

NATO's Sick Plans To Sacrifice Europe | Rupp & Tunander

The "Nuclear Umbrella" always was a sick joke in which the umbrella itself would do the dirty work of exterminating the place it was supposed to "keep clean" of enemy forces. Today I speak with Ola Tunander, professor emeritus at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, and Rainer Rupp, former NATO analyst and East German spy, about the real meaning of the US nuclear umbrella. We discuss deterrence, tactical nuclear plans in Germany and Norway, Sweden's old bomb debate, Pershing missiles, Able Archer, and the risk that Europe could again become the main nuclear battlefield.

Links: Ola Tunander Substack: <https://olatunander.substack.com> Rainer Rupp: <https://www.rainerrupp.de> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Merch:

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#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. My name is Pascal Lottaz, and today I have the very great pleasure of having with me two great brains: Ola Tunander, a professor emeritus at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, and Rainer Rupp, a former NATO top analyst and spy for East Germany. Ola, Rainer, welcome.

#Tunander

Thank you.

#Pascal

My pleasure. See you again. It's wonderful having you both here because I've talked to both of you separately, and actually recently, Rainer, you and I had a talk, and then Ola reacted to that and actually wrote an article on his Substack about a topic that we should expand on today: the US nuclear umbrella. Does it exist? And you made the point in this article that a lot of the beliefs about what this umbrella is or is not are actually quite mistaken. I would love to go further into that, but now let me maybe ask Rainer. Let's start with you. Where does the idea of the nuclear umbrella come from? When you were working at NATO, how important was that as a subject?

#Rupp

Let's start with the first question. Where does it come from? The nuclear umbrella is intimately, I mean, interwoven with the idea of deterrence. So if I am hit, then I'll hit you back. I have the escalation domination. I hit you back if necessary with a nuclear weapon. Now, we also have to distinguish here nuclear weapons as the weapon of last resort, nuclear weapons as a political weapon for blackmail, like Israel has been doing for quite a while already, and a nuclear weapon as a deterrent weapon so that the other person does not, I mean the opponent, doesn't get the idea of using his own nuclear weapon.

Now, this type or aspect of deterrence worked well during the Cold War, relatively well, although there were a number of efforts, primarily from the United States, from U.S. warmongers who were dissatisfied with this concept because it was like a corset around their offensive ideas in other areas. So the original idea, I mean, in the 1960s, in the early 1960s, when there was not even a remote possibility of defending against nuclear attacks on each side, the situation developed under the term MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction. If you hit me, I'll hit you back, and we both are dead because there were sufficient weapons on each side. And the idea of hitting all of the enemy in the first strike, that was originally a fear. As a result, each side doubled and tripled their nuclear capacities and attack weapons.

So in case there is a first try for a first decapitation strike, you still have enough to destroy the enemy. And as a result, also the so-called triad began to exist or was created. You had nuclear weapons based on submarines, you had nuclear weapons based on land, and you had nuclear weapons carried by air. So if one fails, the other still could. So the idea to destroy the world was quite perfected to the point. Now, the problem was, of course, in this particular case, the Europeans, who had felt originally, when the Americans dominated, were the only ones with nuclear weapons. And we were the only ones for a long time with the very advanced miniaturization of nuclear weapons, down to just one kiloton, etc. You remember, I think Hiroshima had 20 kilotons. Yeah, if my memory—I'm getting old too. Fifteen, okay.

#Pascal

I mean, just to get the idea.

#Rupp

One kiloton is... Pardon? Fifteen, I mean, was Hiroshima.

#Tunander

Fifteen, I think.

#Rupp

Fifteen, fifteen. Yeah, anyway, to get the idea. So the Europeans began to feel... I mean, as long as the Americans had that dominance, the Europeans felt quite safe under this deterrence umbrella. That was when the term "umbrella" was actually coined. And then a bit later, when the Russians were drawing equal, the deterrence umbrella, I mean the nuclear umbrella, got some holes, especially when—what was it called—the START I was signed, or what was the original... I mean, the balance was there, and the Europeans, especially the Germans—I must not forget the German special situation—especially the Germans were very concerned that in the case of a conventional conflict, NATO, or NATO being the United States, would not use nuclear weapons in case the conventional forces would collapse.

