



Sweden closing Nord Stream investigation shocking coverup -investigator

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Max Blumenthal (MB): This February 2024, the Swedish government concluded its investigation into the Nord Stream pipeline attacks, declaring that it did not have the jurisdiction to investigate the matter any further. So, after gathering enormous amounts of evidence, the Swedish government has closed its investigation, issuing "no findings" and pointing the finger at no perpetrator. The Danish government has done exactly the same, handing the matter over to Germany. Did Sweden, on the eve of joining NATO, close its investigation under external pressure from a country like the United States to avoid any accountability in the worst act of industrial sabotage in history? I put these questions to Erik Andersson, who is a retired engineer based in Gothenburg, Sweden, who carried out the first truly forensic, independent investigation of the Nord Stream terror attacks, actually taking a ship to the Nord Stream blast site. Here's what Andersson had to say.

MB: So, Erik, what does it mean when Sweden says it does not have the jurisdiction to investigate this matter further when it says that it's closing its investigation into the attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines. Is it in fact true that Sweden does not have the jurisdiction?

Erik Andersson (EA): Well, actually, I think it is true. I've been in contact with really the leading legal scholars about this. And they say Sweden actually never had jurisdiction, for this purpose. The amazing thing is that what happened after the blast is that the investigator said that they actually had jurisdiction. They explicitly referred to the United Nations law of the sea and said that they have all the rights to block off the area, not let anybody else come in there and pick up the evidence and take it to the investigation. So they did claim jurisdiction for doing that. And the legal scholars were upset about it. And it turns out that none of the people who actually knew about that were consulted. The people in the Foreign Ministry were very upset, I heard, and they described it almost like a coup, you know, like the military took over and defined it as a national security matter and provided a completely bogus legal explanation. And so they should have known from the beginning. And anybody who knew the legality knew that Sweden did not have jurisdiction. So the big issue is, how could they clean up the crime scene and grab all the evidence and seal it and make it confidential under those circumstances?!

MB: They didn't have the evidence, but they were the government that most of the UN Security Council states were pointing to as the most responsible investigator, when they pushed back on the idea of a truly international investigation. So Sweden was granted all of this power. So Sweden clearly has the evidence, right? So what's happened with...

EA: The physical evidence that they found, I mean, we know that they picked up a lot of stuff. They picked up, like 50m of pipe, and they said that they had two containers of items that they picked up from the sea floor. So it's really amazing that they did this under the pretence of doing an investigation that would be of value for everybody. And then they just closed it. Okay, they have turned it over to the Germans; that's what they say. But we don't know what the Germans will do with it. So yeah, it's amazing.

MB: So essentially what we're looking at is a cover up. Sweden gathered evidence. They gathered up massive amounts of pipeline to analyse and we can never know, this evidence is under lock and key. It's essentially classified now.

EA: Yeah. I mean, the ostensible or the official excuse for classifying is that the German investigation is still ongoing, but the legal scholars I talked to, are saying that, even if I try to get this revealed or declassified or somehow some of it revealed, they will claim some kind of national security cause. And what amazed me is that it doesn't have to – I mean, this is very vague wording in the national security problem. It doesn't say that it has to be a hostile nation, that does this. It's more likely that it's a friendly nation and that Sweden does not want to say it because it would hurt the relationship with this friendly nation. You know, it would embarrass a friend. And that makes it a completely legitimate reason to claim that it's a national security problem to keep quiet. And that's what the professor in international law was telling me.

MB: So I wouldn't be cynical to surmise that Sweden has dropped this investigation, possibly under pressure from the United States, or because it internally doesn't want to offend the United States on the eve of joining NATO.

EA: Now, I think that's exactly the conclusion that people are making. I mean the really leading experts in this field are making that very same conclusion.

MB: So the leading experts in Sweden are making that conclusion?

EA: Professor Said Mahmoudi, he's the go to person for Swedish TV when they ask about these things. I mean, he was even participating in the negotiation of this maritime law and he is like the leading authority. And he says that the law didn't matter here. It was an intervention. The military took control and that's the situation. I mean, all bets are off. I mean, this legal analysis doesn't apply. That's what he tells me.

