They Hate Us for Our…Foreign Policy

A Comparison of United States and Sweden Foreign Policy

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**Abstract**

In a 2004 speech, which received little attention in the American media, Osama bin Laden argued that while the United States is an attractive target for those seeking to make a political statement through terrorist attacks, other Western democracies, mentioning Sweden in particular, are not.  This completely contradicts the dominant understanding of Islamic extremism perpetuated in the American public discourse, which focuses on the inherently radical nature of Islam and a subsequent and inevitable tension between Islam and the West, while downplaying the role of American foreign policy, and specifically its history of interventionist behavior in the Middle East.  In this paper, we examine the US and Sweden, first noting the similarities shared by the two nations, namely within their political structures, economic systems, and cultures, then observe the vastly apparent differences in each countries’ foreign policy. Our analysis exemplifies the overwhelming differences existing between the two democracies and further proves the point that it is US foreign policy, rather than Western, democratic values, that fuels anti-American sentiments. These findings are significant because an understanding of how US foreign policy is negatively impacting the country’s relationship with the globe can not only help clarify to the public where animosity towards the US is resulting from, but these findings may also allow US policy makers to adjust foreign policy and improve US international relations.

**Introduction**

On September 11, 2001, the United States endured a series of attacks that shook the country to its core. It was on this day, four airplanes were hijacked by terrorists and used to carry out brutal suicide bombing attacks, leaving thousands of Americans dead and an entire country rattled. In the wake of the September 11th attacks, President George W. Bush, the leader of the US at the time, spoke about the terrorist attacks, outlining what he believed to be the cause of the attacks in a speech that remains a hot topic of discussion today. In his speech following the attacks, President Bush made the statement,

“Americans are asking, ‘Why do they hate us?’  They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”

While President Bush’s speech may have been effective in attempting to pull a shattered country together and providing an explanation for how a country as great and powerful as the US, the text book example of democracy and freedom, could possibly be the victim of such a brutal attack, it has been made increasingly clear that the former president’s explanation could not have been further from the truth. In the aftermath of the attacks, infamous leader of al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, came forward and addressed the attacks he admitted, with ease, to coordinating. In his speech released to Aljazeera, Bin Laden states, “…security is an indispensable pillar of human life and that free men do not forfeit their security, contrary to Bush’s claim that we hate freedom. If so, then let him explain to us why we don’t strike for example – Sweden?” (Aljazeera, 2004). This question posed by Bin Laden is, at the very least, thought provoking and will serve as the purpose of this paper. Why is a country, such as Sweden, which is also built on the principles of freedom and democracy, free from attacks while the US is not? Through an in-depth look at the similarities and differences of the US and Sweden, we will find, in the words of Cole (2006), “it’s the policies, stupid.”

**All in Favor of Democracy and Freedom**

 Before diving into the overwhelming differences existing in the foreign policies of the US and Sweden, it is important to note the similarities shared between the two nations in regards to government structure, freedoms, and Western culture. Both Sweden and the US are democratically run nations that function on free and open elections. Citizens in both countries have the right to vote regularly for government officials they believe will best advocate and protect their interests and needs. Unlike elections in some countries, in which the results are often rigged or predetermined, elections in the US and Sweden are open and fair.

 Going hand-in-hand with true democracy are the free and open markets of both the US and Sweden. According to the 2014 Index of Economic Freedom, the US and Sweden are ranked twelfth and twentieth, respectively, in economic freedom. The index ranks a total of 178 countries, so although Sweden and the US are not at the very top in terms of economic freedom, both countries are certainly ranked quite highly of the 178 countries. In terms of the Middle East, where the most emphasis has been placed on terrorism against the US in most recent times, countries included in the index fall very low in the rankings. Iran, one of the only Middle Eastern countries ranked in the index, falls at 173 with an economic freedom score of 40.3 out of 100. Countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria are not listed as “not ranked”.