So here we already see something which originally didn't exist, which was: if conventional defense fails, you use nuclear weapons. That was already another lowering of the threshold for nuclear weapons in this development. And with the miniaturization of nuclear weapons, this threshold became even lower and lower. So the Germans were thinking, oh, wow, if there is really a nuclear—I mean, if there's really a conventional conflict which we cannot control... And I could actually quote here from MC161, on the cover—on the first page of this cosmic top secret, very voluminous document, consisting of over 40 documents, quoted about Soviet strategy, that the Soviet Union, or the Soviet military doctrine, is not based on an attack on Western Europe.

But if there is an armed conflict, and if there is an attack against socialist territory, we have to make sure that the war is not being fought and the destruction will not happen on socialist territory. That's, of course, from the experience of the Great War, the Second World War, where the western part of the Soviet Union, I mean, all the way up to Moscow, was completely destroyed. I mean, that—I mean, so that should not happen. And in that respect, we will just steamroll the Europeans.

#Rupp

In this situation, the German leadership began thinking about, well, what is actually the nuclear deterrence against such a conventional attack, if it happens? And we had, right after, in the early 1950s, the Americans had the Honest John missile deployed in Germany, and that was a nuclear-armed missile with a warhead that could vary and couldn't be too big, because this nuclear-armed missile had a maximum reach of, I guess, 25 kilometers—25 kilometers at the maximum payload of, I think it was, I noted it down here, hold on—a maximum payload of, oh, come on, of 2 to 30 kilotons. I mean, it had a payload, the smallest 2 kilotons up to 30 kilotons, and a reach of 15.4 miles, meaning 25 kilometers.

Now, well, if you did, if you, you know what it means. Then in 1960, 1961, an upgraded version of the Honest John was introduced with a maximum reach of 48 to 50 kilometers. It had a stronger engine, I mean, a stronger rocket engine. And it was, let me see how many kilotons it actually had. It could carry up to 100 kilotons. But then, at 100 kilotons, it couldn't reach the maximum range of,

what was it, 50 kilometers. So it was actually very dangerous for the missile company to operate something like that. But that was the standard of the Americans, the standard of the American and Bundeswehr nuclear equipment, with the difference between U.S. forces and the Bundeswehr.

The Bundeswehr could not use the nuclear weapons as they liked. They always needed American consent and the key to arm each individual nuclear weapon. But all in all, there were over 700 of these tactical nuclear warheads deployed with appropriate Honest John missiles. And it continued, I think, into the 1970s. Hold on, I just have to have a look. The Lance nuclear-armed missile was then introduced, and it had a reach of 120 to 130 kilometers, again with a maximum payload of 100 kilotons. And this missile, the Lance, was introduced in 1972. And the last Lances, actually...

#Rupp

Were decommissioned from Germany after 1995.

#Pascal

Oh my God. But may I just ask, I mean, that means the whole strategy of this nuclear umbrella, of these nuclear missiles, was to reach at best East Germany and then cause fallout there. And Ola, I think you write about exactly that, right? The whole point was that if it ever came to a nuclear escalation, it would mean the annihilation of Germany and basically Central Europe.

#Rupp

And Eastern Europe, yeah? If we pushed the Russians back to East Germany and to the border, I mean, the Russians wouldn't disappear. Then Poland and all those good American friends, all those who are good American friends nowadays, wouldn't even exist if it actually happened.

#Tunander

It's clear that they would attack Polish territory by attacking the second echelon of Soviet forces coming in and so on. But still, the first attacks would be against German territory, against East German territory, but also against West German territory, because you will start, supposedly, you will start a war when the Soviet forces enter West Germany. So the destruction would be primarily in Germany.

#Rupp

You haven't even discussed, I haven't even mentioned the so-called nuclear mines, which were all stationed about 30 kilometers away from the, also U.S.-controlled, German–East German border, at a distance of about 30 kilometers from the border.

