Soviet invaders in Europe using nuclear weapons directly, and to stop Soviet bombers going for Britain with nuclear weapons over Norway. So the nuclear battle was supposed to be in continental Europe. That's right. So what you can see now is that Sweden has this DCA agreement. It's a bilateral agreement with the U.S. All Nordic countries have it.

Sweden does not have a clause against nuclear weapons on Swedish territory. And we hear more and more discussions about it. For example, French nuclear weapons being shared with Germany. And I think there are discussions. I don't know how far they have gone, but there are discussions and ideas are being floated about having French nuclear weapons here too, if I remember correctly. And there's, there's like a campaign of talking down the threat of Russian nuclear weapons. So it's almost treacherous to talk about this as a real threat.

#Pascal

Oh, is it? Is there a social— is there a public media campaign to say, like, no, no, Russian nukes are not dangerous, not dangerous?

#Mattias Forsgren

The phrase is like, "Putin's nuclear bluff," and stuff like that. And I think that's pretty scary because I can see Russia using nuclear weapons. And the discussion in Russia, most famously from Sergei Karaganov, is that we need to put the fear of nuclear weapons into the Europeans again. And I can see the logic from the Russian side that they want to preemptively sort of escalate the deterrence.

#Pascal

And I mean, the Nordic countries and Scandinavia, you are split into several countries, of course, but there's this kind of—there's an identity, right? There's a Scandinavian identity. And that Scandinavian identity, to me, for the longest time during the Cold War, actually kind of tried to somehow strike a balance. I mean, again, with Finland and Sweden basically neutral, with Norway, yes, a member of NATO, but always having limits to what it would allow NATO to do. And all of that seems to be out the window. And it seems to be a completely different paradigm. Can you talk a little bit about how you perceive that paradigm shift happening and what the current, like, perception in Scandinavia in general is about how to confront Russia?

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, I sort of credit the brilliance of this propaganda machine for the turning of opinion in Sweden. And this goes way back. I know you know about this. In the 1980s, we had the submarine incidents in Stockholm Archipelago. And before this happened, there was a small, or a clear minority in Sweden that saw the Soviet Union as a threat, around 20–25%. In just a couple of years, that figure had risen to over 80% that saw Russia as a clear threat. And now we know it wasn't Soviet submarines. There were never Soviet submarines inside the archipelago. Maybe they crossed the border far out, but never in there. There's no proof whatsoever there were any submarines, apart from this down in southern Sweden, but that's a different story.

So, as a... Whiskey on the Rocks, yeah, yeah. So, and then we have had this campaign, and of course it accelerated when Russia invaded Ukraine in February. And, well, everyone has seen this, how this conflict has been portrayed. And we have cancelled diplomacy, right? I and Mats Nilsson, another analyst in the Dissident Club, we interviewed, shortly after the war started, Sven Hirdman. He was the Swedish ambassador to the Soviet Union in Moscow for 12 years. In the latter part of his stay in Moscow, he was the most senior ambassador from any country in Moscow. So he went to all the meetings. And he was appalled about how diplomacy had been cancelled. And, well, we've all seen people like Harald Kujat, the chief. What's his title?

#Pascal

Harald Kujat was the top of the Bundeswehr in Germany. He became the head of NATO, the military head of NATO, not the political head. He was the general, the four-star general responsible for NATO, yeah.

#Mattias Forsgren

And if you listen to him and how he describes the background to the Ukraine war, how it was provoked, how we sort of went over all Russian red lines and so forth. I mean, he's a dissident today. And he's not admitted into the big media programs. It doesn't reach the mainstream public. So it's a campaign that's leading us to war.

#Pascal

And it's a quite systematic campaign that is trying to prepare Europe for war, and Scandinavia as the northern flank of that. What are you seeing in, like, everyday messaging? You know, because war is usually not a popular policy, right? War needs to be sold. War needs to be PR-manufactured. The Germans, the Nazis, knew that, and the Americans know it too, and the Europeans know it as well. What is currently being done to massage the idea that war with Russia will be fine into the minds of the Swedish population?

#Mattias Forsgren

I mean, it's discussed on a very shallow level, and it's portrayed as a threat that Russia is going to invade, and we have to protect ourselves. We have to prepare to defend ourselves. And I think it's more on that level. I mean, for example, I know someone who works in the bureaucracy in Sweden, in the municipalities, and there you have these civil defense people that are responsible for civil defense. And when they're talking to the staff in the bureaucracy, they're saying that, well, Sweden, we have to prepare because we're going to have a support role to Finland, and Finland is going to be a frontline state. So the war, according to the messaging that's going out in the Swedish bureaucracy now, Sweden is going to be a supporter of the war that's coming to Finland. And that's pretty scary. That's pretty sick. And on that level, I don't hear that messaging in the media so far. But that's like the internal discussion.