 In both the US and Sweden, freedoms enjoyed by the citizens of each country are outlined in official documents. In Sweden, freedoms and rights are specifically included in the Instrument of Government, a fundamental law that cannot easily be changed unless amended through the process involving the Riksdag. Some of the freedoms and rights as specified in the Instrument of Government include freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of assembly, freedom to demonstrate, freedom of association, and freedom of worship (riksdagen.se). Sweden’s Instrument of Government looks remarkably similar to an important document encompassing the freedoms and rights enjoyed by US citizens, the Constitution which includes the Bill of Rights. Similarly to the Instrument of Government, the Bill of Rights lays out guaranteed rights of US citizens that can only be amended or changed through an extensive and tedious process involving approval of the US Congress. Many of the rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights are remarkably similar to the rights outlined in the Instrument of Government. The first amendment in the Bill of Rights protects the vast majority of the most prominent freedoms guaranteed to Americans, including freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and the freedom for peaceful assembly and protest.

 In addition to the legitimate democracies, free markets, and protected freedoms, the US and Sweden also share similarities in their cultures. Both of the countries embrace Western culture, including clothing, music, film, and many other aspects of what is known as “pop culture”. An interesting aspect of culture to consider in the US and Sweden is religion. Religion is a fairly prominent aspect of many Americans’ lives and practicing a religion remains widespread in the US. According to the Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project Religious Landscape Survey, 78.4 percent of those surveyed in the US reported practicing a Christian religion which includes Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Orthodox, and other Christian religions. Other religions reported included Jewish at 1.7 percent, Buddhist at 0.7 percent, Muslim at 0.6 percent, Hindu at 0.4 percent, as well as “other faiths”. In addition to the religions reported, 1.6 percent described themselves as atheist and 2.4 percent as agnostic. Although there is quite a mix of religious affiliations reported, it is clear through the data presented that Christianity is by far the most widespread.

 The religious practices of Sweden are somewhat different than what is seen in the US. According to the 10 Fundamentals of Religion in Sweden (Sweden.se/society/), 66 percent of the population of Sweden are members of the Church of Sweden, practicing Evangelical Lutheran, however only eight percent regularly attend religious services. The prominence of secularism is also strongly emphasized. According to the Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism, 29 percent of Swedes describe themselves as religious, ranking Sweden as one of the least religious countries (as cited at Sweden.se/society/). Although different, the freedom to choose to be religious or not, as well as what religion to practice, is an important aspect of US and Swedish cultures.

**It’s all in the Foreign Policy**

**US as the bully of the West**

 The similarities outlined that exist between Sweden and the United States in regards to both countries being built on the foundations of freedom and democracy largely disproves President Bush’s allegations of the US being hated for its freedoms, for if this statement was true, then why would the democratic, capitalist, Westernized country of Sweden not be under attack right alongside the United States? Copious amounts of data also clearly invalidate President Bush’s statements. Makdisi (2002) states anti-American attitudes stem less from “a blind hatred of the U.S. or American values than from a profound ambivalence about America.” Furthermore, 87 percent of people surveyed in Muslim nations approve of democratic ideals and 68 percent approve of the way democracies perform (Cole, 2006). It is clear that there is something far greater playing a key role in shaping the negative attitudes towards the US, compared to the relatively positive feelings felt towards Sweden, another democratically shaped, free country. Breyfogle (2004) attributes negative feelings towards the US not as a hatred of the US itself, but rather to what the US is believed to stand for in regards to foreign policy. Supporting the belief of foreign policy being the point of contention, Lynch (2007) finds that U.S. policies are twice as important as American values in shaping the opinions of America in Middle Eastern nations. The missing piece of the puzzle and the answer to Bin Laden’s question posed in his speech to Al Jazeera is simple: it is the US foreign policy that has caused the country to become viewed so poorly, and often times strongly disliked, by countries around the globe.

 Despite the United States’ outward appearance as a nation working to promote democratic values throughout the globe, a deeper look into US foreign policy history suggests that the establishment and advancement of democracy has been far from the nation’s priority in regards to its international relations. In fact, the heart of US foreign policy has often been to advance its own interests and power (Walt, 2006). These foreign policy moves have taken form as forceful meddling, often times through coups removing leadership of another country from power when US interests have been in jeopardy. The countries that have been impacted by US meddling are not only inhibited from making strides towards development, but are often times left in even far worse conditions under repressive regimes. In illustrating the intrusive interference of the US and the detrimental effects that have resulted, three specific incidents of US meddling in three different regions of the world will be discussed.

