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Introduction to the Governor's text

by Tommy Jeppsson

THE INTRODUCTORY TEXT chosen for this thematic issue of the *Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences' Proceedings and Journal,* concerning our country's NATO membership, was written for the book *För Sveriges Säkerhet (For Sweden's Security)*, which was part of the documentation of the Academy's project *Svensk säkerhet efter 2014 (Swedish Security after 2014)*.

Why introduce the current state of Swedish security policy with a text that is more than a decade old, albeit supplemented? The reason is that it firstly provides a valuable and interesting theoretical background, from a longer retrospective perspective, as well as a present and future-related one.

Secondly, the text reminds us of what has been repeatedly demonstrated historically, namely that changes in the security temperature are a constant and force paradigm shifts of the kind we are now experiencing.

Thirdly, reading the Governor's text should lead to reflections on the continuous need for a realistic analysis of the world around us, where conclusions and recommendations are based on how the world around us actually looks and where wishful thinking is absent. The latter is not uncommon, especially in smaller states, where Wilhelm Agrell, in his latest book *A Time for War,* captures the problem in one sentence, thus: "It is about the dance of violence and wishful thinking that poses the most dangerous threat to any security system and its ability to deal with existential threats."

Fourth, and linked to the fact that security policy changes can be seen as a constant. The picture painted in 2012, the tendency to worry about the future but also a certain optimism, is only twelve years in the past and is today unrecognizably changed. This is reminiscent of the long-standing experience of the need for continuous preparedness and defense capabilities as a platform for political freedom of action. This is despite periods of security policy thaw.

The author is a lieutenant colonel, a member of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences and editor of its Proceedings and Journal.

Why we should have a defense

by Björn von Sydow

Résumé

Sweden is now a member of NATO. How are we to handle the challenges, in perspective of a somewhat modified application I performed in 2012 on the analysis Scheme made by Professor Hans F. Petersson in his dissertation in 1964: Power *and International Order. An analytical study of four schools of thought and their approaches to war, the peace and a post-war system 1914–1919*. Now I have brought my analyses into 2024. Today a right-wing *authoritarian* school of thought is expressed by Putin and his dictatorial policies versus Ukraine and in Russia itself. A second school is conservative and liberal ideas surrounding the Great Powers in the world; they tend to be and strive for an oligarchy in international affairs. They are labelled *moderate* by Petersson. His next school of thought are the *radical;* democrats promoting an evolutionary democratization of the world and be it rule based by international organizations. In his original Petersson labelled the fourth school *revolutionary*. A hundred years ago the then communists were such. Today I pick terrorism, not least Muslim based, striving for world dominance. NATO membership for Sweden is founded with *radical* thoughts. Sweden will no longer have separate command-systems for defense. Swedish based arms industry will operate easier with other NATO countries. It can be viewed as an element of a *small* great powers' *moderate* thinking. Contrasted to the imperialistic *authoritarian* belief system in Russia, priorities in democracies have to be defense. As goes for *terrorism* from September 11, military operations seem mostly to have failed. But they cannot be completely disregarded. Most anti-terrorism efforts must however be managed by police, courts and prisons, but surely also in schools and families' interventions.

THE WORLD HAS almost 9 billion human inhabitants. It is a planet, not that big, compared to others in our solar system and perhaps not even in the Milky Way. But the human species has become completely dominant on our planet. Humans have communication skills, organizational skills and superior intelligence compared to other species. Humans also have the ability to see and take moral steps. From this has come human societies. There are almost 200 states and thousands of significant international organizations on Earth.

But there is no international state on this earth of ours. There is no uniform legal system, political government or economic system. There is no secure internal freedom and no external peace, on equal terms for people. Other living organisms, natural resources and the climate have no voice of their own.

Power in the social and international order is a major issue for humanity. It has also been one of the classic questions of human experience and philosophy.

Let us go beyond centuries of experience, misery and philosophy on this. Let us start with what shook Europe and North America

with the First World War. In 1914, an almost century-long phase of relative peace in Europe was broken; instead, European leaders had jointly and competitively focused their interests to a large extent on colonizing and dominating other parts of the world. It was industrialism in the West that brought military and commercial supremacy.

The outbreak of the First World War was created by a mix of pre-emptive war thinking and unpredictability between the two great power alliances in Europe. But war technology and mass armies could not create an immediate decisive war on the Western Front. Huge losses were incurred in trench warfare. On the eastern fronts, the war was decided, but the great war was not decided until the fall of 1918, when the central powers requested an armistice. In the end, the Western War was a struggle between democracies and imperial authoritarian states. Russia went from its Tsardom to Bolshevism, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire dissolved. Germany became the Weimar Republic.

After 1914

It is in this tumultuous situation that people's political thinking was put to the test—a previous international order proved inadequate; but how should a present one be organized internationally?

A Swedish scholar has made an astute analysis of how power should be handled after the collapse of the 1815 European world; the 'European concert' of the Congress of Vienna should be replaced. But with what? In his thesis *Power and International Order. An analytical study of four schools of thought and their approaches to the war, the peace and a post—war system 1914–1919*, Hans F. Petersson[1] makes a contribution that I believe has had great relevance. This applies not only to the period around the First World War but also to the period up to the end of the Cold War in 1989–1991. I believe that his study can still give us good insights into how the international order can be shaped according to different patterns. It is a body of thought, which I believe can also be used, with certain adjusted applications, for our time and for Sweden's security policy assessments and choices.

H. F. Petersson found that the empirical material in warring Europe could usefully be organized into four schools of thought. They were supported by different actors, who in themselves could be on different sides in the Great War. But their thinking and war aims could have common formulas. Petersson groups the schools of thought into a continuum from right to left.

The most right-wing school of thought he calls *authoritarian;* these were nationalist groupings. What characterizes these actors is their positive view of a concentration of power, both national and international, in the hands of a single decision-maker. To that end, both the national and international order should be given a hierarchical order and this, if necessary, through a revolution from above.

In a middle group, he found conservative and right-wing liberal actors and thinkers. Petersson calls them the *moderate* school of thought. The term is intended to emphasize this school's (continued) desire for a balance of power. No single actor would dominate the others, but the decisive influence would still remain in an oligarchy. The international state they wanted to see emphasized continuity, but it did not preclude change as long as it did not take revolutionary forms.

The next school of thought and group in Peterson's scheme is clearly on the left. He called it the *radical* school. Its aim was an evolutionary, pervasive reform of the social

system, including the international system. The radical school of thought was against any concentration of power, against oligarchies. They wanted to see a spread of power and broad popular participation. They were critical of the current power structure but were unwilling to accept that the current order should be overthrown by force.

The extreme radical left school and group were the *revolutionaries*. They were in favor of a national and international concentration of power—provided it was in their own hands. They were totally opposed to the existing society because its distribution of power was totally negative.

It is these categories, their thinking and almost their actual actions that are the subject of Petersson's work. He collects and equates the arguments of, above all, the actors of the belligerent countries, but also some outside this circle. The arguments are thus brought together into patterns of thought, irrespective of whether they are expressed by a German or French actor, for example. It is the worldview that is at stake; the starting point for political action in concrete terms.[2]

I will apply his schools of thought and categories of actors to contemporary conditions. But first I want to give some examples of how the actors of the time and their systems of thought looked.

The authoritarian politics of the time emphasized land and country as the main asset for power. There was also nothing but a zero-sum game; power could only be gained from the lost power of others. The authoritarian stance pointed to total victory or total subordination. It was military strength at its core that determined the world order. This was a recipe for *one* great power.

The axioms of the *moderate* line were classical diplomacy, classical capitalism and enlightened attitudes, but with no direct aims other than to prevent the hegemony of a single power. Otherwise, it was content with balances of power between different actors, especially regarding the world's great powers. The smaller states could act as equalizers. This was not a static system of world order, but an adjustable one.

Radicals believed that political democracy would transform international disorder into an order akin to parliamentary-controlled domestic politics. States would be interdependent in the same way as capitalism, science and trade. However, major democratization tasks lay ahead. The world was ripe for international cooperation and a modernized legal order. Conflict resolution ideas pointed to general disarmament and something of what became the League of Nations.

The revolutionaries of this time were the communists and their work for the world revolution in which the working class crushed capitalism. The dialectical process of the world order had now reached the tipping point between capitalism and socialism. It was a total shift of power. The means of coercion that the bourgeois state had used against the proletariat would now be reversed. Class war, only then world peace.[3]

These approaches could be explanatory at the time under discussion, but also later. All four patterns of thought existed, side by side. 1914–1989 was an epoch in the development of Europe and the world.

After 1989

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact and Yugoslavia, both Europe and much of the world entered a new international system. We are talking about economic globalization. China, South Korea, India and some other countries are new economic giants. We have strong growth years and sudden financial crises. Is climate change also creating a new geography? We

have talked about both a hegemonic state like the US and a simultaneous movement towards multipolarity in the world. We have a political rebirth of religions. Some live in a widespread culture of corruption, others in corruption-free societies. We have closed borders in some respects; in others, large population movements including tourism. We have fewer inter-state wars but new asymmetric conflicts.

Is it possible to give a philosophical order to today's international conflicts and security policy? One that brings together assessments and normative statements into something similar to what H. F. Petersson did for the period 1914–1919?[4]

A real study on that basis should be possible and interesting. One would then go into material from various actors, regardless of where they are based, and from this extract political lines of thought and see if the scheme of the four schools of thought 1914–1919 would also be valid now. Perhaps one would like to use a modern term to search for each *discourse*. This would require a modern determination of the types of material that would be considered relevant in our time. Speeches, debates, articles, planning documents, etc. A big job. But probably possible; the web would be very helpful.

I can't do anything like that. But let me make some *assumptions* or *hypotheses* about what could be four contemporary schools of thought. My references to sources will only be hints. I limit myself to assuming, rather freely, what is the *security policy* discourse of some actors relevant to us; by that I mean *dominant patterns of thought about their own and indirectly other actors' security policy*.

Four schools of thought related to H. F. Petersson's analysis of the period around the First World War, but with relevance in today's world and with a view to the future, could thus look like this:

Authoritarian. It is a school of thought found in Vladimir Putin's Russia (Russian Federation). It is where the dominant discourse, the heir to Soviet Communism and Tsarist Imperial Russia, resides. Russian patriotism and nationalism are now, as in the past, a powerful driving force. "Even today, Russia sees itself surrounded by enemies, an expanding NATO around a shrinking territory," writes Gudrun Persson in her book *Det sovjetiska arvet*.[5] Under Putin, the Russian state has become authoritarian. The mainstream media have been streamlined and elections have been manipulated. No counterweights to the "vertical of power" in Moscow have been allowed. We can speak of a one-man system, highly centralized. However, the regime has enjoyed considerable support, even without these authoritarian features.

At the time of writing, Russia stands between two elections—the rigged but also criticized Duma elections in December 2011 and the upcoming presidential elections in March 2012. The PEW Research Center reports that in 1991 the Russian population preferred a democratic government to a strong leader by 51% to 39%. In 2011 the results are reversed—32% prefer a democratic government to 47% a strong leader. It remains to be seen whether more democratic conditions will prevail in the future.[6]

The security agenda is based on the view that land and territory are crucial assets in world politics, as well as for Russia's status. It is also based on the idea that every power gained comes at the cost of someone's loss. Already in the elections during the Yeltsin period, a revival of imperial nostalgia could be seen, and it has become a hallmark of Putin. Under Putin, the armed forces have been modernized. The 2010 Russian military doctrine, as in previous versions, expresses a stated ambition to prevent further NATO

enlargement and to give Russia a strong voice in shaping a new security architecture in Europe. The Russian leadership wants to create an alliance on an equal footing with NATO together with its CSTO partners—Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Russia is also strongly opposed to the US- and NATO-led so-called missile defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles from Iran, etc. Russia also considers itself entitled to use its military to protect Russian minorities and Russian troops abroad, although not necessarily at the request of the country where the troops are stationed. Russian military exercises are also based on this type of political objective.[7]

Russia's security policy is thus based on a discourse of a kind that makes it appropriate to call it *authoritarian*. It is authoritarian at home and with considerable popular support, at least until now. It strives for Russian hegemony over its part of the world and in the South and the West cannot accept the presence of anyone else—read the United States and NATO—within the borders that were the Soviet Union's until 1991. (On the other hand, the former Warsaw Pact states have been abandoned.) But the stated ambitions of today's oligarchy in Russia, despite its possession of strategic nuclear weapons, are not enough to achieve hegemony in the true sense of the word, for the whole world.

Moderate. In this category of contemporary discourse, we find above all great powers. They are themselves something of an oligarchy, and some of them are ruled internally by an explicit oligarchy. Their first priority is to maintain political equilibria in the world. That does not preclude readjustments of borders and common institutions. Crucial, however, is preventing the emergence of a hegemonic power. A category of today is Brazil, India, China and South Africa. The more or less explicit political aim among these countries is to prevent the United States from remaining a world hegemonic power. But Brazil, India and South Africa certainly have no intention of allowing China to become a hegemonic world power (just as Russia has not).[8] To this category of states, we can add states that may become regional powers in the long run, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Nigeria, Turkey and Iran.

I would also place the USA, at least partially, in the moderate school. The trait of "exceptionalism" pushes in this direction. The universal norms may have the support of the US but must not bind the US itself. In military policy terms, this may mean that the US can go beyond international law, e.g. as expressed in the UN Charter, in the form of preventive war. US security policy seeks to prevent the emergence of any other hegemonic state, whether at the global or regional level. Today, this alternative power appears above all to be China.[9]

To some extent, European powers and their political discourse can also be found in this category. Britain, France, Turkey and to some extent Italy, all with their colonial past, have to some extent a post-imperial perspective. Britain and France have their nuclear weapons and also effective conventional forces. Germany has its economic power and now recognizes a greater role for itself in international politics. Germany is the anchor of the euro and thus has a special great power base.

Radical. The world's democracies make up half of all states, following several waves of democratization: Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, the latest being the 'Arab Spring', a process of change that is still unfinished. Democracies almost invariably emerge through non-violence. Democratic states are characterized by the sharing of power and the interaction between politics,

law and the market. In many of the democracies, the distribution of income has tended to become more equal through welfare policies, but recent developments are not clear-cut.[10]

The system of intergovernmental organizations is also an expression of the radical discourse of our time. Intergovernmental cooperation can involve both democracies and authoritarian states. This is the case with the UN and the WTO, WHO, WMO, etc. Other intergovernmental institutions have democracies or democratizing countries as members. In Europe, there is the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Nordic Council, etc. Many medium-sized and small states are active in these intergovernmental organizations, which in some of their functions can have clear supranational features. Sweden and the Nordic countries are among the most committed states in the radical discourse after the Second World War. But the United States also has a tradition of participating and committing itself to institutionalized international cooperation. The UN and the international financial institutions, created after the Second World War, are US-based, and since President Woodrow Wilson there has been an aspiration for 'universalism' with the US also as a party. But Wilson himself found that Congress refused to ratify his initiative, the League of Nations.[11]

However, there has been no breakthrough for the original demand of what H. F. Petersson called the radical school for general disarmament. NATO was created in its day as an intergovernmental democratic counterweight to the threat from the Soviet Union. Nuclear weapons were the ultimate deterrent between the parties. Between NATO countries, on the other hand, a kind of disarmament was created through the common external military policy planning and command systems. The same can be said of the EU countries—they are disarmed against each other. Starting in the 1960s, the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated certain nuclear arms limitation agreements, as well as later conventional ones, for the whole of Europe. As far as they go, they are limitations on military armaments.[12]

Revolutionary. Communist ideology of the kind espoused by Lenin has few adherents in today's world. It was ultimately a world revolution. Perhaps this ideology is alive and well in North Korea? There are organizations based on Lenin's militarized Communist Party that would make revolution against bourgeoisie and capitalism by force. Certainly, this pattern of thought is present in insurgent and terrorist groups in some places; in Europe it was present in the 1970s. But on the whole, Leninist ideology is not a living matter with security policy implications in the present.[13]

Are there equivalents—an ideology of a completely different world order? A total reversal of societal values? A use of violence on the basis of a quasi-military organization, which at the same time has a popular base?

