

Question to Foreign Minister Ann Linde (S)

The Foreign Ministry's 'follow up' to the Hammarskjöld Investigations

When the UN Secretary, the Swedish Dag Hammarskjöld, perished in an air crash outside Ndola in what is now Zambia on 18th September 1961 a national trauma was created in the midst of an international conflict area. What really happened and why it happened have been investigated on various occasions, but have been difficult to determine because of various nations' interests in the matter. The possibility that Sweden's earlier responses were influenced by diplomatic reasons cannot be excluded. That can be inferred from the investigation carried out by Mathias Mossberg, Sweden's special investigator of the incident, presented in his report "The Tragedy in Ndola - the human factor or external interference" to the Foreign Ministry on 18 November 2019.

The report says the following:

"The critical reports from the Swedish representatives in Ndola can be said to strengthen the supposition, or rather the suspicion, which more and more material from other sources also seems to support, that other factors were involved in the circumstances around the aircraft accident than had earlier appeared to be the case.

Taken together these two groups of material indicate with increasing strength that the cause of SE-BDY's crash was some kind of external influence, rather than the comfortable, but to say the least imprecise, and, by any reasonable standard, unproven theory of "pilot error." (Mossberg p.37)

In November 1961, i.e. shortly after the accident, the Swedish government established a working group under the direction of Advocate Rudholm, with a mandate "to scrutinize and evaluate the material collected about the crash" and "provide the government with an assessment of the circumstances of the incident and its possible cause." In the Parliament the Prime Minister at the time Erlander used the words "critically scrutinize" (Mossberg p.14, 22)

But when the working group in May 1962 presented its report "it had rephrased and limited its mandate" and it "was no longer about scrutinizing and evaluating, let alone "critically" scrutinizing" (Mossberg p.22). "Despite all the criticism about the Rhodesian investigations which have previously been mentioned, both by Swedish experts and by the Swedish government, the Swedish working group reached results which were closer to the Rhodesian investigations than the UN investigation. The work group's final documents lent more towards pilot error than the UN Commission did" (Mossberg p.21)

Mathias Mossberg points out that "It is still unclear why the Swedish working group - and consequently the Swedish government - chose to express themselves in this way, and thereby in one sense place itself closer to the two Rhodesian investigations than the UN Commission."

Again in 1992 it was appropriate for Sweden to investigate the question in Sweden. The UN civil servants Conor Cruise O'Brien and George Ivan Smith had published an article in The Guardian on the basis of information from de Kémoularia, who claimed that Hammarskjöld's plane had been shot down. "Ambassador Bengt Rösiö was appointed the investigator. He was one of the people who had been on the spot in Ndola in 1961, and was well informed about the matter" (Mossberg p.27). The investigation "involved a thorough examination, but it resulted in conclusions which to a certain extent went further than the evidence permitted. In practice this investigation strengthened the prevailing consensus and resulted in a view that the case should be left to rest." (Mossberg p.38)

To make it possible for the UN to make progress in its ongoing investigation of the accident it is important that the Rudholm working group's report of 1961-62 is examined more carefully, a view Mathias Mossberg also expressed during the press conference of 18 November 2019.

Accordingly I would like to ask the Foreign Minister how she will illuminate the question of why the Rudholm working group stopped scrutinizing critically the evidence and aligned itself more with the Rhodesian investigations than the UN Commission, and why the Foreign Ministry let the matter largely drop after the investigation in 1993.

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