MB: So the Swedish military took control of what was to be a legal and forensic investigation, politicised it and essentially deep-sixed it, along with...

EA: Yeah. And, you know, the other observation is that, I mean, you know, we talked about it at the time and looking at all this ship traffic, there were American warships present from the beginning when this happened. The US was not a suspect, obviously. The story in the beginning was that the Russians probably blew up their own pipeline, and everybody thought that it was a security threat because the Russians had been making a big blast very close to Sweden. But then, as the investigator made these regular updates, they started talking about, it had to be a big state actor, not just because they had very sophisticated explosives, but also because they had been planting several false tracks, so they have these capabilities of deception. So it had to be a big state actor. And then many of us started to believe maybe he's not playing ball totally with America here and so on. He's actually an objective guy. And he assured us that he really wants to find the truth, whatever the truth is, that's what he said. But now it seems – all of this made the decision actually come as a little bit of a surprise. And they didn't even have a press conference. And it was very disappointing. And it really makes it look like there was some outside interference in just closing and sealing this.

MB: I mean, the investigation was closed without very much fanfare. And it feels as though they waited until the public had shifted its attention to something else. And Denmark simultaneously closed its investigation. Was this done for the same reason? External pressure to avoid offending NATO?

EA: Yeah. They were also citing jurisdiction. And I mean, for me, it was funny. And from another point of view, because Denmark, I've read in other news that Denmark actually had to report, they have reported that there are carbon emissions. And that was the other thing that legal scholars said if they really wanted to pursue the criminals here, they could have chosen the option to define it as an environmental crime. And that could have perhaps given them a case for jurisdiction. It's not crystal clear, but the Danish made an analysis because of the carbon emission. It turns out that they had to report to the EU according to the IPCC rules, that they had 8.5 million tons of emissions. So totally from both the Swedish and Danish economic zones, there were 14 million tons of carbon equivalence, which is like, half of Denmark's entire carbon emissions in a year. So it's bad, you know, they have targets. They take this very seriously. They have targets for carbon emissions. And, suddenly, you know, it's a big bump there in the curve because they have to report it. And it says very clearly in their analysis that they did have jurisdiction. So they had to then change their minds. And Sweden went along with the Danish analysis and said they would report it and then in January they changed their minds. They said they made a new analysis and said, No, we don't have jurisdiction. We're not going to report these carbon emissions. I found it almost humorous how they can interpret this law as they want, you know.

MB: They're so serious about green policy, about environmental policy until one of the worst environmental catastrophes of our lifetime comes along, and it interferes with their foreign policy.

EA: Yeah, it was clearly played down. I mean, if you analyse – like I did – trying to read all the news. It was very inconsistent with other environmental news. I mean, they really went very far to explain that this was very small. You know, they tried to put it in some context of

the entire world emissions and things and made it look small for some reason, which they never do in any other cases. But they did it here.

MB: It's remarkable. I mean, this was historically one of the largest emissions of methane gas that I know of. Well, that's well recorded.

EA: It depends on how you look at it. I mean, I wrote a paper on that, and I think in the context of the enormous energy transport capability of Nord Stream, it's not that big. It's like about two and a half days of transport that is contained in the pipeline at any one time. So it's not huge in that respect, but it's very strange, I think that, or very telling that they didn't bring it up because it's still very big. We would have to stop driving for the whole year in Sweden to make up for that. And so that's very strange. My wife is just coming in here. We have to edit this out. No, I mean, it's a big tell that if they wanted to actually pursue the perpetrators here, I mean, they could have defined it as an environmental crime. So it's a tell that they really didn't want to.

MB: So the German investigation is still open. Sweden and Denmark are now urging everyone to sort of – they're handing over their evidence to Germany. But you say that Germany has been covering up the facts around Nord Stream from the beginning, that it did not follow protocol from the beginning, even when they had a major public hazard on their hands. So what do you make of the German investigation?

EA: Well, I don't know. It's been quite secretive about the German investigation. But all the rumours that I hear from some German journalists about this is that they are very true believers in the sailboat trip; the Andromeda, you know, as the story goes...

MB: Yeah, the official story is that there was a sailboat containing several Ukrainian operatives called the Andromeda, which is responsible for this bombing, and it was overseen by a military officer in the Ukrainian military who is not accountable to Volodymyr Zelensky. This was sort of a secret operation.