Yes, my considerations point to today's terrorism, based on religions. It is a revolutionary discourse, school of thought and clusters of actors. I thus classify what happened to the United States on September 11, 2001, as well as the preceding and subsequent terrorist attacks, as outflows of a revolutionary religious-based political school of thought. The regime that existed in Afghanistan in the years before 2001, as well as the Al-Qaeda network can be counted among them, and the related religiously based violence in the Middle East, also between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Ambassador and Foreign Ministry analyst Ingmar Karlsson uses the concept of *fundamentalism* as basic. The religiously based forces that gain political power by partici-

pating in political elections can also be said to be revolutionary, but peaceful, when they want to create a society based on a literal application of their theological creeds. The revolutionary element lies in the desire to establish a literal link between religious belief and social order.[14]

But Ingmar Karlsson does not want to limit this revolutionary discourse to an Islamic revolution alone, in the Muslim countries or for the whole world. Jewish orthodoxy, with its political power in Israel, can be included in the same revolutionary vein. Some elements of Christianity could also be included, especially the very politically oriented evangelical religious beliefs in the United States, which express strong support for Israel.

The development of an Islamist movement is indirectly related to that. It was also in opposition to the ruling regimes and contained a widespread sense of belonging to the losers of the modernization process. However, Islamist movements have very different views on the strategy to be adopted to create Islamic states; there are both revolutionary and reformist ones. In the 'Arab Spring' in Tunisia, for example, we see the reformist line, as well as important elements of the election results in Egypt.

Contemporary international Islamic *terrorism* has shifted from being state-sponsored to, in the words of Ingmar Karlsson, becoming supranational and de-territorialized. "Instead, it now consists of radical movements that oppose the nation-state idea and dream of re-establishing *the umma*, an international Islamic community." The religiously motivated terrorists see themselves as involved in a total war between good and evil, with anyone who disagrees with them on the side of evil. In other words, only those fundamentalists who use violence—terrorist acts or military force—belong to a *revolutionary* discourse *on security policy*.[15]

Sweden's security policy

In H. F. Petersson's discourse, the four schools of thought are grouped from right to left: the authoritarian, the moderate, the radical and finally the revolutionary school of thought. Almost a hundred years later, this holds true in many ways. But not entirely. I am modifying them. The revolutionary school of thought today has a mindset based on religious fundamentalism. I also see it as more right-wing than the corresponding revolutionary one, which existed in 1919. In the model here, I have therefore regrouped the schools of thought—moving the radical one to the left and the revolutionary one to the right.

The question I will now ask is *how Sweden should assess the security implications* of today's four discourses on world order? How should we deal with them? To this end, I will ask what (combat) means Sweden should have to protect and develop our social order, in the light of the conflicts and threats that may emanate from the various discourses. It is thus a matter of Swedish security policy, but to some extent it also concerns how the entire international community should do the same. Two basic categories are useful, now as in the past—is it with *détente* or deterrence that the four discourses should be met?[16]

The radical school of thought. Today's Sweden is very much a participant in this. The most pronounced core of actors with a radical framework is the European Union. In principle, there is no military armament between the member states; this is achieved through the joint command structure in NATO and its complement in the EU. Within the EU, Swedish security policy can therefore focus exclusively on détente. It can be about continued military integration. And looking only at the situation *between* EU

member states, defense spending could be reduced. The development of judicial and police integration could also be deepened, thus replacing the military dimension between EU states.

In the Union's external security policy, there is room for soft to medium-hard security policy, civilian but also military, the so-called Petersberg tasks in the Lisbon Treaty. In a study, Katarina Engberg has shown how the first military operations under the auspices of the EU were conducted.[17] She points out that they take place at the low to medium risk level; they need a UN Security Council mandate; interaction with local actors. And not least, they need a military and political base in one of the EU's major powers, the UK, France or Germany. These are joined by medium and small member states and non-EU states. EU action is less likely when there is a risk of major conflict, but likely as a successor to NATO action.

This means that Sweden's close cooperation with NATO can mean operations of a tougher kind. Examples of this are, of course, above all ISAF, i.e. the NATO operation in Afghanistan, in parallel with the US's own efforts. The Swedish civil and military security policy with NATO cooperation can, as in the case of Afghanistan since 2001 and Libya in 2011, take place with a mandate from the UN Security Council, but also, as in the case of Kosovo in 1999, take place as a non-combatant, since some of the permanent members of the Security Council vetoed it.

My conclusion is that for this part of its future security policy—*in and against the radical actor school*—Sweden can *choose different* levels of ambition within the framework of international operations. A softer security policy within the framework of the EU and the UN seems wise in virtually all situations. I also include all anticipated military operations under the UN mandate and Petersberg tasks under the EU Lisbon Treaty, Articles 42 and 43. There is a preponderance of support among our population that EU membership has been positive for military security. This does not preclude Sweden from choosing higher or lower levels of intervention, civilian and military. Sweden's current security policy has been set at a fairly high military level through the extensive investment in EU battle groups. One could also imagine a lower level of ambition—smaller military components such as those provided by Ireland. But the commitment in Article 42(7) to support a member state under attack argues for a higher military level than merely contributing some components in the lower scale of Article 43(1). The Swedish unilateral declaration of solidarity made by the Swedish Parliament in 2009 speaks in the same direction.

Cooperation with NATO within the framework of *the Partnership for Peace* also offers scope for variation, rather greater than that of the EU, since Sweden is not a member of NATO. The operation in Afghanistan in particular, is higher on the ladder from détente to deterrence. The air operation in Libya had the character of containment/deterrence; only reconnaissance missions. The analysis of how the Declaration of Solidarity could be applied in a series of crises around the Baltic countries and Russia shows different options for cooperation and the need for preparation.[18]

If one looks at Swedish security policy *only within the framework of the radical discourse,* it can be given a very clear, *relaxed* prioritization—humanitarian efforts, civilian (i.e. including police) efforts and limited military efforts. Everything can be varied according to Swedish capabilities, feelings of solidarity and finances.

But Swedish security policy must also confront the exercise of power that takes

place and legitimizes itself within *the moderate school of thought*.

The major *European* powers already have agendas other than the radical one. The UK and France are nuclear powers and defend their nuclear self-determination. They also have veto power in the UN Security Council. The two took the lead in the international operation against Gaddafi's Libya. Germany and France dominate the governance of the euro. The tracks actually go back to the 1990s.[19]

In terms of security policy, Sweden must relate to these various major powers. Can we trust them to relate to us with the standards of the radical school? Yes, most of the time. But always? Can Eurozone countries trust "Merkozy"? Can EU and NATO members like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania trust Germany, France, the UK? Can Sweden? That they stand up for the common good of all. The Libya operation became an issue where only some NATO member states were involved. Germany abstained.

Do the great powers, which are in the moderate school, also need to take into account the competition and conflicts surrounding the global balance of power between great powers? This can take the form of competition for natural resources and for import markets. The US with its global agendas—does China have a similar one? All the Western powers also have a complex agenda with Russia. They need energy, control of the nuclear balance, hence the "counter" to terrorism. The world is unstable. Foreign-domestic and domestic-foreign policy.

The United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany are all committed to seeing Swedish defense transformed into an operational defense, ready for international operations within the framework of NATO, the EU and, in principle, the UN. The Swedish-based defense industry has the interest of the Western powers.

But they certainly also look at the need for territorial defense in Sweden and the Nordic countries, in relation to Russia. And if you look at what you see at a planning table and examine which states have an interest in a militarily defended Sweden in the event of a risk of a limited (in the military sense) armed conflict, you will probably find all the major powers mentioned. An active Swedish effort in the name of solidarity can be very important. However, a certain conventional deterrence against Russia is what one could perhaps live with.

If we look at Swedish security policy within the framework of the moderate school of thought and its related actors, the Western great powers, a somewhat different picture of the trade-off between détente and deterrence emerges than the one we encounter with *the same* great powers in the radical discourse.

The great powers in our part of the world need to face more than *one* combination of détente and deterrence on the (combat) means axis. Sweden and the Nordic countries should act decisively to limit and control the major powers' CBRM weapons (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons). Sweden and the Nordic countries should seek to bind the major powers as much as possible to international legal instruments and controls. This is the *détente arm* in relation to the great powers in the moderate discourse. The traditions of statesmen such as Hjalmar Branting and Alva Myrdal should be constantly updated.

At the same time, *the deterrent arm* should be made clear in relation to the major Western powers. Since Sweden is not a member of NATO, it should have its own command and control capability, alongside an integrated NATO link. A Swedish-based defense industry with export rights to the Western democracies can paradoxically play a role in this element of deterrence. The re-

cipients will see how capable the Swedish armed forces can be.[20] Just as Swedish foreign policy in government and parliament should have its own ability to look at the self-interests and possible actions of democratic powers. Without blinders.

The authoritarian school of thought. We no longer live during the Cold War. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact's western border does not run west of Lübeck, or for that matter, Scania. Soviet war planning was based on an attack on Denmark and Norway. But from what is known so far from the Soviet archives, the defense forces of Sweden and Finland were perhaps able to marginally deter the Soviet war planning from also going over our countries. All this is over.[21]

This should be the starting point for Swedish security policy after 2014, vis-à-vis the authoritarian school of thought in today's Russia.

Russian nationalism and military doctrine have nothing negative to say about contemporary Sweden. To the west of Russia, it is NATO that is the problem—threat or danger. It could be the three Baltic countries that are members of NATO and that are at a very close distance from central Russia. At the same time, the three Baltic countries' NATO and EU membership is also an important asset for Sweden's security. During the Putin period since 2000, there has been a rearmament of the armed forces. Volumes are being reduced and there is a focus on quality. Exercise activity is increasing and the scenarios for the exercises are partly antagonistic to NATO, as before 1989–91.

But Russia's policy of authoritarianism can also be partly countered by Swedish *détente measures.* Any real integration of Russia into the international community could be important. But it is important to act so that Russian commitments are actually fulfilled. The Council of Europe and the EU face major problems here. Sweden has every reason to work for these demands, as well as for Russia to really comply with regulations and panel rulings in the WTO, now that the country is a member.

Steps *between* détente and deterrence can also be important in Swedish security policy towards the authoritarian school and its actors. International limitations on CBRN weapons and the re-establishment of the CFE agreement on limited combat forces on the flanks are very important for Swedish security policy. FOI has made an interesting study of the conditions for creating a limitation agreement on the US and Russia's tactical nuclear weapons, based on the Baltic Sea region.[22]

Inviting Russian troops to joint, preferably multinational, peacekeeping exercises is risky in the eyes of Swedish public opinion. Every Swedish defense minister will have to experience this. But it has important value. There is also value in allowing officers from both systems to study at each other's schools.

But against an authoritarian school of thought and its actors, *deterrence* is also needed, higher up the scale. It should be a matter of deterring limited attacks or pre-emptive strike-like operations. In this respect, the Swedish Armed Forces should have a role to play against the authoritarian discourse in Russia. Today's Swedish high-tech and mobile peripheral defense is well geared for this task. Cyber defense exists. But some adjustments should be made. The aim would be to give the Russian rulers and staffs a clearer deterrent signal of better Swedish endurance through a defensive strategic reserve. If there were to be a conflict over the Baltic countries, Russia and the authoritarian school there, like the Western powers of the moderate school, might find

that a clear Swedish military presence on Gotland would be an acceptable fact.

I would like to stress explicitly that if the democratic protests against the Putin regime in 2011 and 2012 lead to a real and lasting democratization and the dampening of Soviet nostalgia in Russia, things will gradually change. This could mean that the nationalism that exists in Russia is no longer directed against its neighbours to the west and southwest, who have become members of NATO. A discourse in Russia in power that approaches the moderate school of thought, with some genuine elements of the radical school of thought, could lower Swedish deterrence.

The revolutionary school of thought. Sweden has been affected by a few terrorist attacks—or have we? Until the end of 2011, one event has unequivocally taken place—the terrorist blast in Stockholm city in December 2010. Some acquittals in western Sweden have meant that suspected terrorists have been cleared.

The Swedish troops in Afghanistan have been subjected to constant attacks by irregular opponents, as have all other elements of ISAF. The same applies to civilian parts of the international missions.

There are also certainly various kinds of threats and allegations of terrorist attacks against Sweden based on religious fundamentalism, mainly Islamic.

Swedish security policy has to face this. The issue can be divided into two components. One is the risk of terrorist attacks, i.e. attacks outside the "laws of war" against Swedish troops and Swedish civilians in international service. The second issue is attacks against people and property in Sweden. There may be links between the two; Swedish international action can be answered by asymmetric terrorism in Sweden. Another link is the kind of terrorism that took place in Norway in the summer of 2011. The terrorist struck at what he saw as appeasement of Islamism by the Labor Party in particular.

The first aspect has a military component. Sweden has to weigh up the risks of terrorism in Afghanistan-type fields, if it decides to participate in that type of operation. It must also assess the risks of asymmetric terrorism against Sweden itself in that context. The first is a matter for the Swedish Armed Forces and its intelligence service; the second is essentially a task for the police and the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO). (Both tasks, incidentally, are highly dependent on intelligence sharing, including the work of the FRA.) Ultimately, the government and parliament must be aware of the issues—that they may be linked by more or less autonomous terrorists.

I believe that units in the field must act as a deterrent, although there may be room for détente with the local civilian population. Experience shows that this is a difficult but possible combination.

For "home Sweden", the bulk of terrorist work should lie with the law enforcement agencies. This means an activity based in the rule of law. An important element in the detailed design of legislation, law enforcement, schools and neighborhood work is to influence young men in particular away from terrorist acts. Any convictions for terrorist offenses should be a balance between individual prevention and public prevention as is the case in all other criminal cases.

The conclusion for Swedish security after 2014 should be to weigh the risks of asymmetric terrorism, especially if we are to engage in military operations in areas where terrorism is a hallmark. These risks must be weighed against demonstrating international solidarity with the political goals of, for example, détente and security for areas that the UN Security Council calls on us to

engage in, through the EU, NATO, or the UN directly. The experience of Western military operations in Muslim-dominated countries is very different since the Kuwait war against Iraq in 1991, on the one hand, and the war operations on land in Iraq and Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, on the other. In the future, Sweden should be very cautious about land operations such as those that have taken place since 2003 in Muslim countries, as war does not function as an extension of politics in the fight against terrorism.

Why should we have a defense? Conclusions

What we encounter as challenges from the contemporary schools of thought is a varied picture of when, where and how the Swedish Armed Forces should be able to answer the question of *Why should we have a Swedish defense in Swedish security after 2014?*

For my part, the reader will see that I believe and hope that the main development between people will go in the direction advocated by the radical school of thought. The moderate school of thought may come in as a decent second. But the challenges from the authoritarian and revolutionary schools of thought, which are more dangerous to us, show that the development is not yet unambiguously good. *That is why we must have a Swedish defense.*

It is now the task of defense policy to guide defense from time to time towards the conclusions I advocate. International operations-Territorial operational planning-Budget-Recruitment-Training-Materiel-Research-Collaboration. All are components that need to be constantly adapted to the challenges we face in a world that has not been able to create a definitive peace on the basis of any school of thought, past or present. But development does not always go wrong after all.