#Tunander

And also, I spoke with a former Commander-in-Chief for BALTOPS, the Baltic Approaches Command in NATO. And he said that they had special forces with rucksacks carrying nuclear weapons. And my impression is that they wouldn't go very far. There is a limitation to how far you could run with your nuclear weapon and if you would be able to run back, so to speak. So it was a suicide policy. And I remember that Sweden was developing nuclear weapons in the 50s and early 60s. And it was stopped, I think, sometime in the early 60s. But actually, that was formally, I think, in '72. But the development was stopped in the early 60s, I think.

And the argument from one of the most responsible officials in the Defense Ministry in Sweden, he argued also that the nuclear umbrella — that the United States would cover Sweden with this nuclear umbrella — and then Sweden gave up its nuclear weapons program. So that was the idea. But still, in Norway, you had the same logic. You couldn't. And Reiner described, you know, in your last interview, that none of the NATO exercises had attacks on the Soviet Union, of these Vintex exercises. And that was... And of course, the Americans knew that if you attack the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union will attack you back in the U.S. And the Americans preferred to have the fight in Europe.

And the same was, of course, in North Norway, because Finnmark County, in the very far north of Norway, was the part that the Soviet Union would occupy in case of a major war, because they were afraid of attacks on the Kola Peninsula bases. The very strategic bases on the Kola Peninsula — the submarine bases, the air force bases, the missile bases — all of these were extremely vital for the Soviet Union. So they would go into Finnmark County. And, of course, this is part of Norway, and Norway would try to defend against a Soviet attack on Finnmark. But they did not have the major defense line there. The major defense line on the Norwegian side was close to Troms, actually, the next county.

So they knew that the Soviets would take Finnmark, actually. They would not be able to defend, really. But the nuclear weapons would be used against the Soviet troops entering Finnmark. And I have a friend who was up with some French defense specialists, and they looked at this. You know, Finnmark is a huge area with almost no population at all. And they said this is ideal for the use of nuclear weapons. But the problem was, of course, the Norwegians were not too happy that the nuclear weapons were going to be used in Norway — especially not the Lapps.

#Pascal

But this is quite important, actually. I did some research also on the neutrals and the bomb, you know, and Sweden is not the only one. The Swiss were also building a bomb in the 50s and 60s, or they were working on it. And there are several factors for why they gave it up. But one of the important ones was when the military in the mid-60s to late 60s started understanding that the military doctrine of Switzerland — of using its weapons only on Swiss soil — the doctrine was, we

will never use it outside of Swiss soil, only inside Switzerland. That means that if you develop nuclear weapons, you would nuke your own country.

The point was that until the mid-60s, people didn't quite understand what it meant if you nuke a place, right? That you basically permanently destroy that area, and the nuclear fallout — what it would do. So actually, the early Cold War nuclear umbrella was, in that sense, built around the idea, no, no, nuclear weapons are the next level of conventional weapons, right? And we will use them against the approaching armies. And that's not really an umbrella, is it? That's more a counter-strike capability, right?

#Tunander

And even more clear, you could say, is when you look at the Nike missiles — those were air defense missiles. You had the Nike batteries around Oslo, you had them around Copenhagen, you had them in Germany, you had them down in Holland and Belgium. And they had conventional... In Norway, at least, they had conventional warheads. But that was for peacetime. It was just for pretending to defend Oslo. And you told the politicians that you wanted, and also on the military side, you told a lot of military people that these missiles were going to be used to defend Norway against Russian air attacks from the Soviet Union.

That was what one believed. And a friend of mine who was heading these missile systems in Norway and later became chief of military intelligence in Norway, Alfred Berg, he told me that, yeah, we had the storage for the nuclear weapons at these Nike batteries. And these were going to be used in wartime. So, I mean, you're just pretending that you're going to use conventional weapons, because the point with these Nike missiles was to take down the swarms of air bombers, the Soviet nuclear bombers going towards Britain.

And they were, you know, like birds, you know, they go many together, and one would believe that when you try to shoot them down, you shoot one or two, but most of them would pass by. But if you use nuclear weapons, you destroy all these swarms of Soviet nuclear bombers on their way to Britain. So it means that you shoot all these nuclear weapons up right above you, and the fallout will come on you. And it's... it's not ideal. And then I was thinking about this nuclear umbrella, that actually the rain with the radiation would come from inside the umbrella. So it's the opposite of what it's supposed to do, so to speak.