 Although almost every region of the world has fallen victim to US interference at one time or another, Latin America is the region of the world often times regarded as “more frequently victimized by United States meddling than any other set of countries in the world,” (Baker and Cupery, 2013). The Monroe Doctrine, which in many ways gave the US ownership over the Western Hemisphere, set the tone for years of US bullying and interference in Latin America. One of the prime examples of how intrusive US foreign policy has been in the region involves Guatemala in the 1950s. In 1950, Jacabo Arbenz was elected President of Guatemala. During his time as president, Guatemala underwent immense growth, especially in regards to land reform, which would ultimately be the point of contention in relations with the US. An American-owned company by the name of the United Fruit Company had been in control of up to forty-two percent of arable land in Guatemala for many years. As an important component of Arbenz’s plans for land reform, he created the Decree 900 which would redistribute unused land to the natives of the country. Land to be redistributed in this plan included land under the control of the United Fruit Company, immediately sparking US concern in protecting its national interests. In 1954, the US carried out a coup that removed Jacabo Arbenz from power, leaving Guatemala in the hands of Carlos Armas resulting in years of hardship. Not only did the removal of Arbenz stifle any further progress, Guatemala also endured a civil war leaving 200,000 Guatemalans dead or missing, as well as repression, home-grown genocide, and insurgency (Sweig, 2006). This horrendous incident paints a perfect picture of how intrusive and detrimental US foreign policy can be when US interests are believed to be threatened. The actions carried out in Guatemala by the US do not illustrate a powerful nation working to spread the democratic ideals on which it was built. On the contrary, these actions depict a country that acts brutally and selfishly to wrongly protect its interests.

 The next incident of US meddling involves the region of the world that has, in many ways, been the focal point of US foreign policy in most recent times. The Middle East has repeatedly felt the intrusiveness of the US, especially through the United States’ obsession with the region’s oil. As stated by Painter (2012), maintaining access to oil has been a crucial aspect of US foreign policy in the Middle East and has been a major influence in several doctrines including the Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Carter Doctrines. These doctrines have had a heavy influence on the relations between the US and countries of the Middle East, similarly to the influence of the Monroe Doctrine in relations between the US and Latin America. In addition to the problems caused by US obsession with oil, the United States’ often times unwavering support of Israel is also felt to be a “gross injustice” for Arabs in the Middle East (Makdisi, 2002). A specific situation that occurred in US relations with the Middle East is almost frighteningly similar to the meddling in Guatemala discussed previously. This example of shameful US foreign policy involves the country of Iran, also in the 1950s. In the years preceding the Cold War, the US enjoyed a friendly relationship with Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavia. This relationship was largely viewed as a strategic alliance to protect US oil interests in Iran; however, this alliance would be threatened in 1951 when Mohammad Mossadegh was named Prime Minister of Iran. In response to the fears that Mossadegh’s plans to nationalize Iran’s oil industry could jeopardize US oil concessions (Painter, 2012), the US CIA planned and executed a coup that would remove Mossadegh from power in 1953. Resulting from the successful coup was years of brutal repression under the violent regime of the Shah, who remained in power for years to come. It is believed that the increase in money generated through the oil industry, thanks to the US, greatly strengthened the Shah’s oppressive command (Jones, 2012). The actions taken by the US in Iran display a country willing not only to ignore the growth of democratic ideals, but to work to reverse any democratic progress in hopes of protecting its self-interests.

 The final example of less than honorable US foreign policy to be discussed involves a region of the world that has been plagued with corruption and largely unable to evolve, despite the important natural resources the region has to offer: Africa. Unlike Latin America and the Middle East, the US has largely stayed out of Africa. Historically, it has been the European countries that have ran the greatest amount of interference in the region. Unfortunately, the US is guilty of taking part in yet another plan that has, to this day, inhibited a country once on its way to developing democratic ideals from sparking the growth necessary to advance. Upon receiving independence from Belgium, the Democratic Republic of the Congo appeared to be on its way to evolving into a democratic nation capable of utilizing its natural resources to spread economic growth throughout the country. In 1960, Patrice Lumumba secured his position as Prime Minister of the DRC after winning in the national election. Despite their new found independence, growth for the DRC would be inhibited as a result of the lack of support the newly independent country received, primarily from Belgium and the US. This lack of support led to Lumumba’s interest in working with the Soviet Union. Lumumba’s involvement with the Soviet Union sparked US concern, as it was feared the Soviet Union would spread communism to the DRC (Isike and Abutudu, 2012). In February of 1961, the US successfully assassinated the democratically elected Lumumba, leading to the commencement of Josef Mobutu’s brutal reign. The United States’ actions, in cooperation with Belgium, have permanently damaged the DRC, a region rich with resources yet cursed with years of corrupted leadership.