It is up to the government and parliament, and ultimately a free people like Sweden's, to weigh up the challenges posed by the different schools of thought. It is the task of politicians to make choices, to set priorities. And to be accountable.

Post-text 2024

Sweden is now a member of NATO. In the light of the analysis I made in 2012, based on H. F. Petersson's analysis scheme, how should we deal with the challenges of security and defense policy in our membership? Two basic categories remain useful—détente and deterrence.

Membership underlines Sweden's character as part of the *radical* school of thought. The former close cooperation with NATO has now been transformed into a full membership. This means that there is virtually no armament between member states and internally there is a reliance on détente (with a question mark over Greece-Turkey). This also means that Sweden should no longer have its own command capability alongside NATO. At the same time, Swedish-based defense industry should be able to be even more effective in the defense of NATO countries.

However, there is still a need for civilian and military international operations at a lower threat level with the EU and the UN, such as in the Western Balkans (former Yugoslavia). They can be combined with NATO's command and control system, both political and military. So much for the radical school of thought.

For Sweden, NATO also means deterrence and resilience against military and civilian threats, which are beyond the control of the EU and the UN. The *moderate* school of thought is not least an expression of the

great powers' desire for dominance. Tensions and competition between China and the US have intensified since 2012. How should the EU and the European NATO countries relate to this development, seen within the framework of the *moderate* school of thought with its great power focus on balance in a great power system? After all, the EU and NATO have both great powers within them and outside. Is Sweden really a small great power, with a kind of military exceptionalism in its thinking?

The outward-looking approaches within NATO will naturally be directed at those states that are in the *authoritarian* discourse, above all Russia. The attacks on Ukraine since 2014 are justified, not least by Putin, as a threat from NATO to Russia. Advocating détente against a regime like Putin's may seem foolish, but we must at some point be able to return to effective nuclear arms limitation agreements. As well as enforcing agreements against chemical and biological weapons. The world climate policy agenda must also include authoritarian powers.

But deterrence high up on the threat scale is needed, and Sweden and most other Western democracies need to upgrade both military and civilian defense.

The *revolutionary* school of thought today is terrorism, which is present in much of the world, often as religious fundamentalism, mainly Islamic. In Sweden, the risks of terrorism have been upgraded after the provocative Koran burnings. I think it is fair to say that since the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, military pre-emptive strikes against terrorism have largely failed. However, they should not be ruled out. Most of the fight lies with the police and the judiciary. But social action and the role of schools are clearly central to countering recruitment. Cooperation at the human level becomes crucial within Sweden and internationally. One could say that in this sense there is an element of the *radical* school of thought in eliminating the contemporary revolutionary school of thought—terrorism.

For my part, the reader will see that I believe and hope that the main development between people will go in the direction advocated by the *radical* school of thought. The moderate school of thought may come in as a decent second. But the challenges from the authoritarian and revolutionary schools of thought, which are more dangerous to us, show that the development is not yet unambiguously good. *That is why we must have a Swedish defense.*

That's how I rounded off the text in 2012. Much has happened since then, but the main lines remain the same. It is through this same pattern of thinking that our membership of NATO can be described and addressed.

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Responsibility in alliance

by Micael Bydén

Résumé

Sweden is one of 32 allies. Being part of a security community is not without cost. It requires reciprocity – over time and consistently across various security policy situations. As Sweden faces a historic defense decision, it can be noted that we require a governance model tailored to our membership, where there is a division of labor between politics and the professional sphere, and planning processes are overseen and adapted based on needs, synchronized with NATO's joint planning. Particularly important is to collaborate on and coordinate decision-making processes among the Nordic countries.

WE ARE NOW in the third year of a large-scale war of invasion in Europe, with an authoritarian regime demanding spheres of influence and submission. Russia sees itself in conflict with the collective West, of which Sweden is a part, underlined by our extensive military support to Ukraine and our NATO membership.

The situation is serious and demanding. There is a broad consensus on this, not least since the dawn of February 24, 2022. One of the occasions I will particularly remember from my years in office is when I was asked by the highest political level for my military advice on Swedish NATO membership. My answer in the spring of 2022 was that, from a military strategic point of view, membership would strengthen Swedish security.

That is how it was and how it is. On 7 March 2024, Sweden became a full member of NATO. As a nation, we must be able to act not only for our own national security, but also for the common security of the defense alliance. It is Sweden that is an ally, not just the Swedish Armed Forces, which has gone from being a partner to a member.

NATO is nothing new for Sweden, especially for the Swedish Armed Forces. But being an ally is very different from being a partner. Sweden has a voice at the table, and we are expected to use it. Armed Forces personnel and volunteers stand side by side with millions of colleagues in the military defense of NATO member states. Cooperation "beyond peace", as it was formulated in the Finnish-Swedish cooperation, has been transformed into a treaty-based defense guarantee covering 32 countries including the entire Nordic region. The change cannot be overestimated.

This change is of great importance for us as a country and for our defense. In connection with NATO membership, the government has decided to give the Swedish Armed Forces new instructions. From 1 April, the main task of the Swedish Armed Forces will be to defend Sweden and allied states against armed attack on the basis of collective defence within NATO. In other words, Sweden is part of a security community. But a security community is not free. It requires a quid pro quo.

> The change in public opinion towards NATO in the spring of 2022 is the largest and fastest shift in opinion ever measured in Swedish political history. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Friday, February 24, 2022, had a shocking impact on Swedish political life.[1]

This is the opening chapter of the SOM Institute's research anthology on the 2022 national SOM survey.

The rapid shift may illustrate the willingness to rush in under NATO's deterrent umbrella as the sense of threat increases. A similar journey now needs to be made to link the security benefits of being an ally with the continued investments that Sweden needs to make. In other words, we are doing our part to increase NATO's overall strength at a very challenging time.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in violation of international law, not only brought about rapid changes in Swedish public opinion and political life in the spring of 2022, but a wave of soul-searching, reorientation and determination is sweeping through capitals and headquarters on our continent. This determination will be manifested at the upcoming NATO summit in Washington DC in July. After that, the declarations will be resourced and in turn transformed into real defense capabilities.

Sweden brings unique capabilities, well-trained personnel, qualified equipment and defense industry to the Alliance. We are welcome and we are delivering. But we will need to gear up further to defend Sweden, our allies and our freedom to live as we choose.

Every four years, each ally's capability goals are set within the framework of NATO's overall capability development process. This is done according to the principle of consensus minus one, whereby no country participates in the decision on its own targets. However, each country has the opportunity to influence the targets in the process leading up to their setting.

The so-called interim capability goals that Sweden was assigned in connection with the NATO defense ministers' meeting in Brussels on 14-15 February 2023 are based on the guidance provided in NATO's political direction in 2019. They contain both quantitative targets concerning, among other things, the number of combat units and qualitative targets concerning what capabilities the combat units should have. In 2023, NATO has set a new political direction that will form the basis for future capability goals. The new direction includes a significant increase in ambition for Alliance member states and a greater need for capabilities to replenish forces in line with regional plans. The new capability goals are assigned to Sweden in 2025. They will be characterized by the higher ambition and a clearer link to the regional plans than the current ones. This will have a major impact on the Armed Forces and our planning.

Sweden contains a number of militarily strategically very important areas. With NATO membership, Swedish geography affects NATO's defence planning for our region. This applies in peace, within the framework of NATO's deterrence, and it applies if NATO needs to move from deterrence to defense.

The defense of Sweden now begins at NATO's external border. Being an ally generally means higher demands for more available units with the ability to operate outside Sweden. This applies to our most advanced units as well as logistics and command units, which must be able to support operational activities, including armed combat, with parts of the Armed Forces on allied territory.

We are not a pure frontline state, but we will be at the front with units. The first government decision in this regard is that the

Swedish Armed Forces will plan and prepare for Swedish participation in NATO's Forward Land Forces (FLF) in Latvia starting in early 2025.

In parallel with NATO integration, we are strengthening our national defense. It is part of our responsibility as an ally.

Activating NATO's collective defense requires political decisions and probably also time to redeploy forces to the right area of operations. This means that each member state is initially expected to be able to respond to an attack, however it occurs, with mainly national resources. We therefore need a balance between support and operational forces. In addition to the aim of limiting the impact of the attack, it is about creating freedom of action for the Alliance's continued defense operations. It is the national defenses that together form a strong NATO.

Sweden's host nation support capability is central to Sweden's ability to constitute an allied base area for operations with army, navy and air forces. Host nation support consists of support operations that can be provided to other countries' military units that are supplied, to conduct operations or to transit through our territory. The task is military, based on NATO's common defense planning, and requires support from civil society.

Another priority is joining NATO's integrated air and missile defense, which is one of the pillars of collective defense in the regional plans. This too concerns all branches of defense.

Swedish defense planning is gradually being adapted and integrated into NATO's joint planning. This is already generating a new operational concept. We will protect both national and Alliance interests and activities, enable the Alliance to conduct force generation and force pooling, and be able to operate within the framework of stabilizing, defensive and offensive operations in all domains. But the operational environment in Northern Europe also requires a common and coordinated defense concept. The Nordic countries should have the same geographical area of operations and should belong to the same operational staff.

Swedish defense policy has a long tradition of broad political agreements on directions and levels of ambition for Sweden's defense capability. These are developed in a defense preparation process that culminates in parliamentary decisions in approximately five-year cycles. These decisions then form the basis for financial allocation, management and follow-up of total defense.

In late autumn 2024, the Swedish Parliament is expected to take a new decision on total defense. This will be historic in that it is the first defense decision as an ally. The documents submitted by the Armed Forces to the Government for the decision thus have a completely different starting point for the development of the Armed Forces than the current defense decision. This does not mean that the content of, and ongoing work based on the 2020 defense decision, is irrelevant. We can arrive at the same ambition from different starting points, for example the need for increased endurance in our war units. But as a NATO member, Sweden will now have to base its capability development to a significant extent on the capability requirements assigned to us.

As mentioned earlier, Sweden will have new capability goals within NATO in 2024. This is one of the reasons why I have emphasized throughout the defence decision-making process the importance of freedom of action for continued adaptation to NATO, in the direction that is gradually becoming clearer in terms of expectations of us as a member, but also to be able to deal with future political decisions on Sweden's responsibility in the alliance.

The Swedish Armed Forces already need space today to be able to adapt operations to take care of continued support to Ukraine and developments in the surrounding world, with high intensity in readiness adjustments and operations, and in parallel with this to become stronger and more sustainable. In parallel with the need for flexibility and freedom of action, we are dependent on stable financial planning conditions, so that we can, for example, make decisions and order materiel and infrastructure. Sweden's national planning processes, including the defence decision-making process, should now be coordinated with NATO's processes in order to maximize both Swedish influence in the alliance and the rapid implementation of decisions in NATO.

Sweden needs a governance model that is adapted to its membership, where the planning processes are reviewed and, if necessary, adapted and synchronized with the joint planning in NATO. This is urgent to promote effective and clear governance of the defense authorities.

It is also important that planning work is carried out in line with our Nordic neighbors. This facilitates opportunities for joint Nordic defence planning, and also strengthens the possibilities for pursuing common Nordic positions within NATO. More specific governance arrangements also need to be adapted where necessary so as not to limit Sweden's opportunities to contribute to and benefit from membership, for example the structure for joint financing that exists within NATO for capability development.

NATO is changing rapidly and, while maintaining Swedish interests, it is necessary to be flexible in the continued development of defense capabilities. This will require continuous decisions and sometimes difficult trade-offs in the interplay between politics and profession.

NATO is a political organization. Sweden's role as an ally and the common alliance policy with its strategic issues is a task for the political level and democratic processes.

NATO is also a military alliance. The Armed Forces need to have freedom of action both with allocated finances and in the design of our organization in order to meet the future military capability goals in time.

We are not and should never be a weak link in NATO's common chain. It is the adversary, not the Armed Forces, not the Defense Committee, nor the Parliament, that decides what Moscow—despite the risk-taking we see in Ukraine—considers crucial to make it too expensive and difficult to attack us.

My assessment of what is deterrent is that it is immediately deployable war units, for both Article 3 and 5, which gives the political leadership the most freedom of action. But it is also a credible, often laborious, long-term investment in the endurance of the Armed Forces. Added to this, of course, is resilience and the will to defend throughout society.

NATO membership and being covered by mutual defense guarantees does not mean that the defense of Sweden is outsourced. Quite the contrary. This insight will need to persist over time, and over changes in security policy developments.

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Note

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NATO enlargement—three frameworks for motivators and explanations[1]

by Magnus Christiansson

Résumé

The article discusses historical enlargements of NATO in order to explore possible explanatory frameworks useful for ongoing research on the enlargement to Sweden and Finland. With the exception of Greece and Turkey 1952, the Cold War "southern and western enlargements" were characterized by a mix of idealist and liberal impulses as well as realist and military considerations. NATO was a military pact with a liberal soul, or a guardian of liberal society with a military toolbox. In the post-Cold War enlargements there were assumptions about no risks for inter-state war, relative European stability and the ability to keep Russian protests under control. In research, NATO's "eastern enlargements" were controversial because of its contested consequences for European security, but after February 24, 2022 it is clear that the issue of the European security order must also be part of the analysis, not least to understand the drive for membership in Sweden and Finland. The fact that Sweden was a non-member of NATO has been explained both as a consequence of a "Nordic balance", as well as internationalist norms. The striking impression after the Russian escalation in Ukraine 2022 is that most explanations of NATO's eastern enlargements are irrelevant to the Swedish and Finnish "northern enlargement". Further, NATOs northern enlargement has three distinct Swedish and Finnish features: the integrated relationships with NATO prior to membership, the EU memberships and the interconnectedness of the membership applications. Three explanatory frameworks are sketched in the article: a realist perspective of a "reversed Finland factor", a liberal perspective of an interconnected and iterative application process with pluralist input from elite and general public, and a constructivist perspective of changing Western- or small state identity.

SWEDEN HAS BEEN a member of NATO since March 7, 2024. Together with Finland, it has undergone a membership process in the wake of the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. From a military-strategic point of view, a new northern flank has emerged in Europe, which will shape military developments in the region at various levels and require new analysis of consequences and strategies.

The change on the northern flank has already resulted in an emerging body of research on NATO enlargement to Sweden and Finland, both in terms of how the process took place, but also what factors drove it and how it can be explained.[2] The existing studies include explanatory factors that can be attributed to the well-established research perspectives of realism, liberalism and constructivism.

In a social science context, it is also important to compare the enlargement to Sweden and Finland with previous enlargements of the Alliance. Such a focus is valuable both

for the strategic analysis of today's Euro-Atlantic security system, as well as for theorizing in the social sciences. In other words, this article will not discuss the application processes or the strategic implications of a new northern flank, but instead turn its gaze to historical comparisons. This is based on the assumption that we understand social phenomena on the basis of comparisons, but that it is an open question to what extent patterns recur in history. To what extent is it possible to generalize complex social phenomena such as the expansion of a military pact like NATO? What distinguishes Sweden and Finland's accession from other NATO enlargements?

