

Swedish diplomat Sverker Åström dead at 96

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Swedish top diplomat Sverker Åström has died at the age of 96, news agency TT said.



Åström is one of the most experienced Swedish diplomat, with a record going back to 1939. For many he is the architect of Sweden's neutrality policy.

He served as an ambassador to the UN during the 1960s. He was also Sweden's ambassador in Paris and worked as secretary of the cabinet for the foreign ministry.

Foreign minister Carl Bildt praised the late Åström for his leading role in formulating Sweden's foreign policy doctrine during the country's "era of neutrality"., Swedish Radio said.

"He was extraordinarily significant," said Bildt. "Neutrality is a doctrine that we've since put behind us, but it served Sweden well during a not uncomplicated phase of European history".

At the age of 88 Sverker Åström came out of the closet, and became something of a role model in the gay community. In 2004 he received the "Homo of the Year"-award from the Swedish gay oriented magazine QX.