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Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden

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Preface

This book has been written as part of the research project 'Sweden and the Stable Peace', involving political scientists and historians. Being a historian, I have sometimes found the terminology and scientific aspirations of the political sciences too constraining for historical analysis, but some recent works with a historical perspective on International Relations and historical sociology have also been a great source of inspiration. I am convinced that historians, too, should dare to go beyond the stage of detailed scrutiny and paint a bigger picture. My aim with this book has been to make an overall assessment of Sweden's transition from belligerent empire to peaceful small state. A study of Swedish neutrality and state-building from the Vasas to the new millennium cannot pretend to take into consideration all aspects and works of each particular period. Historical specialists will probably find that I pass too rapidly over 'their' years. I have often felt the temptation to get entrenched in the fascinating peculiarities of single epochs, but have then returned to focus on the larger trends that are the overall theme of this book. What might not have been achieved in detail, thoroughness and exhaustion will hopefully be compensated for by perspective, comparability and reflection.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the directors of the project, Professor Magnus Jerneck, Department of Political Science, and Professor Kim Salomon, Department of History, and other project colleagues at Lund University. Equally sincere thanks go to the sponsors, the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. I am particularly grateful to Bengt Werner for generously sharing his knowledge of the eighteenth-century Neutrality Leagues.

During the final stage of my work I had the privilege of spending an academic year as Senior Associate Member of St Antony's College, Oxford University. I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Anne Deighton who made this stay possible, Mr A. J. Nicholls, director of the European Studies Centre, and other colleagues and friends at Oxford who made it such a rewarding year. The visit was financed by a grant from The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT). Finally I

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MIKAEL AF MALMBORG