 Although US foreign policy has experienced some shifts under the Obama Administration, several incidents in recent times suggest that, despite the backlash resulting from past policies, the US continues to implement less than favorable foreign policy. The most recent incident that displayed poor judgment in regards to foreign policy occurred in September of 2013 involving Brazil and the N.S.A. spying incident. The spying that occurred by the US on Brazil was mainly focused on Brazil’s president Dilma Rousseff, as well as Rousseff’s top aides and Brazil’s oil company, Petrobras. Rousseff did not respond gently to this act of intrusion, cancelling her planned trip to Washington. It is actions such as this spying incident that continue to deteriorate the United States’ relationships with countries around the globe.

 While the three instances that have been discussed, as well as the most recent incident involving Brazil, are far from the only examples of meddling, detrimental US foreign policy, these incidents paint a picture of the policies the US often adopts when establishing its international relations. The US is a country that speaks of the spread of democracy and freedom, yet acts in ways that inhibit the growth of democracy when its national interests are in jeopardy. The actions taken by the US, such as the coups and assassinations discussed, have left many countries throughout the world with unfavorable feelings regarding the US.

**Sweden as the advocate for international peace**

 Shifting to Sweden’s foreign policy, there appears to be far less research dedicated to the neutral country’s history in foreign policy. This can largely be attributed to the fact that Sweden has remained inactive in wars since 1814, including World Wars I and II, as well as the Cold War. Sweden follows the philosophy of staying out of alliances during times of peace in order to remain neutral during times of war. During World War II, despite remaining inactive militarily, Sweden did allow refugees escaping the Holocaust into the country. Although very little research is available regarding Sweden’s roles in the World Wars, adequate research has been conducted on Sweden during the years of the Cold War. In many ways, Sweden’s actions, or inaction, during the Cold War set a precedent for the nation’s foreign policy implications for years to come. Similar to previous wars, Sweden remained largely uninvolved in the Cold War. According to Lödén (2012), Sweden’s Cold War policy remained neutral, yet allowed Sweden to retaliate if attacked by the Soviet Union. In 1948, the Scandinavian defense dilemma tested Sweden’s non-alignment stance. While the West attempted to urge the Swedes to join the Scandinavian Defense, Sweden stood strong in its stance to remain inactive in hopes of staying true to its non-alignment policy (Petersson, 2012). Sweden explained its reluctance to join the Scandinavian defense with what is known as the Finland argument. The basis of the argument was that “if Sweden joined NATO, the Soviet Union would occupy Finland and thereby increase the tensions between the blocs in the whole Nordic region,” (Petersson, 2012, p. 223). Sweden’s unwillingness to join the Western cause illustrates the country’s priority to remain non-aligned during conflict. Moving into the 1960s and 1970s, Sweden adopted a “Third Way” type of foreign policy, allowing the country to develop ties with the Non-Aligned Movement (Lödén, 2012). This “Third Way” also allowed Sweden to remain separate from the superpowers in conflict and prevented siding with one. In fact, Sweden allowed for both the US and Soviet Union to employ operations within the country. Sweden’s ability and determination to remain non-aligned throughout the Cold War is a prime example of how the nation’s foreign policy has been shaped throughout history, or at least after 1814, and how the shaping of its foreign policy has allowed the country to remain inactive in war. Sweden’s non-aligned stance in important wars in the past has also contributed to the relatively positive image the country possesses today.

 An important aspect of Sweden foreign policy that was both beneficial during the Cold War and remains a key component of policy today is the idea of preventative diplomacy. Preventative diplomacy emphasizes conflict prevention. As stated by Lund (1996), the strategy of conflict prevention adopted by Sweden focuses on the philosophy that “proaction is better than reaction,” (as cited in Bjorkdahl, 2013). Bjorkdahl (2013) describes Sweden as a norm entrepreneur, meaning that despite Sweden’s small size, the country does not fold and reconstruct its national identity to fit with universal norms. Rather, Sweden has remained not only a critic of superpowers, such as the US and Soviet Union, but it has also created a legacy of supporting international law and enhancing global peace and welfare (Bjorkdahl, 2013). Sweden’s approach to foreign policy has made important contributions to both the United Nations, which Sweden joined in 1946, as well as the European Union, a member since 1995. A particular example of Sweden’s conflict prevention in action occurred in 1998. It was during this time that Swedish representatives composed Presidential conclusions “embracing a holistic approach to UN peace efforts and linking conflict prevention to peacekeeping,” including the elimination of poverty, promotion of democracy, a push for maintainable development, as well as a respect and improvement of human rights (Bjorkdahl, 2013). These foreign policy goals have remained key aspects of Sweden foreign policy, as will be seen in the discussion of Sweden’s current Statement of Foreign Policy.