#Pascal

Reiner, I mean, this is pretty crazy, but I mean, this was the planning of NATO. I mean, weren't these people aware that they were actually talking about the nuclear destruction of Europe by building this kind of defense strategy?

#Rupp

I think they were aware that if it would happen, that would be it. But the...

#Rupp

In my first times when I was participating in the Wintex exercises, I was absolutely surprised that from the moment we, at the very first time for me, it was just one tactical nuke fell on Eastern Europe, then the exercise was finished.

#Tunander

Why? Why? Why?

#Rupp

I asked that. Nobody could answer me. One older soldier — I was still a young man — one of these older soldiers from the military commission, because in NATO headquarters, according to NATO, the dominance of the political part, we have civilians. Of course, as we are dealing with military issues, we also have a military committee for every country, a military staff, and also an international military staff in NATO headquarters itself. Military experts, and most of them, in fact, are either strategy experts or they're coming from military intelligence. And in the case of the people I worked with during Wintex in the current intelligence group, they were mostly from military intelligence. And the level was between lieutenant colonel or colonel; occasionally a general was there. But one of these older colleagues, when I asked him, I said, "Well, what else would be left to discuss?" "Let me finish." "Yeah."

#Pascal

As in, if one tactical nuke drops, then basically Europe is going to be destroyed anyway, so why would we even continue?

#Rupp

Because the Russians would hit back, so let's not discuss that. He didn't explain it in those words, but that's my interpretation. The more I learned in the following years about it, yes, it's very morose to think about the follow-up.

#Tunander

Even if Germany is destroyed, you could still live in France, for example. So it is pretty—but it was—I think that now, when people are discussing the nuclear umbrella, there's a lot of discussion about the nuclear umbrella, that if the U.S. does not really come to our help, then the French nuclear umbrella could possibly, and so on. But you think it is—it is really a kind of misunderstanding of the

difference in strength. France would be destroyed if you had a nuclear war between France and Russia. I mean, Russia has a little bit more territory than France. And France has quite a lot of people concentrated in different... It would be an enormous destruction. And you couldn't... So, in practical terms, it's impossible. Absolutely.

#Rupp

This is, in fact, the point. I mentioned originally three reasons for having nuclear weapons. One is the ultimate weapon, I mean, the weapon of last resort. If all fails, if your country is about to be annihilated anyway, or your state is to be annihilated. That is all, of course, a matter of perception of the political elites or of the people. Anyway, we're not discussing that. But in the case your state is about to be annihilated, you then show the opponent or the enemy that you're prepared to commit suicide, but you take him with you.

That's basically what the French and the Brits are doing, and that is basically what some German idiots are now trying to put into our heads, because you cannot—and having a French nuclear umbrella is absolutely idiotic—because if you don't trust the American umbrella, how can you trust the French to be prepared to commit suicide for the Bosch, which many French are still considering the Germans to be? Yeah? And no way. It was in that period of the deployment of the Pershing and Cruise missiles, early 1980s, the French also tried to bring themselves again more into the strategic discussion. Although militarily outside NATO—many people don't remember that—the French were still part of NATO. They were part of all the other branches of NATO, only not the integrated military planning, because de Gaulle introduced that no American soldier will fight under the command of a non-American.

#Tunander

No, French.

#Rupp

No French soldier. And so they were not in the integrated military planning. But they did want to bring themselves again more into the political and strategic discussion, also in view of the so-called nuclear military modernization. So they created a FAR, a Force Armée Rapide or something, a rapid deployment force that was supposed to go forward to the German border, and they tried to push that also into German and NATO planning. So being outside NATO planning but still wanting to have a back door to get in. And the commander of this was quite frequently at NATO too. And when I was in Paris on another matter, he invited me for lunch.