The aim of the article is thus to examine NATO enlargement in order to discuss explanatory patterns but also, as a consequence of such lessons, to construct some theoretical perspectives that can be used to build on previous (and ongoing) research on how the Swedish and Finnish northern enlargement should be understood and explained. What is lacking is an empirically grounded framework for different explanatory factors for enlargement, which can be used as a framework for interpreting further empirical studies concerning, for example, questions about the application and ratification process. In this article I content myself with three sketches of such a framework, based on a reading of the enlargement literature, both from the Cold War and after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Containment and visions of Europe: Cold War expansions

Enlargements are intimately linked to NATO's very foundations. Article 10 of the Washington Treaty allows members "by unanimous agreement" to invite other European states to join the organisation. However, the Washington Treaty has only vague accession criteria. The invited state should be in 'a position to promote the principles of this Treaty' and have the ability 'to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area'. While this vagueness may be helpful for institutional adaptation and strategic flexibility, it also leaves open the empirical question of the nature of the precise circumstances of various enlargements. This vagueness, and the fact that the accession criteria include both principles (idealism) and certainty (realism), invites empirical studies of the factors that have defined enlargements.

A somewhat simplified summary of the Cold War enlargements is that they moved south and west. The first enlargement in 1952 included Greece and Turkey. According to British scholar Mark Smith, this process is almost entirely explained by realistic security concerns. More specifically, Smith points to three factors: the need to create security outside the industrial and political center of Europe, the emergence of security as a function of military capabilities, and the internal evolution of NATO's politico-military system, which underwent a more mature phase.[3] After the outbreak of the Korean War, the Cold War hardened, and this made ideas of neutrality and ambiguities in alliance systems more questionable. In this hardening polarization between East and West, European states, seen from a NATO position, were either part of the solution or part of the problem. Enlargement to Greece and Turkey was a way to secure the southern flank in a period where deterrence against military aggression took precedence. According to Smith's interpretation, threat perception and military balancing (realism)

drove the United States, and this was also reflected in NATO's internal debate.

But the very next enlargement to West Germany in 1955 was a much more complex story. Germany's position in post-war Europe, also known as the 'German question', was an acute problem for the Western powers after the end of the Second World War. There were two crucial factors in dealing with it: Germany's size and geographical location. Germany became the center of gravity of the Cold War, and within that, Berlin was the epicenter. The inherent consequence of NATO organizing itself for territorial defense rather than territorial retrieval drove the Western powers to have Germany armed and incorporated into the continental defense system. The complicating issue was related to the choice of institutional framework (European or transatlantic) for this process. After 1949, NATO had created the integrated command structure, the civilian staff and the secretariat headed by a Secretary General, the SACEUR post, and further developed the role of the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

In the words of the American scholar Seth Johnson, this represented an 'impressive institutional change'.[4] Smith identifies three reasons for including Germany in the alliance: the military potential of a German contribution to deterrence against the Soviet Union, the need to rehabilitate a stable and non-aggressive German state, and the need to include Germany in the emerging European project. These factors point to both subordination (realism) and reciprocity between NATO as a bulwark and the need to include Germany in the European project (i.e. "Germany was used to solve NATO's problems, and NATO was used to solve the 'German question'").[5] Thus, this process made NATO central to the defense preparations of the states of Western Europe and not only in transatlantic relations. This illustrates the combined explanatory potential of both realism and liberal institutionalism.

Finally, the 1982 enlargement to Spain was an even more pronounced mix between realist and liberal factors. Ever since NATO was created, there had been ideological opposition to the Franco regime, making Spanish membership impossible. The US was more pragmatic (or cynical), but for many countries in Europe, Franco represented exactly the kind of regime that had threatened European democracy in the interwar period. Given the strategy of 'defending rather than liberating' allies, allowing Spain into the alliance would have sent the unwanted signal of a lack of US determination to stand firm in West Germany. In a process with interesting parallels to the post-Cold War enlargements, after Franco's death, Spain became progressively more integrated with NATO, especially in terms of its navy and air force. This was a process that lasted about a decade. On the one hand, there were the drivers of the 'second Cold War' and the German warnings regarding the 'Euro-strategic balance', where Spain had a favorable geography. On the other hand, there was a need for political cohesion on the southern flank. Spanish membership increased the legitimacy of NATO as a democratic project, promoted institutionalized cooperation, strengthened the transatlantic link and the construction of Spain's European identity. From NATO's perspective, as Smith puts it, "accession was an opportunity to consolidate its [NATO's] place in the Western European system, and to broaden and deepen the norms and practices that gave it that place."[6]

An open door: the post-Cold War enlargements

Enlargement after the end of the Cold War was largely an eastward movement for NATO. Although this process was familiar to the Alliance in a political sense, the situation where the Soviet threat had disappeared raised existential questions and the attitude towards enlargement was far from clear. These included concerns about Germany's role in Europe, German relations with Russia and, not least, hesitation in the US Congress.[7] The Clinton administration was initially negative about enlargement, but gradually changed its mind. The first round to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary (the Visegrád Group) was launched at the Madrid Summit in 1997 and concluded in Washington in 1999. The second round started at the Prague Summit in 2002 and ended in 2004. The latter represents something of a 'big bang' in European security as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia (Vilnius Group) all became members of both NATO and the EU.

This development was also reflected in a lively research debate, often with the strong normative undercurrents that characterize realists, liberals and constructivists. The process brought to the fore a number of partly new drivers and barriers to expansion. Liberal scholars tended to emphasize the tendency towards the spread of market-based democracy and a community as well as the general requirement to stabilize Eastern Europe. Stabilization and deterrence against future Russian aggression were also explanations pointed out by realists who appreciated enlargement. Realists who were sceptical of enlargement stressed the conflict-creating potential vis-à-vis Russia and also that enlargement was not in the US national interest. The starting point for some constructivist scholars was role theory based on actor descriptions.[8] This perspective also had critical potential, as it was often claimed that risks from new geographical areas replaced the Soviet threat and Russia as the 'Significant Other', and that NATO enlargement had the function of anchoring a collective Western identity in relation to external threats.

It is important to contextualize the enlargement process as part of a new era in European politics. It did not take place in a strategic vacuum. The 1990 Charter of Paris, sometimes described as the Cold War 'peace conference', further developed the principles set out in the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Europe, including the Russian Federation, was seen as a family at peace. The security of the continent was considered unitary, that is, if any member of the family was insecure, every member was insecure. The European house, an expression popular with Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev, should be governed by universally recognized rules and not power politics. National sovereignty was thus fundamental, in contrast to spheres of interest: for example, no external actor could impose restrictions on membership of international organizations. Conflicts between states were to be resolved at the negotiating table.

An all-encompassing security organization was created to continuously nurture the Charter of Paris, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and in the 1990s, a rich patchwork of different partially overlapping networks, organizations and processes became what effectively constituted European security. This was truly a liberal triumph. During this period, Sweden and Finland joined the EU and European identity became an important part of their politics and identity.

It was in this environment that NATO enlargement took place despite warnings from some scholars and politicians, and as pointed out by American scholars James Goldgeier and Joshua Itzkowitz Shifrinson, there were five underlying assumptions about the conditions for the process:[9]

1. No risk of a superpower war. A large-scale interstate war in Europe was unthinkable.
2. Limited political risk. Increasing cooperation with Eastern European countries was not controversial in the West.
3. The creation of a security system was beneficial for the West. A strong NATO as a guarantor of a liberal world order would help protect the US.
4. Enlargement would maintain NATO as the primary security institution in Europe; the US could continue to have NATO as the main forum for transatlantic affairs (implicitly in opposition to a competing EU).
5. Russia was manageable. NATO listened to Russian objections, but since Russia could do little to harm the West, it ultimately had little impact on the process.

In 1994, when enlargement had not yet been decided, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) was created, initially as a means of establishing institutional relations with Eastern Europe and Russia in something other than membership, but eventually as a tool for the enlargement process itself. PfP was demand-driven and represented an *à la carte* process of activities promoting military interoperability and democratic control of former Warsaw Pact forces. From the beginning, France was against enlargement. With some reservations, Germany eventually supported it, not least its Defense minister Volker Rühe. Russia was, and remains opposed to NATO enlargement, but its concerns did influence both the scope and timing of the first round (not least in view of President Yeltsin's election campaign), and later the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.

In order to promote internal coherence on the issue, a NATO Study Group was set up in 1995 to examine the aims, principles and expectations of the candidate countries. While stressing the need for individual assessment of each candidate, the "Study of Enlargement" report provided a comprehensive summary and interpretation of what Article 10 of the Washington Treaty meant in practice: democratic commitment (including the rights of ethnic minorities and civilian control of armed forces), acceptance of NATO obligations, collective defence capabilities (including qualified personnel for NATO structures), respect for international law, acting in a spirit of consensus within the Alliance, and application of Alliance rules and procedures. At the 1999 Washington Summit, this broad agenda was formalized as a review mechanism called the Membership Action Plan (MAP). Each candidate country is monitored annually in five dimensions (democratic status, defense capability, defense budget, information security and regulatory compatibility). The Vilnius Group was the first to join the Alliance through the MAP process. In the period 2009-2020, a third round of enlargement took place to include a quartet of Balkan countries: Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

In sum, NATO during the Cold War was a Janus-faced creature of both security and ideology: a military pact with a liberal soul; a guardian of liberal society with a military toolbox. In Mark Smith's terminology, NATO had both an *immediate task* (to contain the Soviet Union in the Cold War) as well as an *intrinsic task* (to maintain internal balance among the Allies).[10] Thus, with the exception of enlargements to Greece and

Turkey where military security was the decisive factor, in all other cases security was 'not the only agenda'.[11] The fact that Salazar's Portugal but not Franco's Spain could be in NATO is an illustrative example of how other considerations prevailed. But the Cold War rationale (i.e. geography, ideological considerations and the level of European unity) changed somewhat after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Geography was replaced by globalization, and a firmer EU project was a fundamental assumption. The ideological considerations remained, but more as an active goal to stabilize Eastern Europe.

Eastern enlargement: a normative battlefield

As mentioned earlier, enlargement after the end of the Cold War remained a controversial process in science and politics. This is reflected in the normatively charged terms 'expansion' and 'enlargement'. The former is mostly used by analysts who argue that the process has been, in the words of diplomat George Kennan, 'a fatal mistake',[12] because it provoked Russia. Consequently, the West is (at least partly) to blame for the war in Ukraine. By contrast, use of the term 'enlargement' signals the starting point of national sovereignty as a matter of principle, and the need to consider European security after the end of the Cold War not just as 'a bilateral issue between the ascendant US and the descendant Russia'.[13]

From Goldgeier and Shifrinson's perspective, despite Russian opposition, Ukraine and Georgia were promised future membership at the Alliance's 2008 Bucharest summit, and then the idea of 'expansion...was put on autopilot'.[14] Their point is that "expansion" was interpreted by Russia as an arrogant move by the US, and in the end Russia had gathered strength to fight back. Before February 24, 2022, there were scholars who argued that growing tensions between Russia and the West "call for a reassessment of the principles underlying NATO's expansion",[15] because only "the prospect of future expansion gives Russian hawks leverage today".[16]

According to this perspective, the alternative to enlargement is "to limit or withdraw NATO's presence [in Eastern Europe]"[17] and maintain neutrality for the states in Russia's neighborhood (including Sweden and Finland). Such a new security architecture with a buffer "would require Russia, like NATO, to commit to maintaining the security of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and other states in the region".[18] In other words, according to the critics of NATO enlargement, the alliance should "withdraw" and share influence over Eastern Europe with Russia.

The normative consequence of this argument concerns primarily the future membership of Ukraine and Georgia. According to Goldgeier and Shifrinson, enlargement is taking place "despite the fact that the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and the subsequent conflict in Ukraine convinced many NATO members that their [Ukraine and Georgia] accession was not advisable",[19] and consequently it was future membership that "provoked the Russian invasion of Ukraine".[20]

However, after the Russian full-scale invasion in 2022, there are several arguments for the opposite interpretation. As pointed out by American scholar Rebecca Moore, there is simply a need for a different starting point.[21] It is important to note that NATO has, on the contrary, repeatedly invited future membership to Ukraine, mainly as a means of defending the security order (a liberal argument) and/or as a deterrent

against Russian aggression (a realist argument). The starting point is that it is Russia that has disrupted the order.

Therefore, analytically, there is a need to 'reassess and dismiss once and for all the argument that NATO enlargement is responsible for Russia's aggression'.[22] The first step in such a process is the conclusion that there was no 'autopilot' for enlargement after the end of the Cold War. At the Bucharest Summit, the US pushed for MAP status for Ukraine and Georgia, while Germany and France blocked the process. Since no NATO country has ever been invaded, it seems more reasonable to assume that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was seen as a possibility because of the *failure* to enlarge NATO in 2008. According to this argument, the 'fatal mistake' was in fact that, in Moore's words, Putin perceived the postponement of enlargement as 'a moment of weakness'[23] on the part of the West. Similarly, in 2021, the Biden administration hesitated over future Ukrainian membership, deciding in diplomacy with Moscow to temporarily halt support of "lethal weapons" to Ukraine.[24] Nevertheless, this respect for Russian interests could not prevent a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Thus, a more reasonable interpretation is that the 2014 invasion and the 2024 escalation show the problem of Ukraine outside Article 5.

Analytically, the 'fatal mistake' argument assumes that Russian foreign policy would have steered in a different direction without NATO enlargement. If NATO had not provoked Moscow, Europe would still be at peace. But as Suchentsov and Wohlforth note, this reasoning "exaggerates the likelihood that a collapse could have been avoided" because "what Washington did not grab, Moscow would have taken" in Eastern Europe.[25] It is noteworthy that this argument is based on so-called offensive realism, and not just liberal institutionalism about a rules-based order.

The normative problem with the 'fatal mistake' approach is that it favors a policy of appeasement or even a Putin-apologetic line. But NATO enlargement can neither explain (nor excuse) Russian imperialism. In December 2021, Russia demanded NATO's withdrawal to its pre-1997 borders. In Goldgeier and Shifrinson's 2020 texts, there is no discussion of what a Western acquiescence to Putin's demand to halt, or even withdraw, enlargement would mean for the security order in Europe (or for the credibility of US security guarantees in general). Accepting Russian demands, or accepting to be part of a buffer zone, would undoubtedly undermine the principles of the Paris Charter, i.e. the rule-based order in Europe, and thus the US would give Russia a veto over the security order in Europe. One point of this reasoning is that by moving beyond the debate on the "provocative effects" of enlargement, it allows for a focus on the fact that other explanatory factors may have been decisive for enlargement to Sweden and Finland.

Sweden, Finland and the enlargement literature

The Northern Flank during the Cold War

Despite their geographical proximity, Sweden and Finland lived in different worlds during the Cold War. It is noteworthy that both the United States and the United Kingdom realized that help from the Scandinavian states would be indispensable in the event of war with the Soviet Union. Denmark, Norway and Sweden were variously seen as important 'stepping stones' to the main con-

frontation in Central Europe. The US had an interest in the northern parts of the region, mainly for reasons of pre-emption, and for the British it was an area of particular national interest. The Scandinavian Peninsula was considered a strategic entity. Denmark, Sweden and Norway were considered 'obvious candidates for membership'[26] before NATO was founded, while Finland was left out of the analysis. Why did Sweden not become a member of NATO (or the EEC) during the Cold War?

