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Sweden as Likely to Find 'Russian' Sub as It Is to Find Karlsson, Russia Says

By The Moscow Times

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The children's book “Karlsson on the Roof,” penned by Swedish author Astrid Lingren, was made into a Soviet cartoon that is still popular with Russian children today.

The Russian Defense Ministry has poured scorn on attempts by the Swedish armed forces to find a suspected foreign submarine in waters off Stockholm after they called off a week-long hunt for the mysterious vessel.

“The chance of Sweden finding a 'Russian trace' in these areas is no greater than the chances of [Swedish fictional characters] Fille and Rulle catching Karlsson, who lived on the roof," Defense Ministry spokesman General Igor Konashenkov was cited as saying Friday by the TASS news agency.

The popular children's book “Karlsson on the Roof,” penned by Swedish author Astrid Lingren, follows the adventures of a mischievous flying man named Karlsson who is pursued by two burglars — Fille and Rulle.

The book was made into a cartoon in the Soviet Union and is still popular with Russian children today.

Following last week's sighting off the Swedish coast of a mysterious vessel, believed to be a Russian sub, more than 200 troops, stealth ships and helicopters have scoured the waters off Stockholm for signs of foreign underwater activity, but the armed forces announced Friday they had called off their search.

"This means the bulk of ships and amphibious forces have returned to port," the armed forces said in a statement, adding that some smaller forces would remain in the area.

The military had received what it described as credible reports of activity by foreign submarines or divers using an underwater vehicle. The vessels were unidentified, but during the 1980s the Swedish navy from time to time hunted suspected Soviet submarines in its waters

“Such unfounded actions by the Swedish military department, such heated rhetoric in the spirit of the Cold War, are today leading to an escalation of tensions in the region,” General Konashenkov was cited as saying by TASS. “ As a result they are undermining the foundations of maritime economic activities in the Baltic Sea," he added.

In another incident, NATO and Swedish fighter jets were scrambled to intercept a Russian intelligence-gathering plane that briefly entered Estonian airspace on Tuesday. The Estonian Foreign Ministry formally protested to Russia.

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