And I asked him, do you really think—because this force, Armée Rapide, also was supposed to be equipped with mobile tactical nuclear weapons—that was the idea, to be put forward on the GDR, on the German border. And I asked him, would you really ever think that the French would use nuclear

weapons in the defense of Germany? He said, no, I cannot imagine it, that will never happen. Why? I said, well, it would be only under one condition, which I cannot imagine will happen. That is, if French interests—French political, economic, cultural interests—are so interwoven with the Germans that you can't distinguish one from the other anymore. And that will never happen. And now they are thinking...

#Tunander

I was thinking about Northern Europe. And in the early 90s, we invited Soviets, or former Soviets, now Russian generals. One of them was heading the planning for the Leningrad Military District from '76 to '86, except for a couple of years when he was heading the forces in Afghanistan. His point was that the Soviets, to defend Leningrad, to defend the Kola bases, the Kola Peninsula, and to defend the communication in between—railways and all this—you had to take Finland and Finnmark in Norway. So the whole of Finland. The preparations for the Leningrad Military District forces were primarily for taking Finland, but one should not take Sweden and not Norway, actually, south or further west or south of Finnmark.

And that was the art, or they should try to destroy the bases, actually. And I asked him, but if Americans use Swedish air bases, which were part of the planning in the 1960s—to use Swedish air bases—and that was supposed to take place already from the very first day of the war. And he said that we would take out these Swedish bases and the Norwegian air bases. And of course, this was... You don't take out an air base with conventional weapons so easily, because you have to have a permanent bombing of these bases in that case, and you would lose very, very many bombers, bomber forces.

So it means that in practice they had to take out these bases with nuclear weapons. And so when Olof Palme came to power in '69, it seems that he had shied away from this policy. I mean, he understood that you make yourself into a target. And it was obvious that you had to avoid this kind of problem. The problem for the Americans and the British was that they needed Swedish territory. They needed Sweden as an unsinkable aircraft carrier to have air cover over the central front, to open up air defenses in the Baltic republics at the time, and to open up for the strategic air forces to hit Moscow and St. Petersburg, Leningrad.

So that was... So how do you do that? The Russians, or the Soviets, understood, of course, that if they attacked Sweden, the American Air Force would immediately come to Sweden. So they wouldn't attack Sweden. That was a problem. And of course, the Americans had to find a way for the Soviets to attack Sweden so they could use Swedish territory. And that was, I think, the major issue there — this submarine thing — that you were pretending it was Soviet submarines, and you went there with small Western submarines that they had had there for a long time, but they showed up.

#Rupp

To get to the Swedish air bases, they used Western submarines. Yes.

#Tunander

Yeah, but the problem was that it was not Soviet. I mean, it was a Soviet submarine, but actually, it was...

#Pascal

I must explain something here for the people listening, because this is an internal joke. Because, of course, Ola is the number one expert worldwide on the so-called submarine scare that developed in the 70s and then the 80s in Sweden, when there were submarine sightings in front of Sweden and everybody was, "Oh my God, oh my God, the Russians, the Russians." But it turns out most of these submarines, except for one at the very beginning probably, were actually, probably NATO submarines, in order to scare the Swedes, who were not part of NATO, into, you know, starting planning with NATO for those kinds of contingencies. I mean, this is kind of this internal joke here going on.

#Tunander

Yes, the Swedes had to adapt, and they didn't understand that what was important to defend was Britain and the United States, and the countries in between were less important, really. So it was, I mean, it's the same logic as when you come to the nuclear issue with the destruction of Germany, which was totally destroyed. And in this case, it would also be that the Swedish air bases would be destroyed by nuclear weapons.

And because the whole idea with the submarines was that you make the Swedes, I mean, firstly, a psychological operation in peacetime, but also in wartime—primarily in wartime—you would make the people believe that the British submarine that is coming in with special forces, which they always did actually, very secretly training with the stay-behinds, they would take out the political leadership or the military people who were not on board. And then, so you take out all these people—decapitation, you could say. And then, of course, Sweden would join the U.S. from one day to the other. So it's very efficient. And, of course, that was not very public, put it that way.

#Pascal

Rainer?