#Pascal

Are there any discussions actually on whether it was wise to give up Swedish and Finnish neutrality, which there was? I mean, at this point... Four years ago, the whole discourse was, we need to join NATO to be safe, right? Neutrality cannot keep us out of war. And by now, we are inside the idea that, well, war is inevitable. We got to prepare for war because war will come, and then, well, we need to be able to fight. Isn't that the opposite to the idea why these two states had to join NATO?

#Mattias Forsgren

No, there's not very much discussion, and even less about the DCA agreement.

#Pascal

The agreement that allows the U.S. to station so many troops, right?

#Mattias Forsgren

That's the base agreement. Seventeen bases that the U.S. can use for their own purposes, and, uh, like American soldiers, they can't be put in front of a Swedish court. They're under U.S. law in Sweden, so, I mean, it's very, very problematic. It's like the occupation, uh, sort of, what do you call it, occupation treaty, sort of.

#Pascal

Yeah, an occupation treaty and a colonial treaty. I mean, these people, they don't even owe you sales tax. So if they go and buy any kind of goods in Sweden, they can take the receipt and then demand that your government give them back the 10% of whatever sales tax you have on there. Not even there they contribute. I mean, nothing. It's like a foreign power that doesn't owe you anything, but that can do anything it wants inside Sweden. Even if they go and kill somebody on the street, the person who does that cannot be held to account by Swedish police.

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah. And then the question arises: how is this possible, that so much is happening that is completely contrary to European interests? I mean, a very symbolic or, well, important part of this is the bombing or the blowing up of the Nord Stream. I mean, the Nord Stream, that was something that was pushed very, very hard by German industry. It was the heavy German industry that understood that they needed this gas to be competitive on the world market. And you had reasonable German politicians that understood this. And the Germans pushed it through, even though, as I understood it, the Russians were very skeptical because they saw that this was going to irritate the Americans very much. And there we go.

The Americans blew it up. And anyone that seriously looks into this, what happened, and again, Ola Tenander has done some of the foremost work on this, to really look into what happened with Nord Stream. And of course, it was the Americans that did it. And then you have to put all these facts together and try to think: what is the strategy here? Are the Europeans just stupid? And is this all by chance? Or is there a strategy? And the hypothesis that I play with in this article is that—well, actually, this is what we see—is a calculated plan from the American side. It's a continuity of power. It's the same planners, it's the same logic that governs today as did before when Dennis Ellsberg was working in the Pentagon.

Only there are some differences. The US isn't the unipolar power anymore. They haven't got this escalatory dominance anymore as they had in the late '80s and early '90s. In the 2000s, after Putin came back to power, Russia built up their nuclear forces. They built quite some marines. They built these Poseidon nuclear drones, and they built all these hypersonic missiles. So according to people

that I think understand these things, like Ola Tenander and Ted Postol, the Russians have the escalatory dominance now. But still, these powers that be, wherever they sit, this neocon City of London mix, whatever it is, I think they're doing everything they can to try to find sort of a fix to this problem.

And if they don't have the escalatory dominance, how could they effect a really credible nuclear threat? How could they use this nuclear gun against the Russians? Well, they can't pull it themselves, so they delegate it to the Europeans. That's what I think we are seeing. We're seeing a Ukrainification of Europe. Maybe firstly, I guess they're going to try to push European young people into the meat grinder, maybe open up a new front: Baltic countries, Finland, obviously, seems to be one of the options, and try to sort of unbalance Russia in that way. And if that doesn't work in the direction of where this is going, well, you've got the nuclear alternative. Firstly, of course, just threatening, and who knows what happens after that.

#Pascal

It's extremely dangerous and very, very irresponsible. And I see it like that too, especially because we hear that kind of planning coming from the United States, not only from the think tanks, but, as you correctly said, from people who are also in the top ranks, levels of government. Which one of these policies do you think is most crucial that allows this to happen? And in your view, why is it that Russia is at least partially playing along? I'm still flabbergasted that Russia is willing to go along with the narrative that the United States is just a neutral bystander who's trying to mediate between, you know, conflict parties. That still doesn't make complete sense to me. How do you understand it?