EA: Yes, he was reporting to a guy that was reporting to Zaluzhnyi. And, I mean, The Washington Post had a big piece about it in December. It was one of those guided tours in Ukraine, where they went with the CIA and talked to a bunch of people, and they came up with this story that said that it sounded all like this was a very cool thing to blow up Nord Stream. But they also wrote that America was opposed to it. They were saying through an intermediary, they passed it onto General Zaluzhnyi that America was opposed to it. And my impression was that this was quite lame. You know, if they wanted to stop it, they could have done it more firmly, then just telling an intermediary to tell Zaluzhnyi not to do it. But I think that the boat trip definitely happened. I mean, it was docking in five different ports, and there are witnesses in those ports. And they paid the fuel in cash, which is very unusual in Sweden, you know, to come with a thousand or more euros and pay things in cash, it's very unusual here. That draws a lot of attention to it. They behaved strangely and they spent more than two weeks – I mean, this was from September 6th to September 22nd – and they didn't set sail in a sailboat. They went by engine. And they had false passports and all these things. So it was

very suspicious, I think, this boat trip. But we don't know, of course, if it was a cover story of some kind, but we know that it happened.

MB: You know that the German investigators are beholden to this theory that a small ship rented by this Ukrainian team, the Andromeda, was responsible for the Nord Stream attack. How do you know that? I've seen German media report that and I know the German journalist Holger Stark interviewed you about your own investigation and came to that conclusion. But how do you know the German investigation team is beholden to that theory?

EA: Well, the reports are that they have focussed the investigation on that. I think they actually even had it in the UN report to the Security Council. They said that they were focusing on that. Both the Germans and the Swedes interviewed people who had made observations of this boat. So it seemed like the Swedish investigation was starting to follow the German lead as soon as that came up. But of course, it all originated with a Dutch leak, you know, the AIVD, the Dutch security services, supposedly were embedded in the SBU, in the Ukrainian, spy organisation. And they had a cable going out already in the summer of 2022, that's around the time when, according to Seymour Hersh, the bombs were going to be planted. And this was then cabled out and it was presented after the blast in Der Spiegel as something that came through Russian cables or whatever they made it sounds like, Okay, Ukrainians, but it's probably a Russian false flag. But as the story, as I hear it from the Germans and I've talked to them, this was taken very seriously as soon as the blast had happened. And the Dutch were also getting back to the source in Ukraine, and the guy there who was embedded in Ukraine, confirmed that six Ukrainian commandos had rented the boat in Rostock. And then it actually took until January until they found the boat. What I hear is that they didn't know it was a sailboat, and they couldn't think that it was a sailboat; it was so unlikely. They didn't extend the search to sailboats until December, and then they found the sailboat in January. But what they tell me is that the German investigation was taking this Ukrainian lead very seriously from the beginning. And these journalists also tell me they hope that there will be convictions. And the goal is definitely to bring charges against Ukrainian individuals.

MB: So the Dutch leaked that this was going to take place in June 2022. Then the Andromeda sail boat goes out on what, September 6th? They have this expedition to the 23rd. And this was the plan that was supposedly executed. And the CIA warned Germany ahead of time, supposedly. But then the Dutch don't – this Dutch source in Ukraine that supposedly knew about Andromeda didn't say anything after the blasts.

EA: Well, he said after the blasts. But it would have been more helpful, I guess if he had said it before the blast.

MB: He didn't say anything beforehand.

EA: No. You know, because there were two. The first leak was about, a first attempt that was allegedly foiled. You know, they were supposed to rent a boat in Stockholm and do the same thing. It had the same features, there were six people on the boat. But, somehow, if you

believe The Washington Post, America went in and stopped it. What I think happened is that America, maybe the CIA, were watching this all the time, and they realised that this was a very dangerous thing and they would be discovered. So that's why they had to go back to the drawing board and change a few things in the plan. I actually think it's very likely that even, you know, Seymour Hersh's plan also has a lot of similarities, you know, like just two divers and things like that. So maybe that was the first iteration. And then they found out it was too dangerous, or the Norwegians bailed out of it, so they thought the Ukrainians were better positioned to execute.