#Rupp

We, in the deterrent discussion, left out an important part of history because we went over Honest John to Lance, etc., but the Germans in particular were not very satisfied with that setup. And it was

Helmut Schmidt, who is considered to be one of the best German chancellors, who had the idea—and he had discussed it first also with Giscard d'Estaing and with Callaghan, his British colleague—that we need a new, modernized, medium-range U.S. nuclear weapon stationed in Europe. The NATO countries along the borders, with the capability of reaching Moscow and beyond. So, a medium-range missile of up to 5,000 kilometers. And it was this fear that things could happen and Germany would be destroyed by these kinds of short-range American nuclear weapons in case of a conventional attack, kind of augmented by the fact that...

#Rupp

The American president at the time, Jimmy Carter, was considered to be a peacenik who was opposed to nuclear weapons. And in the case of a conflict with the Soviet Union, there was all the more conflict—a big question mark in the German media, in the German political discussions, a big question mark about how valid the American nuclear umbrella still was. So in 1979, there was this conference.

#Rupp

And between these four heads of state, I mean, these three Europeans I just mentioned, and Jimmy Carter at Guadeloupe, at the seaside resort, it was all very relaxed, in swimsuits and towels, and they discussed nuclear weapons. And the outcome of this was that—what's his name—Schmidt, Helmut Schmidt, had his way. They pressurized, I mean, with Giscard d'Estaing and Callaghan, they pressurized Carter. And Carter, of course, was not surrounded by peaceniks, but we just have to remember who his national security advisor was—this Russian hater, harasser of Polish-American Brzezinski.

And so out of this developed, and it actually was decided then—the political decision was actually taken in 1979—that NATO would modernize its nuclear forces, medium-range nuclear forces: 106 Pershing IIs, modernized to be developed for that specific purpose. I mean, the Pershing I existed already, but the Pershing II was just to go further and faster, with the capability of reaching Moscow within 10 minutes—that was also specified. And another over about 500 cruise missiles, also nuclear-armed cruise missiles, to be spread from—I think the Scandinavian countries didn't participate—but it was spread from Holland and Belgium to Italy.

I can't remember the other countries. And so, all in all, with again almost 700 tactical nuclear weapons for the use of these weapons. Then Carter didn't get a second term, and Ronald Reagan came to power with the neocons, the very, very bellicose neocons. And what originally was conceived or constructed by Helmut Schmidt and his German military advisors was to have a kind of stronger link between the use of nuclear weapons in Europe and also increasing the threat for the American forces, for the American mainland, by hitting Russian territory.

That idea was then perverted by the neocons—by Wolfowitz, Perle, the Prince of Darkness, etc.—because they saw a chance in the capability of the Pershing II, these 104 Pershing IIs, with extreme, I mean, they had a **Treffsicherheit**, what we call it here—excuse me—an accuracy of about 10 meters. You didn't need huge nuclear, many kilotons, to take out a headquarters or a missile complex, etc. So they saw the chance to implement their old dream of a decapitation strike of the Soviet command, control, and communication systems. And so that, in the end, the Red Army would run like a chicken already decapitated—which is still, I come from the countryside, I've seen it—running still over the courtyard before it collapses.

Nobody is capable anymore of taking any decision. The Russian population expecting the liberators in Iraq and Syria and elsewhere. And that was the idea. They perverted this issue, and as a result, we also had this development in Germany—the anti-nuclear development, etc. So I think that now it comes as the parallel, which brought us subsequently to this Able Archer, re-Able Archer crisis of 1983. Now we see a new development almost repeating this problem. If Trump does not really stay true to his word of saying these new weapons are foreseen to be deployed by, I think, by summer next year—new medium-range missiles that can reach Moscow also within a few minutes and beyond—which it was Biden who pushed onto Scholz, on Chancellor Scholz and Scholz.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. No discussion in Parliament, no nothing. Now, these... And the parallel just comes to my mind with the nuclear arming of the Nike anti-air missiles. Biden said, okay, yes, but these missiles will only be conventionally armed. They will only be conventionally armed. And my good friend Ted Postol said, this is absolute crap. This is idiotic, because conventionally armed, they don't serve any purpose. It's quite clear once they are there, there will be the nuclear, the tactical nukes to go there.