 Perhaps the most telling document of how Sweden constructs and executes its foreign policy is Sweden’s current Statement of Foreign Policy. In this document, it is evident that the country’s priorities of human rights and the advancement of democracy continue to prevail as the motivating factors for the ways in which Sweden interacts with the globe. The opening declaration of this document states, “Sweden’s foreign policy contributes to the freedom, peace and reconciliation around the world,” followed with “democracy, human rights and sustainable development permeates our country’s relationship with other countries and with multilateral cooperation,” (Statement of Foreign Policy, 2014). These opening remarks strongly reinforce the goals of foreign policy outlined by Sweden in the 1990s when working with the UN. With these statements setting the tone, the Statement of Foreign Policy continues on to discuss goals and plans addressing specific regions and countries in which Sweden believes attention must be paid.

 Before discussing specific countries, the Statement of Foreign Policy calls attention to the EU. According to the statements made within the document, Sweden is advocating for a stronger union that encourages enlargement with more countries entirely included in the EU. Sweden believes growth of the EU will contribute to the “peace, stability and development” of the continent of Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). Specific goals for the EU, as illustrated by Sweden, include recognizing the seriousness of global challenges, including climate change, expanding the economy through free trade and open markets, and a heavier focus on the positive benefits of migration. Despite the current rifts occurring through Europe in regards to the EU, Sweden not only continues to stand by the union, but is pushing for the EU to take greater global responsibility (Osterdahl, 2009). The EU is a tool Sweden wishes to use to employ its foreign policy strategies to improve the conditions not only of Europe, but of the globe.

 After the discussion of the EU, the Statement of Foreign Policy goes on to discuss desired actions and goals for specific countries or regions. One region that is given rather detailed attention is Ukraine. Sweden describes itself as “deeply concerned” with the situation occurring in Ukraine. True to Swedish form, the country condemns the use of violence in handling the situation, urging the leaders of Ukraine to work together with the opposition to come to a solution, specifically stating that Sweden is “ready to support reform policies and take measures if the regime instead chooses the shortsighted path of repression and brutality,” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). It is clear through this bold statement that although Sweden is pushing for a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine, the country will not stand by and let a brutal regime resort to brutality.

 The document goes on to discuss the current struggles of Syria. In regards to the situation Syria is enduring, Sweden believes it is the responsibility of the parties involved, as well as the international community, to employ negotiations currently in the works to contribute to a solution, emphasizing the importance in stopping further violence from occurring and respecting humanitarian law. The document notes of Sweden contributing heavily in humanitarian aid, SEK 700 million, as well as the plan to contribute at least SEK 230 million more in a year with support only being given to “actors who promote human rights and democracy,” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). This statement made is crucial. The previous discussion of US foreign policy moves exemplified US willingness to support brutal regimes, rather than human rights and democracy, which is quite opposite from Sweden’s foreign policy outlines. It is this distinct difference in the execution of foreign policy that fosters the unfavorable feelings towards the US, yet positive or neutral feelings towards Sweden.

 While Sweden’s Statement of Foreign Policy undoubtedly illustrates how Sweden intends for its foreign policy to play out in the near future, a recent event proves that Sweden follows through on what the nation stands for in regards to its international relations. In October of 2014, upon taking office, the new Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, made a bold and honorable first foreign policy announcement, declaring Sweden will now recognize the state of Palestine. Prime Minister Lofven stated, “the conflict between Israel and Palestine can only be solved with a two state solution and a two-state solution requires mutual recognition and a will to peaceful co-existence,” (Christensen, 2014). As previously mentioned, United States’ unwavering support for Israel has long been a point of contention in the Middle East. It appears as though this unwavering support is not going to be broken down any time soon, as the United States’ reaction to Sweden’s decision to recognize Palestine as a state fell short of condoning and congratulating the new Prime Minister, believing “international recognition of a Palestinian state is premature,” (Christensen, 2014). It is moves such as recognizing Palestine as a state that shape the feelings and opinions towards Sweden. Likewise, moves made by the US, such as the reaction of the US to Sweden’s announcement, also shape the opinions of the US; however, these opinions are deservingly far less positive than that of Sweden.