#Mattias Forsgren

I don't understand it. I find it very, very puzzling. But, of course, we don't know what is said behind the scenes. So, I mean, what they're saying out in the open might be completely contrary to what is said, I mean, when they're really talking business to each other. And this might be some way just to keep the public calm. I mean, for Russia, when people start to get really, really scared, I mean, you don't know what kind of ideas will pop up in their heads. And for Russia now, it's very important to keep their population motivated and creative and hopeful. So maybe this playing along with this U.S. mediation game is sort of a way to just keep the machine going. I don't know.

#Pascal

It's still puzzling to me, but again, I have to find a couple of Russian colleagues to talk to, to kind of get that. The best explanation is that the Russians are still working on a, well, working relationship with the United States. And in order to have that, you kind of go along with one part of the narrative on some level. But what then is the mood in Sweden in general? If you talk to friends, colleagues, and also people who are not very politically informed or ambitious, right? Are people getting fatalistic in Sweden too about the inevitability of war with Russia?

#Mattias Forsgren

You know, I have a very limited sense of this. Most people don't want to talk about it. With my ordinary colleagues at work, I have some people I can talk to, and they share my frustration and fear. But most people just don't want to talk about it. If you try to sort of steer the conversation into this territory, it's like, "Ah, did you see the football match?" You know, it's just, no, you can't talk about it.

#Pascal

Do you think it's escapism, as in, "I don't want to think these dark thoughts," or, "I don't want to think it through"? Or is it this kind of, "Ah, you know, it's not important. Why would I care?"

#Mattias Forsgren

I don't know. Or maybe they just know my opinion, and they don't share it, and they don't want to discuss it because they know it's just going to be, you know, confrontation. Yeah.

#Pascal

I mean, very, very possible to a lot of people. And the people that I know from Sweden are all very polite, so rather not to speak about something you disagree with than to have an open shouting match like the Germans would do when they get to it. Is that a bit it? No. Yeah, I think so.

#Mattias Forsgren

And it works. Sometimes it's a good option just to let things be, and with time it will sort itself out or just be forgotten. But I think the situation now, we should be discussing this because it's very dangerous. And as I write in this piece, I don't think that the politicians we have are working for us anymore. And I understand that many people would say that sounds very far-fetched. But as we mentioned earlier, when you look at these political murders of both politicians and important businessmen like Enrico Mattei and Herrhausen, and you've got Aldo Moro and Olof Palme, of course, all these political murders on people that wanted to have a good relation with Moscow.

So, and now we can see that so many of these politicians, they have a background from, well, these American think tanks, Atlantic Council, and all this is very much built into the system. I did an interview with a person, Ulf Svensson, that worked at the Foreign Ministry under Olof Palme. And he was preparing Olof Palme's meeting with Gorbachev in April 1986. And he told me that he had heard that in the Foreign Department there were people that were working with the unspeakable, or the unsaleable. And this was people that were working very close to the British and the Americans and

were working to have Sweden move to NATO integration. So this is something that's been going on for a long, long time in Sweden. And now we're sort of reaching this peak U.S. integration with this DCA agreement.

#Pascal

Yeah, you can't get much further integrated without actually becoming a territory of the United States. And that's actually not what they want. You don't want to fight on your own territory, right? You want to fight through nice proxy arrangements. And again, the epitome of statesmanship is figuring out how to make foreign populations willing to fight the fight you want them to.

#Mattias Forsgren

I listened to an interview with Michael Hudson here the other day, and he was with Nima. And he mentioned a speech by Trump. It was the 1st of October, and Trump said that all these foreign countries, they've been living off us, exporting a lot to us and making a lot of money. But now I can turn off the energy tap. And he was boasting about this. And Michael Hudson said that, well, now the U.S. has positioned themselves into a situation where this energy weapon is very, very powerful. I mean, they took the Venezuelan oil. For a decade or so, they ramped up their own energy production with fracking and drilling offshore. But if you look at the actual reserves the U.S. has, it's not very much. So they're really boosting the energy they got left. They're doing everything. They invested very heavily to make themselves energy independent.

And then we see this happening in the Gulf, where they provoke this war. And you have Iran and Israel and the U.S. to sort of destroy the energy infrastructure, close down the Hormuz Strait. And now, recently, we've seen that the U.S. has been pressuring its allies to let go of their reserves, which makes us even more vulnerable. So we've become extremely dependent on the Americans for our economy just working at all. So they could very, very easily just turn the taps. Say this problem goes on in the Gulf for half a year more, and the Americans say, "Well, sorry, boys, we need this energy for ourselves," and we cut ourselves off from the Russians, and, well, the European economy will just stop. So the Americans got incredible leverage over Europe now. And Michael Hudson said, well, this is for the U.S. to demand that EU countries take part in this war against Russia and Iran.

