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## SCANDINAVIA ON GUARD

### NEUTRAL STATES REARM

#### PACIFISM OF DENMARK

From a Special Correspondent

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One of the questions discussed by the Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, at their present conference in Stockholm has certainly been that of national defence, again a matter of primary importance in Scandinavia. In the Swedish autumn elections the Social-Democrats were returned with their first working majority in the Riksdag, but in spite of this triumph the Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson, incorporated the leaders of the Farmers Party in his Cabinet and advanced a programme of rearmament sufficient to appease all opponents. As in Sweden so in Norway defence has become a national question transcending party politics. It is well to the fore in Finland. The pacific attitude of the Danish Government alone prevents the possibility of a concerted policy of military cooperation between the Scandinavian countries as a whole.

In July responsibility for national defence in Sweden was transferred from the hands of some 40 different authorities to the commanders in chief of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and a central general staff for the three Services was



formed. In August the Crown Prince of Sweden opened the inland railway which now makes communication possible from North to South, well out of gun range from the coast. In the Norwegian Storting the Labour Government has voted unopposed a grant of 21,000,000 kroner to cover extra defence commitments for the next three years and special projects have been launched for the development of the air force, of supreme importance where so many natural obstacles impede communication by land and water. Denmark stands aloof from the Norwegian-Swedish enthusiasm for armaments, and the recent speech of Hr. Stauning, the Danish Prime Minister, at Lund called forth a storm of protest in the rest of Scandinavia because of his

denunciation of Scandinavian military cooperation. This divergence of political opinions may appear strange to the outside observer, accustomed to consider Scandinavia as a whole, but the reasons are not far to seek.

### STAUNING THE "REALIST"

The armament policy of Norway and Sweden and the pacifism of Denmark are both dictated by the same motives—namely, the preservation of neutrality. The Scandinavian countries maintained their neutrality in the Great War, not in consequence of armaments, but because in the long run their neutrality was more convenient to the Central Powers and the Allies than their active participation. Numerous provocative incidents were exploited as *casus belli* by neither side. But the modern development of aircraft has altered the strategic position of Scandinavia and neutrality can only be maintained by armed force or by pacific submission to a neighbouring Power. In 1864 Denmark, unaided by Norway and Sweden, was unable to resist the aggression of Prussia and Austria. The history of Denmark has consisted in a continued battle with her own exposed situation, and the development of air warfare finds her even more vulnerable. Hr. Stauning has outraged his Swedish critics by suggesting that Denmark had no better justification to-day for putting her faith in Swedish military support than in 1864, and has shown sound political sense by encouraging a *rapprochement* between Denmark and her one potential enemy, Germany. Rearmament in Denmark might by some be interpreted as directed against Germany, though German newspapers have said that Germany would not object if Denmark rearmed; indeed, think she should in case of "Soviet aggression against Germany in the Baltic." Hr. Stauning, at all events, is not prepared to offend Denmark's second best customer when the economic survival of his country is at stake. The Norwegian and Swedish Foreign Ministers, Professor Koht and Dr. Sandler, never miss an opportunity to reject identification of their policy with either Fascism or Communism, but their neutral rearmament is unquestionably directed in part against that Power which Denmark is so desirous of conciliating. Small wonder that the ideals of Scandinavian cooperation have stranded when it comes to a question of concerted military measures.

In Scandinavia neutrality, whether armed or unarmed, takes into consideration two only of the great Powers—Germany and Russia. Russia still remains the traditional historical bogey in the west, especially for Swedes whose parochial conception of world politics blinds them to the possibility of Russian expansion at the expense of any country but their own. Germany, since the National-Socialist revolution, has immediately been transformed into the potential enemy of Scandinavian democracy. When Dr. Sandler speaks of the danger of siding with communism or Fascism he enlists his country for the same policy as the British Government, and draws from "realistic" politicians the same reproach of adhering to abstract ideologies. The Germans, for example, condemn the Swedes as idealist, and hail Hr. Stauning as a *Realpolitiker*.

### GERMAN INFLUENCE

The German and Russian reactions to Scandinavian policy are interesting. The Swedish Foreign Minister's travels across Europe are commented on at length in the German Press, and at regular intervals officially inspired leading articles appear in the prominent papers. The *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* recently published a leader on the subject of Swedish rearmament, confirming German respect for the Swedish desire for neutrality, but protesting against agitation for a Scandinavian military alliance based on the conception of Germany as the aggressor. Dr. Sandler denied any such intentions on the occasion of his last