Now, what happened in 1983—we had the crisis, a crisis, a perception crisis, admittedly, but a serious perception crisis—which brought us to the edge of a nuclear war, where the Russians actually were thinking, out of this Able Archer maneuver, out of the movement, that the Americans would do that implemented decapitation strike, of which they've been swashbuckling so much. And they were prepared to take these out in a preemptive strike with also tactical nukes to get them away before they could start. Now we're going to see, I mean, the possibility of a repetition, or at least that the groundwork for a repetition of such a crisis would be laid if we agree or if we deploy these kinds of missiles in Germany. It's for me very obvious. Why should the Russians react differently? Before accepting the program, let's decapitate Germany. Full stop.

#Pascal

If you only have 10 minutes' reaction time, then the incentive to strike first is just very high if you feel any kind of threat that it might be used. But Ola, please speak to what you've just heard.

#Tunander

No, I... I mean, before, in the 70s and so on, and also largely in the 80s, it was the Americans who perceived that they had escalation dominance. They believed that, in the final analysis, they would have the last card. And the problem is that this is no longer the case with the very fast Russian hypersonic missiles. The Americans cannot do anything about them, but the Russians may be able to take down U.S. missiles. So the situation, when it comes to escalation dominance, has been turned upside down. And psychologically, that means that Americans withdraw from Europe, actually. That's because they realize that there's no way they would go into a war that they would risk losing, really. But may I just put in one more, because in your last interview you brought up this with the use of the Korean Airlines 007, and this was a...

#Tunander

You brought up how the bomber forces, that are now described very clearly by Ben Fisher, as you mentioned, went towards Soviet territory in the north, and they were able to do it regularly, sometimes several times a week or something like that. And then you received the report that the satellite had picked up the nodes of communication. That was what, of course, in a real war situation, would be taken out. And then came the same thing with the Korean Airlines 007, when it, in 1983, went over from Anchorage, over Kamchatka and Sakhalin, actually, and was shot down by the Soviets. And this was a regular airline. The problem was that you received the report about the communication nodes in the east, around Kamchatka and so on.

There are a couple of points there. A person in the National Security Agency, who had a very central position, said that they sent from the base in northern Japan—I've forgotten the name now—the National Security Agency base in northern Japan. They knew exactly what happened from two hours before. They followed the communication. They sent messages to the White House with the highest priority three times. And there was enough time for the Americans to stop it. There were very clear possibilities. They could easily have stopped the whole case, because it was a communication that went on for, I think, up to two hours or something like that. And that was... So actually, for some reason, now you could say Reagan was in California at the time.

And also, I think his national security advisor was in California too. But still, there was enough time to stop this shooting down, and they didn't. The second issue is that there was another Korean Airlines flight five years earlier that went not over the very secret base of Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka, but over Murmansk. And it was almost the same procedure. But it landed on a lake and the people survived. So this was, you know, and Korean Airlines had some special ties to some people in the intelligence community. But I think, and the third point that I want to mention is that in Sweden, the same thing happened against the radar systems in the Baltic with a Swedish airplane that was not yet introduced into the Swedish Air Force.

That was from the Saab Aircraft Company. For some reason, it went towards the Baltic states and had an attack on the Baltic states, and they knew that this very week the incident-ready part of the

Soviet Air Force was on exercise in the Urals. So they used this special occasion to go into the Baltic to check out the radars and, you know, communication nodes and whatever. And then they were—this would be in the mid or late seventies, I think mid-seventies maybe. So it was very, very clear that they were using these civilian airplanes, and a huge number of people died because of the shoot-down. And I think it's a pattern, call it that way. This was really—they really, I mean, people in the U.S. and the chief of the National Security Agency knew perfectly well what was going on.

#Pascal

Reiner, do you believe that NATO was actually playing with civilian aircraft in order to provoke the Soviet Union? Reiner?

#Rupp

No, no. I think anyone who thinks that way—that something like this could have emanated from NATO, from NATO headquarters—doesn't know how this organization works, because you have committees, and in NATO there were many, many times you had governments which didn't agree with the Americans or this, that, or the other. You could not have a NATO decision on this. Like I've always said, it was impossible for NATO to have an attack plan or decide on an offensive attack plan against the Soviet Union, because there would always have been a NATO government who would have been against it.