An idealistic answer to this question, according to the foreign policy role theory, is that Sweden took the position of "norm entrepreneur".[27] During the Cold War, Sweden identified itself as a Nordic internationalist, which resulted in "high levels of foreign aid, peacefulness, mediation efforts, activism and progressiveness".[28] Thus, due to strongly cultivated identity, Nordic countries acted as "idealistic nations in world politics".[29]

But there is also a realistic version. A parallel track to the creation of NATO in 1948-1949 was the discussions on a Scandinavian Defense League, which Smith describes as the attempt to create "a kind of Nordic Brussels Pact".[30] As noted earlier, there were several common security interests among the Scandinavian states, but in the end Swedish demands for neutrality made the initiative fail because "for Denmark as for Norway, neutrality was an unacceptable option".[31] According to Smith, the process was driven by a combination of "simple geostrategic logic",[32] "different experiences of neutralism"[33] during the Second World War and the fact that Norway and Denmark "felt much closer to the West".[34] But arguably Sweden was just as "Western" as Norway, especially as Sweden had a close but secret cooperation with NATO during the Cold War, so why didn't "simple geostrategic logic" prevail for Sweden?

As Norwegian scholar Arne Olav Brundtland argued, the situation in the Nordic region during the Cold War led to a delicate balancing act.[35] The region was characterized by a relatively low level of great power presence. It was, in turn, in the interests of the Nordic countries to maintain this state of affairs. The logic of this reasoning led to three different choices: membership of NATO without a permanent foreign presence (Denmark and Norway), neutrality (Sweden) and neutrality with a cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union (Finland). Given the nature of the Soviet threat, Brundtland's point was that there was a particular value of each country's policy to the others. From this realist perspective, Sweden's choice to stay outside NATO cannot be understood without also including concern for Finland's situation.

A new chapter: Sweden and Finland join NATO

The enlargement to Sweden and Finland constitutes a northern enlargement of NATO. Having studied the previous scholarly debate above, the question is what combination of immediate and intrinsic tasks for the Alliance prevailed in the enlargement in these cases. This search for driving forces is interesting, not least because most of the assumptions in the post-Cold War literature seem so irrelevant a priori. When Sweden and Finland applied for membership in the spring of 2022, there was a clear risk of a wider war in Europe, the membership process had political risks both for the candidate countries and for NATO (not least if the process became protracted), Russia was not a controlled force in European politics and far from 'manageable'. Moreover, there was no reason for NATO to stabilize Sweden and Finland as democracies. However, other

factors seem to be more relevant for empirical research: the role of US interests, the importance of deterrence against Russia, the importance of a collective Western identity and the fear of provoking Russia.

Compared to the previous post-Cold War enlargements, there are three main characteristics of the Northern enlargement: 1) the relationship between the candidate countries and NATO before enlargement, 2) military strategic circumstances and 3) the dual nature of the applications.

1. Both Sweden and Finland joined the PfP and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1994. Sweden tended to be a more active member than Finland (participation in all the defining operations: IFOR, SFOR, KFOR, ISAF and *Operation Unified Protector*). Sweden also adapted its armed forces to "transformation", while Finland tended to be the "odd man out" in the European defense circle. This raises questions about whether Sweden and Finland had already made an identity change as long-term partners to NATO. However, an important difference to the Visegrád group was the very purpose of the partnership: not to qualify for membership, but cooperation instead of membership. Both countries wanted good relations with NATO, but neither was interested in what realists see as the point of NATO membership: Article 5. In fact, after 2013, Sweden and Finland rather engaged in deeper bilateral defense cooperation. This raises the question of whether it was the February 24 escalation that prompted them to apply for membership.
2. A second peculiarity is that Sweden and Finland were the first states that were already EU members when they joined the Alliance. For understandable reasons, there was not a single annual MAP review, and the liberal call for democracy promotion would have been a stillborn starting point. Furthermore, this raises the question of why the accession process seemed so complicated and protracted for almost two years, when the liberal expectation is rather that two established EU democracies would have meant a relatively trivial accession process.
3. Finally, Sweden and Finland share a regional location and several military-strategic preconditions in northern Europe. The actions of one actor potentially affect the security situation of the other, and in accordance with liberal assumptions, we could observe a process of interdependence between Finland and Sweden. Historians have studied such processes as "transfer history" or "entangled history" (*histoire croisée* in French), i.e. the complex processes where ideas and events cross national borders.[36] However, we know very little about what these dynamics looked like and what entanglements were decisive.

Northern enlargement: three frameworks for further investigation

As a concluding summary of the discussion in the article, three frameworks can be sketchily constructed to analyze factors about why and how the Swedish and Finnish memberships came to be realized. These frameworks can be used to explain the northern enlargement. The three perspectives share the view of the importance of the small state's need to maintain the European security order as a key driver, which has been ignored by previous research on the consequences of eastern enlargement. However, the events

of February 24, 2022 (i.e. the Russian escalation) and the domestic political process have partly different meanings in the three frameworks.

The first perspective could be called the "Finland factor" or "the reversed Nordic balance". In the Nordic balance, Finland was the main reason why Sweden did not join NATO during the Cold War. Thus, Finland's position was also the argument *against* membership for Sweden during the Cold War. This explanation is primarily based on the strategic implications of geography and the need for states to confront the political consequences of the spatial dimension. By the same logic, this was also the primary argument *for* Swedish and Finnish membership in NATO after February 24, 2022. Both countries had to deal with the consequences of their geographical location, and due to the same circumstances, the Finnish choice became decisive for Sweden. The political process was mainly due to the fact that the escalation in Ukraine was a strategic shock,[37] without which the process would not have happened at all. Without Putin's aggression, there would be no Finnish leadership, and thus no Swedish change. The domestic political game was clearly subordinated to this strategic logic, and this is an exogenous and structural view of the relations between Sweden and Finland in the application process.

The second perspective is liberal institutionalism. The domestic political scene is the most important explanation, as it was the political elite and the population that, in a predominantly rational process, sought a course of action in response to the Russian escalation. The exogenous shock of the February 24 escalation was crucial to launch the debate, but its outcome was not obvious. The domestic debate was about weighing the pros and cons of membership and was not isolated to the national context. Rather, the process was influenced by a rich network of contacts between both political elites and the populations of the two countries. The journey towards membership was thus driven in tandem between elites and populations, but also in an interconnectedness between the two countries, against the backdrop of long-standing historical links and past defense integration.

The third perspective can be labelled as Western or small state identity. The decisive explanatory factor is the social identity construction of the political elite and the population in both Sweden and Finland. Two versions of this perspective can be distinguished. The first is based on role theory, i.e. that a country can undergo foreign policy "role changes... that respect the boundaries set by social identities and the domestic elite's appreciation of external pressures".[38] The decisive factor is the degree of conflict among the elites and conflict between the elites and the population in terms of role choice. Finland's foreign policy role before the February 24, 2022 escalation was as a 'communicator' between East and West. Due to a high level of national consensus, Finland managed a rapid role change that is likely to fulfil the expectations of a NATO ally. Sweden's role before February 24, 2022 was "normative internationalist". Due to high tension within the political elite, Sweden was slower to change its role and thus is also unlikely to fulfil the expectations of a NATO ally. This perspective emphasizes the differences in strategic culture between Sweden and Finland.

The second version emphasizes the slow nature of identity change. Given the basic assumption that (national) identity exists before (national) interest, the rapid change of Sweden's and Finland's foreign policy after February 24, 2022 is surprising. Established traditions do not change

overnight. According to this perspective, even *before the* Russian escalation in 2022, non-alignment and neutrality policies were hollowed out and superficial. The language itself, with concepts such as neutrality and military non-alignment, had ceased to be important for identity. The very idea of an 'external shock' is thus misleading,[39] as both countries' identities as neutral had been eroded over decades. This perspective places great emphasis on the influence of pro-NATO commentators in changing Swedish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War.

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Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Response,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
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NATO member states and their relations[1]

by Gunilla Herolf

Résumé

The relations between NATO's member states – what do they say about NATO's future? These relations are particularly important today as the attack against Ukraine has put NATO's whole existence at risk. This article seeks to explain how established patterns, dependencies and interests among the member states have impacted their policies and cooperation during a period that has been dominated by the reaction against Russia and aid to Ukraine. Their policies give evidence of strong support but also considerable differences between countries. The future of NATO will be determined by many factors, in Europe as well as on a transatlantic and global level, but also by other organizations. Ultimately, however, the relationship between the member states of NATO and their relationships with the organization will be decisive for NATO's future.

THERE IS A very strong bond between all NATO member countries—Article 5, which means that if one member country is under armed attack, others should see it as an attack on themselves and come to its defense. When people see the fate of others as their own, it usually means they have strong ties to each other. It is clear that this is not the case between NATO countries. Yet this alliance has lasted for 75 years, expanding from 12 to 32 countries in that time.

The support provided by Article 5 to member states has been an important reason for states to apply for NATO membership. The desire for NATO membership is of course also influenced by how dominant the threat is. For long periods there has been a strong threat from the Soviet Union/Russia, which should work to bring member states closer together. As a counterforce, there is also the Russian policy of weakening the organization. This can be done by external means, which can be military, political or economic, but it can also be internal through infiltration into the countries. To a large extent this also applies to the EU, because in both cases the aim is to weaken Western society.

In the following, the relations between NATO member states will be described with the intention to discern how the relations that already existed at the inception of the organisation have evolved over the years and under the influence of different events. In the context of Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2024, NATO has emerged as broadly united, but there are also other trends and differences between countries. What do they say about the future of NATO? It will be influenced by many factors in Europe and beyond, but above all it will be determined by relations between member states and their views on NATO.

The formation of NATO

The events leading up to the formation of the Atlantic Alliance have had a profound impact on NATO and its members, particularly the role of the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States.

At the end of the Second World War in 1945, there were hopes that it would be possible to maintain the good relations with the Soviet Union that had existed during the war. However, a series of events showed that the Russians were not going to allow countries under their control to retain their democracy. The decisive event was the Prague coup in February 1948, which led to Czechoslovakia becoming a communist dictatorship. A few months later came the Russian blockade of Berlin, which, thanks to a massive Western airlift, failed to starve the city out.

In March 1948, the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, had approached his American counterpart, George Marshall, to ask him to work out a defense system for the United States and the European countries, which would be supported by American security guarantees. France and the United Kingdom in particular were keen for US support to be automatic, but the positive US response required the Senate to take such a decision first.[2] On April 4, 1949, while the Berlin blockade was still in place, 12 countries signed the so-called Washington Treaty: Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom, as well as the United States and Canada. What remained was what was seen as the necessary structure for the United States to intervene in Europe, with the creation of NATO in 1951.

NATO's major powers

The countries traditionally considered to be the great powers of NATO are the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany. They hold this position as a combination of a large population, strong military, stable economy and general influence. Countries such as Turkey and Italy could be considered great powers by virtue of their population, but do not have the other characteristics that make other countries see them as such.

The United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany have cooperated closely throughout NATO's existence, including non-NATO issues. The same is true of the three European countries, among which cooperation has been so close that the group has sometimes been called the "directorate". This term reflects the concern of the smaller countries, that the larger ones would decide important issues in advance.

USA

The dominant position of the United States in NATO today, as in 1949, rests on its strong defense forces, including strategic nuclear weapons. No other NATO country could build such a nuclear arsenal, except over a very long time and with very large resources.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the major Soviet threat ended, raising the question of the continued role of the United States in Europe and thus the continued existence of NATO. In France in particular, there had initially been hopes of creating a purely European organization, but the discussions still resulted in keeping NATO in its existing form: the situation was not seen as stable enough for a new order without the United States.

One of the effects of the Yugoslav wars was that France and the UK felt closer to each other, while at the same time feeling more distant from American thinking. Their St Malo Declaration of 1998 proposed that

the EU should be able to conduct autonomous operations (in line with French ambitions) but also referred to the importance of NATO (in line with British views). The American reaction was positive but with a requirement for Europeans to avoid..."decoupling, duplication and discrimination", which broadly meant that European cooperation should not try to replace NATO, which was also in line with European views.[3]

Germany

(West) Germany became a member of NATO in 1955, after gaining full sovereignty that year. Before that, and as part of the 1954 modified Brussels Treaty,[4] it had been prohibited from possessing nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, a prohibition later reiterated in other contexts.

German policy has often (and especially within the EU) been pursued in close cooperation with France, based on the complementary interests and strengths of the two countries (economic for Germany and defence-related for France). However, on the most important issues, the United States has been the main guarantor of Germany's security.

United Kingdom

The superiority of the US military did not mean that the US could dominate other NATO countries in all respects. At the time of NATO's formation, both Britain and France were seen as global powers. A painful realization that this era was over came when, after their annexation of the Suez Canal in 1956, Britain and France did not have the support of the United States and were therefore forced to withdraw. The British conclusion from this situation was to stay close to the United States in its policies in the future.

That Britain still retained some ambition is shown by the British nuclear weapons program, a reaction to the US McMahon Act of 1946, under which the US would continue to keep knowledge of nuclear weapons secret, even from its closest partners. Britain's own deterrent was now seen as necessary in case the US returned to isolationism, and the weapons were also necessary for others to see Britain as a first-rate nation. After the US changed its policy, the development of the UK's nuclear weapons (now solely submarine-launched missiles) became a joint effort.[5] The UK's missiles are part of the NATO common defense, and in many respects dependent on the US, but only the British Prime Minister can order their use.[6]

France

French nuclear weapons, like those of the UK, were first developed in the 1960s on their own and for much the same reasons. However, it took France a long time to get American help, because the French had reacted more strongly than the British against the US after Suez.[7]

In 1966, France chose to leave the military part of NATO, seeing the United States as an obstacle to pursuing the independent policy it wanted. However, it remained in the political component, which meant that Article 5 was still in force, as was the right to vote in the organization. The French also maintained their close contacts with the United States, which from the early 1970s secretly helped them develop the more advanced elements of French nuclear weapons. In addition, there were secret agreements allowing NATO to use French ports in wartime. In 2009, France chose to return to the military component, largely in order to play a more central role in NATO.[8] However, French nuclear weapons, which

now consist of submarine- and air-launched missiles, remain under French control alone and France does not participate in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG).

The United Kingdom and France have for many years cooperated closely in the Lancaster Treaty format, which covers many aspects of defense, including weapons development, for example regarding nuclear weapons. The two countries relate this cooperation to their special role and responsibilities as members of the UN Security Council, the G7, etc. but indirectly also as major defense and nuclear powers, which gives them global interests and an important role in Europe.[9]

NATO countries in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region has traditionally been dominated by conflicts between different power claims, and even between many NATO member states in the region, old and new conflicts have come to characterize relations.

Turkey, like Greece, joined NATO in 1952, having stayed out of the war during the Second World War and now seeking a Western identity. For NATO, Turkey's geographically strategic position and strong armed forces made it valuable. However, after the Cyprus crises (starting in the 1950s), relations with Greece became tense, and it also changed relations with the United States and the United Kingdom, which were seen as pro-Greek. At the same time, relations with the Soviet Union improved.

The Arab Spring of 2011, named after the hopes for greater freedom that drove the uprisings in several countries, led instead to crises and wars. One example of the complicated relationship between different NATO countries is the war in Syria in 2011, which has only in recent years declined in intensity. Assad, and his ally Russia, are widely considered to have won the war. In this, the United States, the United Kingdom and France sided with the rebels against the Assad government and the Islamic State (IS); Turkey was on the same side but also attacked the Kurds, which they saw as terrorists, while the Americans, among others, saw them as very valuable allies.

In recent years, the situation between the United States and Turkey in particular has deteriorated, caused by Turkey's restrictions on democracy, and cooperation with Russia, including the purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system. Added to this is the delay in Sweden's NATO ratification, which was only resolved when Turkey was allowed to buy F16 fighter jets.