MB: And so what do you make of this? How has your theory been impacted by this New York Times report, which came out on February 26th? It was a collection of leaks, the whole article was guided by the CIA.

EA: Yeah, yeah.

MB: And it was essentially the CIA lobbying for Congress to increase its black budget, to carry out more sabotage operations and assassinations.

EA: Right, right.

MB: But there's a section in the article; basically the article portrays Ukraine correctly as a beachhead for the MI6 and CIA, which it has been since 2014, I think some of the chronology is upside down. But there's a section in the article which describes the head of Russia House, the CIA department overseeing, you know, anti-Russian operations, having a meeting with their counterparts in the MI6 and in the Dutch secret service in The Hague about stepping up operations against Russia. So the Dutch were clearly at the centre of anti Russian operations here. Does this alter your theory or the theory of Nord Stream?

EA: No, I think this confirms it. It makes it pretty unthinkable that Ukraine would do this as a rogue operation on their own, as it was portrayed in December by the Washington Post. And there was an article in The New York Times and there was another one in The Washington Post again, and they mentioned there that the Kerch Bridge, you know, CIA had helped, or Americans had helped in blowing up the Kerch Bridge. But they didn't mention Nord Stream in this article. Because the story of Nord Stream is that the Ukrainians did it on their own, against the will of the United States. And I think that's not really believable at all. And it became less believable after that long New York Times piece.

MB: Right. Have you tried to get any evidence or data from Nord Stream itself, the company that owns the pipeline? For example, the pressure data, that's something you've been pointing to as a key data point, which might help identify the perpetrator. What happened?

EA: There is a theory I have that's maybe a bit novel here, but I'm thinking it could be perhaps distinguishing between the Seymour Hersh idea of a sonar triggering, or the Ukrainian story, which is saying that they were using timers. The thing is that Nord Stream, a representative of Nord Stream 2, has told me who has seen these curves that in the pipeline itself, in the gas, there was a pressure wave coming from the actual explosion, these bombs,

this HMS explosion, so that before dropping the pressure actually went up a bit, there's a bulge and of course that arrives, you know, the speed of sound and everything, you could see that the difference at the arrival time of this and perhaps have a very on the second or split second idea of exactly the timing of the different blasts. Seismologists have come with some conflicting information and they can't really distinguish between the actual bomb and the effect of the gas that was pouring out after. They thought that there were very big bombs initially, like 500 kilos TNT, which it wasn't, it was much smaller bombs. And the seismic reaction was or signal it was caused mainly by the gas that was pouring out and creating a big bubble that oscillated in the water. But if we knew exactly the time of the three blasts in the northern area, then perhaps we could say something about how they were triggered and if Seymour Hersh is right, that they were triggered from some sonar device of an aeroplane, then that, of course, is a very strong fingerprint that the United States were involved. And I'm just trying to get this information. Maybe they keep it secret for a reason. And you know, when they don't give it, you know, they said it was declassified, the Swedish coastguard gave me something but it was blurred out. They put it in the copy machine with a bad pixel resolution. So you couldn't really make anything of it. So if they keep blurring the information and retracting things, you get more curious that there might be something in there.

MB: Right, right. So Sweden is going to join NATO. It has just ended this investigation into one of the most serious acts of industrial sabotage in history, in which it holds obviously important evidence. Can you, as a Swede, as a political activist, as someone who's lived through Swedish history, kind of put this in some kind of historical framework for us to understand Sweden's history of subservience to the U.S. even going against its own national interest?

President Biden: Sweden officially joined. And their minister is here tonight. There, stand up. Welcome, welcome, welcome.