#Pascal

I mean, I get the idea, but the thing is, if they do turn off the energy faucet, the risk they will run is that the Europeans will look for it anywhere else that they can, and that's the time you might start developing, you know, options with the Indians or getting something from somewhere, or even this one remaining pipeline of Nord Stream, although that is probably the least of all options. Then again, the Americans are out loud thinking about the option of buying Russian oil and then selling it through that pipeline to the Europeans as, like, American oil. So, I mean, there is a lot of thinking going on on the very highest level of how to even still increase the leverage that this economic

lifeline is giving. And Europe is just at, in any imaginable scenario, Europe is at the weakest and worst kind of position of this whole thing. Why do you think it is that that is not public discourse in Europe at the moment?

#Mattias Forsgren

I mean, it's not up for discussion in mainstream media. Yeah, because mainstream media is controlled. But as you see with the AfD in Germany, there is a lively discussion in parts of Europe where people understand this. Slovakia—I mean, you saw what happened in Romania when, what was he called? What's his name?—when they voted for this president, they understood. And in Bulgaria, many people understand that you need a good relation with Russia. But these powers that control the system, they're so powerful. So they just block out this discussion from polite society, so to say.

#Pascal

But for you in Stockholm, when you go out, are there any visible signs of energy shortage? Like, are there any visible signs when you go out to say, like, "Oh yeah, I now feel that the squeeze is, um, starting to hit me personally"?

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah. I mean, there's no shortages so far, but the prices—I mean, before the election, they made the prices go down with all sorts of, I don't know, I don't know how they did it, but by tax breaks and stuff like that. But now the price for petrol is almost up to 20 crowns a liter, and before the election it was under 15. Diesel prices are going up. Food prices are going up like never before. So people see that the economy is suffering. But I mean, Sweden is doing pretty well, I guess, compared to many other countries. I've got a close relative that was down in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland on a business trip. And last year when he was traveling, people were saying, "Well, the German economy, it's heading the wrong way." Now people are saying, "The German economy, it's over. It's finished."

#Pascal

So yeah, I hear that too. I have this discussion on my channel quite a bit, of how dramatic things are for these largest economies within the EU, and the other one, of course, being France now having all of these mass protests. And I think I haven't heard of mass protests in Sweden yet, Finland or Norway neither, and that's maybe a reflection of the fact that the Nordic countries are doing better. But the economic hurt is definitely around there inside the European Union, isn't it?

#Mattias Forsgren

In Finland, Finland is pretty bad, as I understand it, especially the people that live from, yeah, the Finnish economy, especially the eastern parts that were trading a lot with Russia. Yeah.

#Pascal

Just a lot of self-inflicted wounds, but still the narrative that, you know, there needs to be reconciliation with Russia and so on gets immediately slapped as kind of defeatism and being unpatriotic and hating Ukraine, right? It's still that stupid narrative, even in 2026. Yeah. Well...

#Pascal

No, I mean, like, do you see any signs that the narrative overall is changing, or that people on the ground are starting to have, like, other concepts about this? Because in Germany, we do see the rise of the AfD. In France, Marine Le Pen's Front National is, like, now set to probably win, if not completely, then at least big in next year's election. Is there similar discontent or, like, political reflections of that discontent also happening in Sweden, Finland, Norway?

#Mattias Forsgren

I don't see it. I mean, I'm living in sort of the underground, and we have always been discussing this, but I don't see the mainstream taking any impression from this. But, I mean, maybe Gaza. Maybe you have a little shift there. People are starting to understand how completely insane and terrible the situation is in Israel. But I don't see that really affecting the discussion on Ukraine or our relation with the US. I mean, in Sweden, I think Sweden was one of the countries that had least confidence in Trump. Everyone hated Trump. Everyone was completely convinced that Trump is the new orange Hitler, but still no protest against the DCA or NATO or anything. I mean, it's kind of cognitive dissonance that's very difficult to understand.

#Pascal

It's kind of the Europeans at the moment, I see that throughout, right? Everything bad that's happening that's coming from the US is personalized as done by Donald Trump. Whereas, you know, overall, the United States is a force for good and a force for freedom and democracy. And if just Trump was gone and Biden was back, then we would, you know, the good United States would be here again. So it's just temporary. It's that kind of schizophrenia or Stockholm syndrome.