In Libya, the popular uprising also led to war. Following a Franco-British initiative, and a UN no-fly zone, a NATO-led coalition of countries was launched. It led to the death of leader Muammar al-Gaddafi, but the war continued. The country was now divided into two parts, the eastern part dominated by warlord Khalifa Haftar and the western part by a UN-backed government (but with links to ISIS). A number of countries were now involved in different ways. In the east, French and Russian interests dominated, in the west, Italian and Turkish interests. France and Italy were interested in the Libyan oil deposits, while Russia had strategic interests and Turkey had both strategic and oil and gas interests. Italy also wanted to prevent a refugee crisis, while Russia wanted to have the power to control one such. Despite many attempts to resolve the conflict, no solution has yet been found at the time of writing.[10]

In 2020, another conflict erupted in the eastern Mediterranean, once again with France and Turkey on opposing sides. Following some gas discoveries in a disputed

area, a Turkish ship had started drilling there, to which Greece and France responded by sending combat forces. France also accused NATO of being biased in this context. Only minor skirmishes ensued, but in 2021 France and Greece concluded a defense agreement against Turkey, a unique event of NATO.[11]

Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there was great pressure from the liberated countries to be admitted to NATO. Both Western Europe and the United States were hesitant in view of Russian reactions but found it difficult to say no given the wording of NATO's Article 10.[12] In 1999, the first three countries, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, therefore became members, and in 2004 it was time for Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. (The group also included Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, see below).

Apart from their shared post-war history, the new member states were different in many respects, but some were closer. Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary had formed the Visegrad Group in 1991 to protect their common interests, but cooperation and policies have varied with the often changing governing parties. Hungary, under Prime Minister Viktor Orban, closely cooperates with Russia and provides limited support to Ukraine. Slovakia, which has recently elected a new president, has also taken this line. For Poland, the recent elections brought the opposite development, and the Czech Republic has made a major commitment to Ukraine in spring 2024 with its initiative to buy ammunition on the world market.[13]

Although the countries in this group are different from each other, within NATO and the EU they still feel a distance from Western Europe, which they believe has dominated the highest positions. This became evident not least in the discussions on a new NATO Secretary General.

Between 2009 and 2020, four Balkan countries joined: Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have also declared their desire to join, while Serbia, which has close relations with Russia, has no such aspirations. However, there is a lot of friction between Kosovo and Serbia, and within Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska opposes a membership. It will be even more difficult for Ukraine and Georgia, which were promised NATO membership in 2008, given that Russia has a deliberate and harsh policy of preventing new countries from joining and will do its utmost to prevent that.[14]

Northern and north-eastern part of Europe

Northern and North-Eastern Europe includes the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. With the accession of Finland and Sweden in March 2024, the whole area became part of NATO, which also means that the Baltic Sea, except for the St. Petersburg area and Kaliningrad, is a NATO internal sea.

This group of countries is similar in many respects: they are all relatively small and have good relations with each other. The countries' defenses are also linked to each other, for example through the importance of the port of Gothenburg, and of Sweden as a transit country and staging area to Finland and the Baltic countries. They are also all Atlanticist by nature, meaning that they see a great value in the transatlantic relationship, which they consider vital to their security.

They also belong, along with Poland, to the group of countries most critical of Russia.

Uniting or dividing?

NATO is now at a moment of destiny. War has come to Europe, and NATO—though not participating in hostilities—is very much involved. What is NATO's capacity to act and prevent a catastrophic development of this situation? The answer lies largely with the member states.

Following the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, NATO countries responded with almost unanimous condemnation. However, there are some variations among members in terms of support.

In general, and not unexpectedly, it has been found that loyalty to NATO is greatest when the threat level is high and therefore the need is greatest. In other situations, as can be seen just after the fall of the Berlin Wall with a low threat level, alternatives to NATO itself or to the crisis management tasks that NATO has can be sought.

Today we have a situation where the threat of escalation is very high, yet NATO countries do not feel they are in a situation where Russia could attack them in the near future. The picture is fragmented, but a line can be drawn between the countries in the north and those in the south. In the north, Russia is the only threat, while in the south there are also large refugee flows, terrorism and internal strife.

Another factor that can be seen to have played a role in the assistance to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia is the dependence on Russia in an important area such as energy (oil and gas). For countries like Hungary and Turkey, such dependence is combined with a close relationship with Russia, with implications for NATO and (in the case of Hungary) also EU policies. Other factors also play a role. In Slovakia, the population traditionally has a strong sense of the Slavic identity shared with Russia.[15]

An uncertain factor with great potential to affect the cohesion of Europe and thus NATO, is the success of populist parties in Europe in recent years, which may be transformed into political power by the European Parliament elections in June 2024. In the short term, these parties could snatch away the possibility of support for Ukraine, and in the long term the effects could be devastating for democracy in Europe.[16.]

Domestic politics has also proven to be a powerful factor, and when it comes to by far the largest donor, the United States, the impact is significant. When the US stopped delivering because the new aid package for Ukraine was caught up in the partisan battle in Congress, the situation became acute. While that issue is now resolved, there may be problems in the future: the fact that more than half of the Republicans in the House of Representatives voted against is a bad sign, as is the fact that many seem to have been influenced by the Russian information campaign in their views on Ukraine.

In addition to the United States, as described above, France, the United Kingdom and Germany have a great deal of influence within NATO. The more independent position that France has adopted has included having bilateral relations with various major powers, not least Russia, and through them hoping for a reformed country over time. In the case of Ukraine, France also made great efforts to bring Russia back to the negotiating table. However, starting in 2023, French hopes have finally faded, closing the gap between France and the other countries that never had such illusions.[17]

On the issue of aid to Ukraine, there is a big difference between Germany and France. Like France, Germany has long held

out hope that Russia could change, but in Germany, politics is not run by a president who can put forward his own ideas, but by a three-party government that is currently very divided on the Ukraine issue. Although Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared very early on, that the attack on Ukraine had led to a *Zeitenwende* (a historical turning point) in Germany, the aid shipments have been marked by delays and criticism from other countries on the content, which was seen as too defensive. Both the Liberal and Green parties are in favor of sending long-range Taurus missiles to Germany, while the Social Democrats are hesitant and therefore the Social Democratic Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, decides that no delivery should take place. The left wing of the Social Democrats also wants to start negotiations with Russia.[18]

In this situation, France and Germany, although both fully on Ukraine's side, have been irritating each other. President Macron has openly criticized Germany and has himself launched the idea that NATO should be able to act on the ground in Ukraine, which has met with a lot of criticism. Another factor is that Germany is the biggest European donor, while France is one of the smallest.

At the same time, there is also now another factor in the talks between France and Germany, namely Poland, which has taken on a different role with the defeat of the national conservative Law and Justice party and the return of Donald Tusk as Prime Minister in 2023. It is the Weimar Triangle, consisting of France, Poland and Germany, that has been revived. It was hoped during the spring meeting that Tusk would be able to mediate between Macron and Scholz and, as you would expect, the three leaders also assured each other after the meeting that they were all united in their support for Ukraine.[19]

The United Kingdom has been very active in supporting Ukraine from the start of the war and is the third most important sponsor. They have also planned coordinated support to Ukraine through the Lancaster partnership with France. However, Brexit has widened the gap between the UK and the other EU countries. In key areas, the UK only has 'third country status' and in cooperation with France and Germany, views have often diverged. In the context of the war in Ukraine, the UK has also consistently taken a tougher line with Moscow than Germany and France.[20]

Overall, as the picture above shows, there is a contrast between the strong support from NATO countries evident at NATO meetings and the problems that are now apparent regarding further support. At the same time, it should be emphasized that much assistance has already been provided during the two years or so of the war, repeatedly going against the "red lines" set by Russia.

With the exception of a few countries where loyalty to NATO is weak, there are a number of reasons for the contrast between what is said and what is done. In addition to the examples given above, in some countries, aid to Ukraine competes with domestic priorities that may be more pressing, especially for a government that has problems with its support. Financial problems, as in southern Europe including France, can be great, while historical reasons make a country like Germany hesitant to use offensive weapons against Russia. In France, there are also successful populist parties with Russian sympathies challenging the president and his party, and in northern Europe, where the Baltic countries in particular provide very strong support on a per capita basis, the small size of the countries means that it does not have a strong impact. In many countries there may also be a lot of short-term thinking, but also a lack of insight in-

to what would be the effects for everyone if Russia were to defeat Ukraine.

The global level

The global situation also plays a role in the future of NATO, and China is obviously an important factor in this context. There has long been a difference between the tougher US policy towards China and the softer European policy, which can be explained by European trade dependency. For example, China is Germany's largest bilateral trading partner.[21] But there is also a tendency here, as in France and Germany, to act independently rather than within the EU, as both Macron and Scholz have visited the country on various occasions, accompanied by business delegations.

On the US side, there is annoyance that Europe is not reacting more strongly against China, given that it supplies components to the Russian military-industrial complex. On the other hand, France has been concerned that the United States, with its strong support for Taiwan, has crossed the line. In interviews to Western media during a visit to China, President Macron lamented that France and the EU lack "strategic" independence and that Europe could therefore be turned into "the vassal of the United States" in a conflict that "is not ours". The statement was harshly criticized by several European countries. Regarding Sweden, Ulf Kristersson stated that "Sweden's relationship with China should be anchored in a common European strategy with a clear transatlantic link".[22]

A clear pattern of global cooperation independent of NATO can also be seen in the declarations of principle of Franco-British cooperation. For example, at the 2023 meeting, the two countries decided to coordinate the patrolling of their aircraft carriers to "provide a complementary and continuous European presence in those areas where both countries have common interests".[23]

NATO, like the EU, has interests in Asia, but while NATO in its cooperation with, in particular, Australia, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand has focused on defence relations, the EU in its Indo-Pacific cooperation has been based on trade relations, much in view of the fact that two thirds of the world's container traffic pass through the region. In this, one can see more of complementary than of competing interests between the two.[24]

The future

In 2023–24, first Finland and then Sweden joined as the thirty-first and thirty-second members of NATO, a good sign of the alliance's continued attractiveness. The countries next in line will find it harder to meet NATO's criteria, but above all we know that Russia's actions to prevent further enlargement will be boundless.

However, continuing NATO's current policy on enlargement is only one of a number of challenges facing the organization. Another risk with major consequences concerns the possibility that Donald Trump is elected president in the autumn and that the United States would then, in a worst-case scenario, choose to leave NATO or withdraw a large part of its forces to Asia. Such a development would lead to a NATO composed almost entirely of European countries, but significantly stronger than the EU, as Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom and Turkey would be included.

This risk has already divided Europe. Many believe that it is important that Europeans must now start preparing and that a European pillar of NATO must be strengthened through projects involving only European companies.

A strong advocate of this and of pursuing a more autonomous policy within NATO is France. The term 'strategic autonomy', coined by France, means seeking greater autonomy for the EU, but without renouncing the link with the US and its guarantee through its nuclear weapons. However, Jens Stoltenberg has warned against excluding the US from the cooperation, pointing out that it could be difficult to regain US confidence after this. Sweden has declared that it will continue its transatlantic cooperation, but it is uncertain at the time of writing how other NATO countries will react. The importance of maintaining close ties with the US has also been emphasized by Poland.[25]

Talking about the future of NATO without mentioning the EU is not possible. Apart from the fact that 23 NATO countries are also members of the EU, the two organizations are today very close and cooperate closely. Policies aimed at one will also affect the other. This applies, for example, to the EU's ongoing enlargement, both in the Balkans (covering six countries) and in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. In the latter three in particular, Russia's hand is already visible behind a series of events.

This also applies to other organizations such as the European Political Community (EPC) created by France. Established in 2022, following the attack on Ukraine, the EPC includes most countries in Europe except Russia and Belarus and aims to strengthen links between EU and non-EU countries and increase cooperation between them. So far, it has played an important role in including the UK in cooperation in areas where the UK has previously cooperated within the EU, and the fourth meeting will take place in July 2024, hosted by the UK.[26] At the same time, however, each new organization also takes areas from the existing organizations.

Despite the importance of Donald Trump's policies and the influence and actions of other organizations, it is NATO member states that will determine the future of the organization. In the first instance, this can be done by supporting Ukraine, so that the war can be ended in such a way that Vladimir Putin is not encouraged to push his aggression into new countries. Secondly, it is to increase, in cooperation with the EU, the resilience of Member States against Russian and Chinese attempts to influence them, where especially the Russian motives are to weaken Western society. To achieve this, NATO cohesion must also be strengthened, which is not easy given the heterogeneous nature of the membership, but where the weakness offered to Russia through internal disagreements and squabbles should have a deterrent effect.[27]

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Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
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Building solidarity peer pressure within NATO and the EU1

by Lars-Erik Lundin

I have never felt safer as a Finn. We have three locks that our defense is based on. The first lock is our national defense. The second lock is NATO and the EU, and of course, Sweden as well. The third lock is our DCA treaty, which is a defense treaty with the USA.

(President Alexander Stubb in SVT Aktuellt 2024-04-16)

Résumé

This is a special issue in the Academy's proceedings and journal about NATO. Sweden in NATO is also the main question in the ongoing Academy project SV-A-R, with a focus on – as the abbreviation and hyphens suggest – sustainable Deterrence and Resilience. Clarifying NATO's added value for Sweden and Swedish defense is a key issue in this context. Of course, the task requires that NATO's role be placed in a broader context, as done by the President of the Republic of Finland in the above quote. The question is broader than that of security guarantees. This article focuses on the added value that NATO, in cooperation with the EU, can provide to Europe's and Sweden's defense. The cooperation can be seen as a mechanism for creating *peer pressure* that mobilizes will for defense cooperation regionally and globally. In this perspective, Europe must anticipate how a possible second Trump administration could affect NATO and EU cooperation.

THIS IS A thematic issue of the Academy's documents and journal on NATO. Sweden in NATO is also the main issue in the Academy's ongoing project SV-A-R, focusing on—as the abbreviation and the dashes suggest—Sustainable Deterrence and Resilience. Clarifying NATO's added value for Sweden and Swedish defense is a key issue in this context.

Of course, the task requires putting NATO's role in a wider context, as is done by the President of the Republic of Finland in the quote above. The issue is broader than that of security guarantees. This article also focuses on the added value that NATO, in cooperation with the EU, can bring to the defense of Europe and Sweden. This cooperation can be seen as a mechanism for creating peer pressure that mobilizes willingness for defence cooperation regionally and globally.

In this perspective, Europe needs to take into account the impact of a possible sec-

ond Trump administration on NATO and EU cooperation.

NATO and the EU as actors

But first: are NATO and the EU actors that can be likened to states? Even when scholars discuss states as actors, finding an appropriate model of analysis is a major problem. The distance from thought to action can be short at the individual level. However, states do not always think and act in accordance with defined interests, and often decisions are implemented after lengthy investigations, discussions and negotiations. State leaders can largely prevent decisions from being implemented (cf. Trump). However, many necessary conditions are required to make and implement decisions. The example of defense agreements clearly shows this—be it in contemporary Germany or Sweden.

At the same time, there are examples, not least from the Second World War, when not only the great powers but also Sweden was able to implement extremely ambitious decisions in a short time, then in the form of rearmament.

Today, at the great power level, it is primarily Russia and perhaps China that have the authoritarian institutional conditions to do this. In Russia, it is estimated that 2-3.5 million employees work under strict discipline in the arms industry. While Western arms procurement and production are constantly hampered by rapid price increases for artillery shells, etc., the Russians can better control costs and reduce unnecessary duplication and fragmentation of production—a goal pursued since the Soviet Union's planned economy of the 1930s. The ability to finance such rearmament is much better than in North Korea, for example. That the international sanctions in a given situation will suddenly have a decisive effect has so far been what may appear to be a pious hope on the part of the West. But this hope has not yet been abandoned.