EA: Actually, I've got to know some very interesting people lately, who've been doing a lot of research on this. And I also have an experience starting in the Cold War, in the 1980s. I mean, the story is that Sweden was very much of a neutral country. You know, there were the prime minister of Targe Erlander, and then Olof Palme, who was known – I don't know if you know about Olof Palme, but he was very much opposed to the Vietnam War. He was a good friend of Yasser Arafat's who came to Sweden. And also the South America countries that were insurgencies and Sweden had very friendly relationships. And, I think there was one term uttered. Nixon said he was a big arsehole, I think; the Swedish arsehole, that's what he called him, President Nixon in the US. But there was a term that was uttered, that Sweden had an aggressive neutrality policy and was aggressively neutral. And in the beginning of the 80s, only about 25% of the Swedish population thought of Russia or the Soviet Union as a threat. And apparently, the military and probably their American friends didn't like that. So, we had a big, like the Swedish Russiagate. It was in the news all the time. I got really tired of it. And all the Swedes in my generation know about this; news about Soviet submarine intrusions into Swedish waters. It turns out, these researchers I've talked to and there have

also been witnesses from the US, you know, the generals involved. And someone has said that there weren't any Soviet submarines. They were actually Western submarines. They were Italian submarines maintaining American hydrophones, because this was during the Cold War and America was watching the Soviet Union. But the thing is that they talked so much about these threatening Soviet submarines that it was a psyop, you know, the whole population ended up – with about 80, 83% – thinking of the Soviet Union as a threat. And what also happened in this time, is that even though the politicians, the civil government, maintained this idea of neutrality. The military had very close ties with the United States. I mean, the American and the Swedish military were cooperating. And, well, there is even a very widespread theory that the murder of Olof Palme was actually done in order to stop these aggressive neutrality policies. I mean, there's no evidence of that, but it's an ongoing mystery that some I think very good people are still trying to solve.

MB: Olof Palme was assassinated. There are theories that the Mossad participated, that apartheid South African intelligence was behind it because he had extended diplomatic olive branches to so many groups like the African National Congress or the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which were considered off limits in the West. And then you also have the Americans and his, you know, neutral policy toward the Soviet Union. So there are so many enemies. But it seems like Sweden has completely turned its back on the legacy.

EA: Yes, exactly. And then, of course, NATO is the final step in this very long process. I wasn't too proud of the neutrality myself. I mean, there's a part where Sweden was helping German troops, Nazi troops to go transit through Sweden to Norway and things like that. So there's been a mixed feeling about this neutrality. But I think it's a terrible timing now when the world is changing, you know, when we're going to this multipolar order or whatever you want to call it. But then I think Sweden is missing a big opportunity to be friends with everybody and to be, you know, between instead of jumping into one side and surrendering our freedom or national freedom to decide. And I think that's a real shame, actually.

MB: Well, there could also be real consequences. We've seen Finland join NATO also ending its traditional policy of neutrality towards Russia, and it had economic consequences for Finland. Is that right? Isn't that right?

EA: Well, I don't know about the economy. I mean they had a lot of trade relations with Russia.

MB: And hasn't there been kind of a crisis in energy in Finland? Gas prices have gone up significantly, there's been rationing.

EA: Yeah, yeah. Sure. Of course. It's like with Germany that, you know, that the Russian energy and the loss of that is bringing up prices a lot. And it was even affecting Sweden with electricity prices, because there's a common electricity market and when the prices go up in Germany, they go up in Sweden, too.

MB: Yeah. And so how do Swedes feel about Nord Stream and joining NATO? Have they been propagandised into submission, into seeing Russia the way that American neoconservatives do? Is this inveterate threat that's determined to march westward and conquer as much territory and Putin reconstituting the Soviet Union? Or, are they suspicious of this move which has been made without much public input?

EA: No, I think, except for some grumpy old men like me, and then people who are listening to your podcasts and other alternative news in America, there is not much debate in Sweden, at all. And the national television, they actually explicitly say that they have a mission to educate the public, to understand that Russia is the enemy. Regarding Nord Stream, there was a series; a very high budget series, about Nord Stream, which is insinuating, you know, there was sort of scary music and everything, that the Russians everywhere, Russian spies everywhere, and the Russian boats that were hovering over the sides and they probably blew it up. You know, they're saying it without saying it, of course, but the whole purpose of the whole show is to make people scared of Russia. But it's always been a tactic from the military. The military has been downsized in Sweden and their pitch has always been to say that the Russians are coming. So we need more cool gadgets to play with here and more money, you know.

MB: Right. And Sweden is a major component of Western military industry, although it presents itself as this...