So that could not happen as an official act, like Operation Barbarossa. Something like that wouldn't have been able to be done in NATO. But NATO... In NATO, every NATO country has its own embassy secured, especially also from NATO. It's secured in the NATO compound. So it provides plenty of bilateral, trilateral discussions, secret discussions, etc., which do not touch NATO whatsoever. So things like that are possible. And if somebody then said, "At NATO we discussed," it could only be something of that kind, but not a NATO decision, not in a NATO committee.

#Tunander

No, I mean, that was all... You understand what I'm trying to say?

#Rupp

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

#Tunander

No, I think when I spoke with you, maybe you meant Vigleik Eide, who was chairman of the NATO Military Committee in the early 1990s, around the 1990s.

#Tunander

Three years, four years maybe. And he said that when it comes to the very secret things, like the submarine I mentioned before, but also like these operations, these could never be a NATO operation because it was too secret to run within the framework of NATO. This was U.S.

#Pascal

US operation together with single countries, and they were running very dirty things. Now, Reiner disappeared. I think his connection is getting worse and worse, unfortunately. Reiner is... I think he's coming back. One moment. Here, you're back. Hello, Reiner. We are reaching the one-hour mark anyhow, my friends, so maybe I would just like, maybe as a final word from both of you, this idea of a nuclear umbrella and also the protection of NATO. It has always been a double-edged sword, hasn't it? It was always, on one end, yes, we can protect you, maybe, and on the other end, no, it will destroy you if used.

#Tunander

Yeah, clear. I mean, I think this nuclear umbrella and the use of nuclear weapons in Germany and the use of nuclear weapons in Norway, this is very clear. It shows that the idea is to defend, but in the final analysis, it is to defend Britain. It is not continental Europe, and continental Europe will be largely destroyed.

#Pascal

Reiner, is that also your assessment, that the strategy basically was to sacrifice Central Europe for the interests of the UK and the United States?

#Rupp

Well, that was the strategy in the past, and I think that strategy is now under question for a long time, and in reality, things are moving away. Once the Americans are out of the equation, which it looks to me they are already out of the equation, they are not prepared to. During the Cold War, even in Germany, we had to say, when we wanted to question the nuclear umbrella, we asked the Americans, are you prepared? Berlin for Boston? Yeah? And if the Russians take Berlin, you promised to use nuclear weapons, but are you prepared to risk Boston in return? Yeah, so Berlin for Boston, that was the kind of phrase.

Now, the Berlin for Boston issue, that type of thing, I think, is gone. The danger now is that some scrambled brains in Germany and in Europe, especially in Germany, try to slip under another nuclear umbrella, the French or the British, or develop a European nuclear force. I mean, a European nuclear force would only again consist of the British or the French, and again, would the British be prepared

to sacrifice the island for the defense of France or Germany, etc.? You can forget about it because they haven't got the strategic depth to threaten the use of nuclear weapons. They can only threaten with national suicide.

Well, if you use nuclear weapons, if Russia—look at it. The United States and Russia, or the Soviet Union at the time, they did their first nuclear explosions of many kilotons on their own territory, above ground. And nothing happened, you see? Even if you take out Moscow with a nuclear weapon, I mean, a big city and prepare for mass murder of any kind, Russia will continue to survive. If you make Paris disappear, France will not survive. The same applies to Germany. I mean, that is the difference, and that has to go into the heads of the people, but I think they don't want to. Anyway, you know the Chinese term—we are having interesting times. We live in interesting times.

#Pascal

It is, but it would be nice if we managed to convince these lunatics in Berlin, Paris, and Washington that the only way to deal with nuclear weapons is by making sure that they will never be used. But we are still a little bit away from that. The Russians and the Chinese, I believe, are already there because they keep saying so the whole time: they must never be used. And we are learning new things now also through the Iran war, where a non-nuclear weapon state is successfully defending itself against two nuclear weapon states. But that's a discussion for another time. I would like to thank both of you for your insights and this historical and contemporary discussion. Ola Tunander and Rainer Rupp, see you next time again.

#Tunander

Thank you. Thank you.