The importance of NATO's actor capacity for Sweden

NATO membership means that the importance of NATO as a functioning actor emerges in a completely different way for Sweden than before. For it is NATO's deterrence and resilience that is the main focus for Sweden as a member of the alliance. This is with the hope that the whole will provide added value beyond the individual national parts of the alliance and beyond the various capabilities that the member states have, including Sweden's DCA with the United States. For Sweden, it will then be of great importance that NATO can function as an actor, both in terms of decisions and capabilities.

The importance of the EU

The importance of the EU's own military capabilities has so far been a side issue in the increasingly developed cooperation between the Alliance and the Union, and there are strong forces both in Europe and in the US that want to prevent a separate European military capability. Statements from the European, sometimes French, side about strategic autonomy can to some extent be seen as a warning to those in the US who want to de-prioritize the importance of the transatlantic link. It is also a signal to Russia that Europe is not entirely dependent on the US for its defense.

It is clear that Sweden's membership of the EU needs to be seen as an important complement to NATO membership in the field of security policy, especially considering the need for resilience where the EU has a far more ambitious agenda than NATO.

Moreover, the EU has a capacity that needs to be harnessed to enable better cooperation within the Alliance by catalyzing and contributing to national capabilities that are important for burden-sharing within the Alliance.

If it is stated at the Swedish national level—as was recently done by the Defense Committee during the Academy's Winter Symposium 2024—that more than 98 percent of the Swedish state budget is relevant to a total defense that must be utilized, it is obvious that the same goal must apply to the EU budget including its supranationally regulated resources.

Similarly, it is important for Sweden to see the EU's legislative capacity in various areas as an opportunity to create better conditions for a total defense. This applies not least to creating opportunities for non-state actors—perhaps primarily the business sector—to contribute to standardization and an effective division of labour in the production of goods and services that are important for the Member States' total defence.

The national level

Several other contributions to this thematic issue illustrate the complexity of cooperation between Europe and North America in different sectors and at different levels, particularly in terms of the different national policy ambitions of the member states and the domestic political complexity of their decision-making systems.

In scenario analyses of how cooperation within and between NATO and the EU might develop, the national level is undoubtedly fundamental to a credible forecast of this in the next phase of the project—2025. And the question is not only about the outcome of the US presidential election.

Both NATO and the EU are essentially intergovernmental organizations in terms of defence policy. Admittedly, the EU also has a supranational component led by the Commission, with the Member States in the European Council and the European Parliament acting in practice as legislative chambers.

But the supranational component of the EU needs to be led, and decisions on this will be taken intergovernmentally and based on the outcome of the European elections in June 2024.

And although the EU budget is significant, it is only a few percent of the total resources of the member states. Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty allows very limited possibilities to use EU funds for defense purposes, although the interpretation of the Treaty has been stretched on this point.

NATO has limited military capabilities within its own organization. NATO has no nuclear weapons and virtually all military units and weapon systems (with the exception of, for example, a number of AWACS aircraft)2 are under national command in peacetime. NATO's civilian budget is very limited, and although Sweden is expected to contribute hundreds of officers to NATO's staffs, it is a small part of the total staff work for Swedish defense.

The issue of the strength of security guarantees

Against this background, a brutal but highly topical question in the coming years is what added value NATO and the EU can create for deterrence and resilience against primarily Russian aggressive policies.

- A first question concerns the security guarantees enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which lays the foun-

dations for NATO. Article 5 contains the mutual defence guarantees that form the core of NATO's collective defence. It provides that an armed attack against one or more of the Parties in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against all Parties.3

- There is also a security guarantee in Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty. This clause provides that if a Member State (an EU country) were to suffer an armed attack on its territory, the other Member States are obliged to support and assist the attacked Member State by all available means, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.4

Both pledges depend on rapid and potentially life-changing decisions that, in the case of NATO, must be taken at short notice by the President of the United States and the leaders of the other nuclear powers in the West (where France does not participate in NATO's joint nuclear planning group).

Existing security guarantees within the framework of various types of political and legally binding agreements have historically been tested to some extent in reality, already in the period leading up to the entry of the UK and France into the Second World War. Developments then showed that there is no simple automaticity.

In the Ukraine case, after 2014 there was a legal debate about what the 1994 Budapest Memorandum should mean for the US and the UK as signatories alongside Russia.5 The document was created to enable the Ukrainian parliament to approve the decision to renounce Ukrainian nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. An analysis of the status of this document under international law notes that the language of the Ukrainian version of the document suggests that it is a binding guarantee, while the English version speaks of security assurances, a less binding use of language. Voices have been raised in the US Congress that Russia's aggression with reference to the 1994 pledge requires a strong US response, but this is far from uncontroversial.

The discussion around this paper illustrates the complexity of assessing the value of security guarantees already outside the areas of NATO and EU membership.

And what one might call the ultimate test, we will probably never be able to evaluate, namely whether deterrence fails at the strategic nuclear level and fateful decisions have to be taken first by the US President to deploy sub-strategic and then strategic nuclear weapons against Russia.

The Cuban Missile Crisis illustrated the trauma of such a decision-making situation, even though the threat was within reach of US territory. Needless to say, the decision-making situation becomes even more difficult if it is questionable whether an attack on any part of Europe within NATO really poses an acute threat to the vital interests of the United States.

During the long period of post-Cold War disarmament, the US response to demands for clarity on how the US will respond to a Russian threat has evolved towards increasing strategic ambiguity. The United States has not been prepared to publicly clarify what its response would be to different levels of Russian aggression (conventional, hybrid or nuclear). Neither NATO nor Russia has made a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. However, it has been stated that even a Russian nuclear attack on Ukraine would be met with terrible consequences for Russia.6 A full-scale Western conventional attack on Russia would, according to US military assessments, have a tremendous impact on Russia.7 Even a

vaguely formulated statement about what response Russia can expect in the event of a further escalation of the war against Ukraine is deemed to have a deterrent effect.

Added to this are the hints given by France regarding the application of Article 42(7) of the EU Lisbon Treaty as a basis for French action.8

Western sub-strategic nuclear weapons

The debate on Western sub-strategic nuclear weapons and their role in deterrence at the European level is as yet undeveloped. The modernization and deployment of the B-61 gravity bomb in Germany and the other countries participating in the NATO nuclear sharing system has not yet been completed, nor has the deployment of certified fighter aircraft capable of penetrating Russian air defences, primarily the F-35.

The same applies to the question of extending this system territorially, including in northern Europe a discussion that has already taken place in Norway and Denmark and to some extent also in Finland, but where the Swedish government so far seems to prefer a certain degree of "strategic ambiguity". Statements on this point are also linked to the deterrent effect on Russia. The American view of the military value of deploying sub-strategic nuclear weapons on the ground in Europe is also imprecisely formulated, probably for the same reasons.

Conditions for building solidarity within NATO and the EU through peer pressure

One added value of NATO-EU cooperation that is less widely recognized is the ability of NATO and the EU to mobilize common political will to implement nationally and internationally agreed decisions.

This added value is not primarily rooted in the administrative structures of the institutions, but in the European Council and the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Both—and the European Council in particular—meet frequently and at a high level to find common solutions to various short- and long-term problems. In both contexts, heads of state, ministers and ambassadors are subject to significant peer pressure, often leading to surprisingly far-reaching joint decisions.

As far as the EU is concerned, the Lisbon Treaty took important steps to create the conditions for such peer pressure by creating the European Council as an independent flexible institution within the Union framework with far-reaching powers to creatively interpret the limitations of the Treaty.9 The EU's ability to develop common policies as close to real time as possible is already far greater than NATO's for geographical reasons. After all, the US President and the Canadian Prime Minister cannot be in Brussels every month.

But peer pressure also requires important institutional conditions that can be difficult to create at the national level. The confrontation between the three constitutional pillars of the United States, the presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court, points to the fact that the doctrine of the separation of powers as developed by Montesquieu to prevent abuse of power has an obvious downside. The effectiveness of both Congress and the Supreme Court can be influenced and manipulated from the outside, and the effectiveness of presidential power requires a loyal administration at all levels and some form of control over what happens at the state level. Similar problems exist in Europe, for example in Germany, where the federal states have considerable autonomy in civil defense matters.

Elections in the EU

In both the EU and NATO contexts, 2024 sees very important elections that will define the extent to which this peer pressure can be effectively maintained in 2025. It also defines the possibility of policy continuity both within the EU institutions and NATO.

For the EU, the question already arises before the end of 2024. The current President of the European Council, Charles Michel, first ran for the European Parliament and was expected to leave his post around mid-year. When it was noted that Viktor Orban—if no decision on Michel's successor has been taken in time—would then replace him as temporary President of the European Council, Michael decided to step down. Hungary will take up a term as rotating President of the Council of the EU on July 1, 2024.

A second issue concerns Commission President Ursula von der Leyen who is running to succeed herself but is dependent on the outcome of the European Parliament elections in terms of the number of seats allocated to her EPP parliamentary group. There is also a discussion about the effectiveness of her campaign, with several politicians within the EPP raising questions that undermine her candidacy. Should von der Leyen be elected for another term as Commission President, this will of course facilitate continuity in the work of the Commission.

This in turn allows the EU and the European Council to maintain peer pressure because the European Commission has a very significant supranational budget at its disposal. One person who has experienced this peer pressure particularly clearly is Viktor Orban.

If, on the other hand, there is a new Commission President, there may be a transition period of a year or more before the guidelines for the new Commission are translated into a clear policy, with many new officials at different levels needing to get up to speed to make their mark.

In the meantime, a window opens within the institutions to publicly question past policies as well. Suddenly, it is not self-evident that everything that has been said and done by the leading representatives within the institutions has been right.

What must not be forgotten is that the European Parliament has decision-making powers together with the Council on budgetary matters and other important decisions in Community policy. The coalitions that can be built after the European Parliament elections are therefore a key issue, particularly for long-term policy.

Elections within NATO

NATO's Secretary General is also due to leave his post and be replaced. Here, too, Ursula von der Leyen is a possible name, if Hungarian opposition to former Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte continues. The Secretary-General's position relies heavily on personal qualities rather than large administrative and financial resources.

The Commander-in-Chief of NATO military operations, General Cavoli, SACEUR, of course reports to the NATO Military Committee, but is directly dependent on the US President who nominates him to his post.[10] The US resources and decisions delegated to SACEUR in danger of war or in time of war are entirely dependent on the consent of the US President.

It is quite possible, as has been done in the past, particularly in the case of out-of-area operations, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan but also in Syria, to organize informal coalitions outside the NATO framework led by the United States. In several cases, however, these coalitions have then been continued

within the NATO framework when operations have dragged on.[11]

Peer pressure not necessarily linked to organizational resources

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) can also build peer pressure that can be important for Alliance members.

It is worth noting that the only time Article 5 was activated within the NATO framework was in support of the United States in connection with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The activation of Article 5 was then a decision that was largely stimulated by NATO, it was not an obvious and independent decision by the US.[12]

Focusing on peer pressure as a key parameter when assessing the added value of international organizations is important, as there is a tendency to focus on the resources at the disposal of the different organizations. NATO has a fairly small budget but is not obviously less important than the EU, which has both supranational competences and a much larger financial power base. The key issue is what resources can be mobilized within member states' budgets overall.

Important link to the UN level

The fundamental problem of the United Nations today can be said to be the absence of effective peer pressure in the Security Council and the General Assembly. Such peer pressure has been mobilized on occasion over a number of decades but currently the prospects are very bleak.

If the European and transatlantic organizations are also weakened, this is also likely to have a negative impact on the international decision-making system, both at the UN in New York and in a number of specialist bodies that have a bearing on health, the environment, nuclear power, etc.

Prospects for preserved transatlantic cohesion and a stronger Europe

In the US, France and other countries, there are strong political forces that want to concentrate attention on internal national problems and reduce cooperation with other Western countries.

In this context, the outcome of the US presidential election is of particular importance, as there has been a recent trend towards a mutual blocking of decision-making power in the White House and in Congress. Individual politicians are fighting for their survival, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who has great power over the agenda while being constantly threatened by forces within his own party group.

The current situation is partly the result of a series of decisions taken by Donald J. Trump during his first administration (e.g. the appointment of Supreme Court judges) which may now be followed by a second presidential term. The implementation of the US 2025 program developed by the Heritage Foundation in collaboration with a number of other think tanks could have far-reaching consequences.[13] The effect could be a sharp decline in US interest in multilateral cooperation.

The focus of the documents released so far is clearly on prioritizing bilateral transactional agreements with a limited number of friendly Western countries. In this context, it is also clear that a new Trump administration will seek to act swiftly to replace as many officials as possible who might slow

down the implementation of the President's policies. However, the top layer of such appointments will have to be confirmed by the Senate within six months' time.

Russian and Chinese-led disinformation to reduce cohesion and unity in the West

Russia, China, Iran and a large but unknown number of both state and non-state actors (including wealthy and corrupt oligarchs in both East and West) are working to undermine unity and create confusion in Western decision-making structures. In doing so, they are deliberately threatening the prospects for cohesion in NATO and the EU.

The Russians have a window of opportunity at the moment in terms of leverage in both Europe and the United States that they are trying to exploit to the maximum. At the same time, they are seeking to contribute to a long-term power structure in Europe and the US that favors Russian interests.

Russia is very likely to try to influence both the US and European elections, but not necessarily in the way one might imagine. Putin may not need to focus solely on those closest to him politically. The opportunities to weaken and divide can and seem to have led to Russian hybrid destabilization operations supporting both the right and the left in politics.

Western responses to the Russian and Chinese information campaigns

Probably the biggest disappointment for Russia after the full-scale attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 is that it catalyzed a greater European unity and willingness to defend itself than Moscow had expected. NATO enlargement was already gaining momentum with the accession of Finland and Sweden, as well as the ambition to enlarge the EU. Far-reaching decisions to strengthen defence were taken in many European states, not least in Germany and Sweden. Attempts to undermine the Ukrainian will to defend itself failed. It can also be noted that support for Brexit is now lower than it has been for a very long time,14 which may lead to better conditions for cooperation between the UK and not only individual Western states but also with the EU.

The West is also conducting information campaigns against Russia and to build up the will to defend itself in the West, which means that objective information about how the war is actually going is difficult to find. The West can be said to have an interest in exaggerating Russian capabilities and losses. At the same time, there is caution in publicizing and discussing weaknesses on the Western side, including in Ukraine. On the nuclear issue, there is a deliberate lack of clarity, which may of course create domestic political turmoil in various countries, including Sweden, but which may be deemed necessary to increase deterrence against Russia.

All this also makes it difficult to assess the future prospects of the sanctions, as well as the question of the production capacity of the Russian war industry and Russian military reconstruction after very heavy losses. There is a tendency to exaggerate Russian capabilities, for example, in addition to devastating artillery strikes, to re-attack major Ukrainian cities such as Kharkiv.

A worst-case analysis for a second Trump administration

A President Trump, if he follows the recommendations of the Heritage Foundation,

will have a policy framework that focuses on Europe paying for US aid. NATO and the EU as institutions play a very subordinate role in this concept. The question can be asked whether a new Trump administration will even choose again to undermine the diplomatic recognition of the EU's representatives internationally and in the US. Such a development would further facilitate Putin's efforts to destabilize and divide.

If the US is unwilling to negotiate with the EU, cooperation between the EU and NATO as institutions—which has developed in more than 70 different areas in recent years—will also be severely weakened.