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, I guess it really is the Stockholm syndrome. I think that's a very good explanation. I mean, when you're dependent on someone and that person does something terrible, you can see this in

families where there are abuse cases, and everyone in the family, they sort of group together to protect the abuser and to shut down the abused. And I think that's very much the kind of psychology that's happening now. It's very unhealthy.

#Pascal

A European general mass Stockholm syndrome. So the question would be—and yeah, I want to ask you that because you're sitting there—how to get Europe out of Stockholm?

#Pascal

How do you treat that?

#Mattias Forsgren

I don't know. We're having this discussion. I mean, you hope that maybe this will push it forward somehow, but I don't think it makes much of a difference. Well, if I should hold some hope, it's about the Chinese. I really hope—I mean, the Chinese, they've got leverage. They've got these rare earth metals and all this technology that the military-industrial complex in Europe and the U.S. are dependent on. And I hope the Chinese are trying to sort of steer this development somehow. Actually, we in the Dissident Club, we were invited to the Chinese ambassador here in Stockholm for a three-hour meeting, and we had a discussion very much like this. I presented my article to the Chinese ambassador, and I met him shortly after, and he read it and said he enjoyed it.

So, I mean, we're trying to push this understanding of things on different fronts. So, yeah. Yeah. I mean, Swedish industrialists, they understand the importance of good relations with China. And Swedish industrialists are active in China. They say that their biggest problem is all the prejudice against China that is back in Sweden, in journalism, in politics, and even at the headquarters of Swedish companies here. So, I mean, for our own development, our own well-being, we really need to have good relations with China and Russia. They don't want to invade us. I don't think so. I don't see any proof of that. But I see sort of this megalomaniac, psychopathic financial system that wants to keep this control, has a backstory of 500 years of colonialism. And I think this is the real problem.

It's a mental problem in the governing elite in the Western world, especially in Britain and the U.S. So, yeah, maybe the Chinese can buy them off somehow, I don't know, find an off-ramp for them. Because as I write in the article, I think these people are very scared because they are criminals. They've done so many criminal acts, regime change operations all over the world. They started wars with lies. Everyone knows about this, but these people go unpunished. And you had this person from the Chinese Foreign Ministry who spoke out in October 2022, I think, and he listed all these crimes, many of these crimes, and he said that these crimes have gone unpunished, but that won't be forever. So, I mean, the Chinese have spoken up against this. So I think these people are very worried to lose control because they don't know what will happen then.

#Pascal

Yeah, yeah. No, and the thing is, the crazy thing is that if they do not change course pretty soon, they will lose control. I mean, that's the only thing we know by now, because if it continues in this direction, it's just steering into a catastrophe. And industrialists and so on, and financial elites, you know, wars are really good for only a tiny fraction of them. The rest of them will lose out too.

#Mattias Forsgren

I was trying to convince my acquaintance who got these contacts with industrialists in China. And I asked him, why don't you suggest that these people write sort of op-eds in the media? Why don't they try to promote their narrative of China? And he said, they don't dare. I don't really know what they're afraid of. But they seem to think that if they speak up, they will be punished.

#Pascal

Well, it's the self-reinforcing mechanism, right, within what you outlined in the beginning: the opinion corridor of the sayable and unsayable. And it has this feedback loop, especially on people that maybe understand what's going on. But, you know, you don't bite the hand that feeds you, otherwise it's dangerous. Yeah. That's how society keeps itself in check, unfortunately. But I am very glad for people like you, Matthias, who do speak out and share their analysis with others. People who want to follow you, who want to know more about the Dissident Club, where should they go?

#Mattias Forsgren

Well, just Google the Dissident Club or the Dissident Pod. I write mostly on Facebook, and I got my Substack, but I haven't got too much there. A few articles, but yeah, I think that's it. And thank you, Pascal, for the work that you're doing.

#Pascal

Well, I mean, I'm glad we can. So as long as we have these platforms, we should use them. So everybody, you will find Matthias Forsgren under his name on Substack. And I will, of course, put the links to his work and the Dissident Club into the description box below. Do click it, do follow, and do share your thoughts on this, especially if you have a couple of observations on the themes that we tried to touch upon.

#Mattias Forsgren

Yeah, I would love to have some discussion on the article. If the logic is faulty somewhere, please give me feedback. So, yeah.

#Pascal

Yeah, reach out. We can have a discussion, and reach out directly to Matthias, especially if you are also somewhere up there in Scandinavia. I'm sure you could have very good discussions. Matthias Forsgren, thank you so much for your time today.