In summing up the differences between the structure and execution of the foreign policies of Sweden and the US, Bjereld and Ekengren’s (1999) work on the dimensions of Sweden and US foreign policy perfectly exemplifies the disparities. The authors refer to the concepts “militant internationalism” and “cooperative internationalism” in their comparison of Sweden and US foreign policies. In the study, Bjereld and Ekengren discuss the difference in how the US and Sweden define each concept. In Sweden, militant internationalism is described as “an involvement in world affairs in combination with attitudes toward violence for solving international issues,” whereas cooperative internationalism is defined as “expression of opinions on the relationship of state with the larger world community or North/South relations,” (p. 514). In the United States, on the other hand, militant internationalism is described as “the American right to send troops in order to fight communism and guard American interests,” (p. 516). The connotation of the concept “militant internationalism” varies greatly between Sweden and the US; however, how each country describes this concept is quite representative of how foreign policy is executed. While Sweden clearly denotes a negative connotation regarding militant internationalism, the United States’ interpretation of the concept fits well with the way in which the superpower conducts itself on the international scene, utilizing force to protect its national interests wherever it may see fit.

**Is Sweden too neutral?**

 It has been made clear through the research presented that US foreign policy is at the root of anti-American sentiments. Intrusive US meddling is the answer to Bin Laden’s question posed regarding why the US is under attack while a country like Sweden is not. While it is evident, in regards to foreign policy, countries around the globe are far more accepting of Sweden’s often neutral stance; could it be possible that Sweden’s policy of neutrality works against the Scandinavian country’s goal of protecting human rights and spreading peace? Should Sweden do more? Some may argue that Sweden, as a well-established country with resources, should do more to get involved with spreading peace and democracy. Current shifts in Sweden’s foreign policy suggest there is little to no validity to these statements. Although Sweden is not jumping at any opportunity to send troops into a country to use military force, the nation’s statement on foreign policy, as well as the actions it has taken, proves Sweden does actively work to protect human rights and create peace around the globe.

 Although Sweden has remained inactive in wars, the nation has provided support in peace operations on numerous occasions, including the contribution of troops in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2010 and the active military participation in the Libya conflict. Furthermore, Sweden’s current statement on foreign policy displays the country’s willingness to become involved when it is firmly believed resorting to force is the only or best possible option; however, Sweden stresses the importance of diplomatic resolution of conflict over the use of direct force. Sweden has made it clear through its statement on foreign policy that protecting human rights and aiding to end turmoil in countries enduring conflict is an important priority. Providing aid to countries such as North Korea, Syria, and Ukraine remain at the top of Sweden’s to-do list in their foreign policy. Even as Sweden begins to involve itself more directly in countries suffering from human rights violations, there is very little risk of Sweden ever employing force to work against international law (Osterdahl, 2011). The fact that Sweden is a country that functions based on diplomacy rather than brute force should not take away from the work the nation does to support the spread of democracy and improve human rights around the globe; rather, Sweden’s way of using mediation and negotiation over military force should be admired and adopted as proper and fair foreign policy tactics.

**Conclusion**

 A country’s foreign policy is vastly important to its international relations. The ways in which a country interacts with the world have profound impacts on how well, or poorly, the country is viewed by other nations. A country, such as the US, that repeatedly acts in self-serving ways, detrimental to other regions of the world is inevitably going to face a backlash for its actions. A country like Sweden, on the other hand, that does not carry out the same intrusive, meddling foreign policies is going to be viewed far more positively. Democratic, capitalist, free countries are not a target. In most cases, these developed countries are very much admired and viewed as models for how life could be. Freedom and democracy does not create resentment and hostility, contrary to President Bush’s understanding of the September 11th attacks occurring as a backlash to United States’ freedoms. The explanation for the hostility felt towards the United States that is not felt towards Sweden, another democratic and free nation, is simple: foreign policy.

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