EA: Well, as we were a neutral country, we made our own fighter jets, and, you know, tanks and sort of anti-tank missiles and stuff and so on. So that's always been a Swedish rather independent and strong military industry.

MB: Is there anything further for investigators like yourself to do here? Are you planning any further investigation?

EA: Well, I mean, I have made these FOIA requests. There should be a possibility to get some public disclosures of some information that might contain some clues. I mean, we shouldn't be too optimistic about it, but of course, there are things that can be done and should be done. I know you published the boot. I'm very happy you published the boot... I mean, we should have gone back and picked that up. When I realised that we could pick it up, we were a bit too scared to pick it up when we saw it. I was hoping that some television channel, like the German television, would pay for an expedition, so we could go there. I didn't want to pay for another expedition.

MB: For those who aren't familiar, you found a boot at one of the blast sites, which matched closely, I think a boot produced by a company called Thor, which NATO states have employed, including US divers. And the tape that was on the boot matched those that we've seen on US divers. And we were mocked, widely mocked for publishing this, including, I think, by Bellingcat, which told me we must have been on to something.

EA: Yeah, I mean, I was talking to the Nord Stream Company, the owner of the pipeline. I said I found a boot and they said, yeah, we found it, too. They had seen the boot, two months before us, and they reported it to the investigation. And the investigation obviously didn't care. They didn't go back to pick it up. And it's very strange because through an intermediary I know that the divers and the Swedish investigation, we're not using that type of boot. And the Germans said they didn't dive, they just used robots. So from who is the boot? And we also know that there was this big ship, the big offshore Norwegian ship that just ploughed into the area and didn't ask for any permission or anything and was protected by a US Coast Guard boat; that was the end of November. And they definitely had divers because you could see they were staying over the site. So I think the boot probably came from there. But that's another secret that we never heard about, that probably America paid for their own investigation here.

MB: Right. Which is still undisclosed. So it still would have been a significant piece of evidence, even if it didn't relate to the actual attack.

EA: I mean, it sort of rings very strangely with what they said in the United Nations, in the Security Council. Because America said they convey all this great confidence in the integrity of the Swedes and we should let the Swedes do their work, and we should not interfere with it. And so they were pretending that they were totally relying on the Swedes. But if they pay for an even bigger, offshore vessel to go there on their own, you know, that's kind of suspicious.

MB: And just following up on the possible US secret investigation of Nord Stream. I spoke to a Greenpeace staffer who said that they documented those US ships, including the USS Hamilton, at the blast sites – what last November? Like one year ago.

EA: Well, yeah, it was '22. It was a month...

MB: November '22.

EA: Almost two months after the blast.

MB: And so a Greenpeace ship was nearby. And this Greenpeace staffer told me that they had a logbook documenting these US ships and that they would get it to me. And then they went off the radar. I never was able to contact them again, despite all my attempts. What do you know about this?

EA: Well, again, I mean, we said that it was a pretty big – normally Greenpeace cares a lot about climate and emissions, and there were 14 million tons of equivalents here. And they cared about it initially, and then suddenly they didn't care about it. They said they were assigned to other projects. Actually I got in contact with them, I wanted to trade some footage because I had film and they had film. I said we should share the film. So, eventually I was able to get their film and that was nice. We could analyse it and our colleague Michael Colbs is very good at this; we could use that also. And we have made this three dimensional reconstruction of everything. But they were not interested in it anymore. So it's kind of weird,

this supposedly organic organisation of activists are all of a sudden deciding that this is not interesting anymore.

MB: Well, Greenpeace is not an organic organisation of activists, that's been well-established. They're very closely interwoven with the political infrastructure of the NATO in NGO industrial complex. So I'm not surprised by their behaviour here. But it is clear that they...

EA: No, it came from the top because the guy, I guess you talk to the same guy as I talk to, and he was very excited.

MB: Initially, very helpful.

EA: Yeah. And so something happened there. Something came from the top.

MB: Yeah. That's what it seems. So we'll continue to follow up with you, Erik Andersson, on your work to get to the bottom of one of the worst acts of industrial sabotage in history, the Nord Stream attacks. Thank you for sharing your insights with us at The Grayzone. And for all of the independent investigative work you've been doing.

EA: Thank you very much.

END

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