In such a situation, much of the burden falls on the heads of state in the major European capitals to put their house in order to meet the major challenges facing Europe. Member states will then have to decide whether they want to allow the supranational functions of the EU to develop further in the security field—a red flag for the US—even before any future treaty changes. In addition, the question of concentric circles within the EU to enable more effective exercise of power within the Union will be raised, including the question of the euro as a common denominator for the inner circle.[15]

A challenging external environment

That the challenges are many and multi-dimensional is clearly indicated by an analysis of developments around the world. The Academy of War Studies' project SV-A-R studies this with regard to both developments in and around Ukraine and the Middle East, another arena that is strongly destabilizing and dividing Europe, while the risks of spreading several conflicts are obvious. Here, solidarity within the EU and NATO means both a need to build unity to the East and to the South. Threat perceptions are partly different in different countries.

Does Trump need to initially fail to realize the need for cooperation with Europe?

The question can then be asked whether continued cooperation between NATO and the EU presupposes an initial failure of Trump's foreign policy, not least with regard to support for Ukraine.

The parallel with September 11, 2001, is of some interest in this context. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations downplayed the risk of terrorism as a threat to American security. European attempts to build a European security and defence policy that could in any way threaten the power structures of NATO were resolutely resisted. But when the picture changed dramatically in the wake of the September 11 attacks, Bush saw his dependence on effective European coordination on terrorism and organised crime. US policy gradually shifted towards better cooperation. European security coordination in the fields of justice and home affairs increased. And paradoxically, it was the UK—the most US-friendly administration among the European powers—that led the EU's work in this area until the last British commissioner had to leave with Brexit.

If Trump takes the line that he can resolve the Ukraine war through a deal with Putin that changes the internationally recognized borders of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, he may be able to push through a ceasefire that lasts a while if he simultaneously cuts off US aid to Ukraine.

But—and this is a crucial but—he will not easily be able to manage the risk of continued long-term Russian rearmament and he will not necessarily be able to reduce Putin's

appetite to fulfil his historic mission to reunite Tsarist Russia, which on the map also includes the Baltics.

Perhaps Trump can create a temporary surface calm that is not fundamentally disrupted during his remaining years in power. But he cannot control the wider world and perhaps not the outcome of the next US mid-term elections as he approaches the end of his term.

In the case of North Korea, for example, he may have to come back and exert maximum pressure on the person or persons with whom he thought he could reach sustainable agreements. A first issue in this context is of course not only North Korea but also Iran, where US policy has shifted dramatically in recent decades.

In the light of such a possible development, it will be very important to study how Europe is affected by US policy. There are many indications that European interests may then be neglected to some extent, which could create group pressure within Europe for a unified policy to safeguard European interests. The US has traditionally opposed such a European joint decision-making *caucus*. What the American response will be to such a development remains to be seen.

The author is ambassador and a PhD. He is a member of RSAWS and leads the Academy's project SV-A-R.

Notes

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Sweden is Finland's Closest Partner

by Minna Ålander

Résumé

It cast a shadow over Finland's first year as a NATO member that Sweden's NATO process took longer than Finland's. The then President Sauli Niinistö pointed this out in his statement on Finland's membership in April 2023: "Finland's NATO membership is not complete without Sweden's", and it became an oft-repeated statement by Finnish political leaders during the 11 months between Finland's and Sweden's NATO membership. And it was not just political rhetoric, but an assessment based on a military logic. In terms of security of supply, Finland is something of an island, surrounded by water to the south and west and with only a comparatively much shorter land border with Sweden and Norway to the north. Therefore, close cooperation with Sweden is of crucial importance to Finland. From NATO's perspective, it has been clear that Sweden is a key to the defense of northern Europe since the Alliance started working on its first defense plans in 1950. Sweden was the missing piece of the puzzle that has now changed the strategic environment in the Nordic-Baltic region. Almost 75 years later, these considerations have finally become an operational reality, with Sweden and Finland fully integrated into NATO's new regional plans.

WHEN FINLAND'S THEN-FOREIGN Minister Pekka Haavisto deposited the instrument of accession with the United States Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, on 4 April 2024, it was Finland's very first official act as a NATO member to hand over the ratification documents of Sweden's accession – seconds after becoming a member.[1] The fact that Sweden's accession took longer than Finland's cast a shadow on Finland's first year in NATO. Then-President Sauli Niinistö remarked on it in his statement on Finland's accession in April 2023: "Finland's NATO membership is not complete without that of Sweden"[2] and it became a frequently repeated statement by Finnish political leaders in the period of 11 months between Finland and Sweden's NATO accession.

Why Sweden Matters (So Much)

Therefore, it was an occasion for a deep sigh of relief in Finland in early March 2024 when Sweden's NATO membership was finally fully ratified, after Hungary, the last NATO member to hold out its ratification, completed the task. Reactions by Finnish officials and political leadership on the day of Sweden's accession ceremony on 7 March were overjoyed: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, posted a congratulatory video on the social media platform X (previously Twitter), with Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Elina Valtonen waving a Swedish flag and the song "Den glider in", known from the 1995 ice hockey world championship finals

where Finland beat Sweden, playing in the background.[3] On the day Sweden became a NATO member, Finland's membership was completed too.

Finland's geographical location is characterized by the opposite nature of its main neighbours: on the one side, the long history of oppression and wars with Russia,[4] which is also currently waging a brutal war on another neighbour; on the other side Sweden that has not waged wars since 1814. Furthermore, belonging to the Nordic group has been a window to the West for Finland after the World Wars and the historical and linguistic connections to Sweden have facilitated Finland's identity as a Nordic country.[5] It explains why Finns tend to follow political, economic and societal developments in Sweden[6] in a manner bordering on obsessive and why it is perfectly logical in the Finnish public debates to cite Sweden as both the better and the worse example, depending on the point of view.[7] For Finland's post-World War development the orientation towards and rapprochement with Sweden has been an important facilitator in the process of creating distance to Russia and the Soviet Union and building Finland into a successful Nordic welfare state. As Bergquist et. al (2016) put it, "the mere existence of Sweden was of immense significance for post-war Finland as a neighbour, trade partner and a social model."[8]

Finland and Sweden: Connected by History

The joint NATO accession process and the aspiration to join the alliance together has brought Finland and Sweden closer in the vital policy field of security and defence than the two countries probably ever have been since the Kingdom of Sweden lost Finland, then the eastern part of the kingdom, to the Russian empire in 1809. Finland's Minister of European Affairs and Ownership Steering, Anders Adlercreutz, published a video on the social media platform X on the day of Sweden's NATO accession, telling a personal story of that war: his relative, Major General Carl Johan Adlercreutz, had led the Swedish forces in the battle of Oravais where Sweden suffered a decisive defeat against the Russian Empire. As it became clear that Sweden would lose Finland to Russia, the officers under Major General Adlercreutz decided to open the uppermost button in their uniform sleeves, not to be closed until Finland and Sweden were reunited. On the day Sweden became NATO member, Minister Adlercreutz symbolically closed the uppermost button of his suit sleeves in the video.[9]

A more recent unifying historical factor between Finland and Sweden was that both remained neutral during the Cold War and continued the policy of military non-alignment after the fall of the Soviet Union until Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022. However, the drivers of both countries' neutrality policies were vastly different. While it is not possible to give a comprehensive account of Finland and Sweden's neutrality policies here, a brief overview of the important links between Finland and Sweden during the Cold War neutrality is given. It is relevant to understand the different reasons why Finland and Sweden remained neutral during the Cold War, to better understand why it took 30 years after the Cold War to make the decision to join NATO.[10]

Sweden's Neutrality and the "Finnish Question"

For Sweden, the question of NATO membership has ostensibly been politically linked to Finland. At the end of WWII, Sweden was

faced with a choice as spheres of influence were being demarcated: To join the Western NATO bloc or remain neutral. After the attempt to establish a Scandinavian Defence Union with Norway and Denmark failed in 1949[11] and the two others joined NATO as founding members, Sweden kept up its neutrality that it had managed to uphold also during the Second World War. Part of the argumentation was that were Sweden to have joined NATO along with Norway and Denmark, it would have left Finland alone to face the Soviet Union. In such a case, it was argued in Sweden at the time, Finland would almost certainly have fallen entirely within the Soviet sphere of influence, possibly even being annexed, as Moscow would not have accepted a fully NATO-dominated Nordic region.[12] Indeed, Finland was already identified as within the Soviet sphere of influence in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and had just fought for its independence in the Winter War 1939–40. Thus, Swedish leaders believed that their neutrality would help Finland maintain its independence, creating a larger buffer between the Soviet bloc and NATO.

It was also in accordance with the idea of a "Nordic balance", as formulated by Arne Olav Brundtland in 1966: Denmark and Sweden in the Western bloc, Sweden's "well-armed neutrality", and Finland's neutrality with "arms control" in the form of the Finno-Soviet Friendship Treaty of 1948.[13] As Risto E J Penttilä describes the mechanism, "if the Soviet Union were to tighten its grip on Finland, Norway and Denmark would welcome permanent NATO bases and nuclear weapons on their territory. And vice versa: if NATO were to increase its presence in Norway and Denmark, Moscow would tighten its grip on Finland. Both sides refrained from making such moves."[14]

However, although the Swedish rhetoric about neutrality became increasingly fervent on the political level during the Cold War decades and Sweden pursued an active, normative "third way"[15] foreign policy with a strong focus on the so-called Third World between the blocs, Sweden simultaneously cooperated quite extensively and to an increasing degree with its NATO neighbours Norway and Denmark on the military level.[16] As an incentive to give up its nuclear weapons programme, the United States even offered Sweden secret security guarantees.[17]

For Finland, in contrast, neutrality during the Cold War was a pragmatic rather than ideological choice that served to emphasize Finland's independent status as non-Soviet bloc country, thereby increasing Finland's room for manoeuvre that was limited by the Finno-Russian Friendship Treaty. NATO membership was out of the question for Finland in any case, as the treaty stipulated that neither party would join alliances "hostile to either party to the treaty".[18] The treaty also specifically names Germany as a potentially hostile country, and West Germany was taken into NATO in 1955. Neutrality (as well as sauna) helped Finland fend off Soviet suggestions to hold military exercises together in the 1970's.[19] After the Cold War, Finland maintained military non-alignment for as long as it served the practical purpose of avoiding costly tensions at the long border with Russia. The so-called "NATO option", meaning that Finland reserved the right to reconsider its non-alignment, should the security environment change, served a similar purpose as the emphasis on neutrality during the Cold War, and was an important response to the regular Russian threats about consequences of a Finnish NATO accession.[20] Putin's demand on NATO not to accept new members – including Finland and Sweden – in December 2021 directly undermined Finland's NATO option poli-

cy, which Finland's President Sauli Niinistö addressed in his 2022 new year's speech, reminding of Finland's sovereign right and freedom of choice what comes to a membership in NATO.[21]

NATO membership: Not a Question of If, but When

After the end of the Cold War, Sweden did not seek NATO membership either but otherwise followed the general trend – and NATO doctrine – of a focus on crisis management and professionalization of forces away from the Cold War conscription army to an expeditionary force model. A policy change began in the 2010's, when Sweden stated readiness to give and receive military assistance in case of an attack on EU and Nordic partners.[22] Sweden began investing in increasingly close defence ties to Finland, its Nordic neighbours, and NATO partners – intensively so since Russia's annexation of Crimea 2014. Both Finland and Sweden had been pursuing a close partnership with NATO already since the 1990s, by joining the Partnership for Peace in 1994. In 2014, both received a status upgrade to Enhanced Opportunity Partners.

Finland and Sweden have been also among the most active partners of NATO and contributed to NATO's missions and operations, starting with the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 (Sweden)/ 1996 (Finland), Afghanistan (Sweden 2003–2014 and in a supporting role until 2021, Finland 2002–2021), Iraq, Kosovo and Libya (Sweden). Both have also participated in the enhanced NATO Response Force (NRF) and signed a memorandum of understanding on Host Nation Support. Thus, Finland and Sweden had reached the "plateau"[23] of the highest possible level of partnership with NATO, with full membership as the only remaining logical step.

What comes to national military power, Sweden has displayed a tendency to swing from one extreme to the other, going from a weak military capability before the Second World War into building one of the world's largest air forces during the Cold War, then radically scaling down the armed forces in the 1990's and 2000's. Now Sweden is swinging back again, with the latest Defence Commission recommendation – reportedly inspired by Finland's new President Alexander Stubb's recommendation to "talk less and prepare more"[24] – suggesting significant increases in defence budget, procurement, and troop size.[25] The wake-up call had come a decade earlier, during the so-called "Russian Easter" in 2013 when Russian fighter jets simulated an attack on Swedish territory during a military exercise. The Russian aircraft had to be intercepted by Danish fighter jets on NATO's Baltic Air Policing duty at the time, as all Swedish pilots were on Easter vacation. NATO later determined that it had been a simulated nuclear attack[26] and Sweden concluded that national defence capability had not become entirely obsolete, after all.

However, NATO membership remained a question of political identity in Sweden.[27] The narrative of 200 years of neutrality (or non-alignment after the Cold War) and staying outside of wars as a conflict party, instead emphasizing arms control and peacebuilding, has been an integral part of Sweden's (and especially its Social Democratic Party's) foreign policy tradition as a "moral superpower".[28] Finland's preference to stay outside of the alliance, too, was to an extent a convenient excuse not to press the divisive issue, as Sweden joining NATO would have created "a strategically awkward situation" and could have brought back the Cold War-era "Finnish question".[29] But Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 fundamentally changed the equation for Finland. Only a few days after the beginning

of the invasion, public opinion in Finland shifted significantly in favour of joining NATO and set the political process in motion, initial Swedish resistance post-invasion notwithstanding.[30] "Damned Finland, now we may also have to join",[31] was reportedly then-Foreign Minister Ann Linde's reaction, when the government fully understood Finland's intention. Suddenly, Finland was leading the way into NATO. After it became clear that Finland and Sweden would jointly submit applications for NATO membership, a headline in the tabloid *Expressen* thanked "big brother Finland" for "NATO-help" – in Finnish.[32]

Military Drivers of Bilateral Cooperation

The statement that Finland's NATO membership is incomplete without Sweden was not just political rhetoric but an assessment based on a military logic. In terms of security of supply, Finland is somewhat of an island, given that it is surrounded by water in the south and west and only has a comparatively much shorter land border with Sweden and Norway in the north. The long land border with Russia is currently closed and likely will remain so for some time, which limits Finland's supply lines to the western direction and underlines the island-like character. Therefore, the close cooperation with Sweden (and increasingly so with Norway in the north) is vital for Finland.

As Matti Pesu (2023) describes, "as a NATO ally, Sweden will primarily act as a staging area, facilitating onward-moving reinforcements for operations in Finland and the Baltic states. This role as a hub would also entail acquiring capabilities and functions that would directly and indirectly support the defence of frontline nations, particularly in the land theatre of the European Arctic."[33] The logistics connections and military cooperation between Finland and Sweden were major topics during President Stubb's first state visit to Sweden, including the port of Gothenburg. Finland is extremely dependent on the Baltic Sea supply lines for both military and civilian-commercial purposes, and the port of Gothenburg is a key logistics node: It is the Nordic region's largest port and main entry point from the Atlantic – both in peace time as well as in crisis and war.[34] Furthermore, Sweden's navy, amphibious units and air force play an important role also for Finland's defence: "Sweden is strong on the water, under the water, and above the water", President Stubb said.[35]

FISE Cooperation: Friends with Many Benefits

Sweden's central geographic location makes it important for military mobility and security of supply in the whole Nordic-Baltic region. Swedish territory connects the Norwegian Atlantic coast in the Arctic to Northern Finland and reaches all the way down to the Danish Straits in southern Baltic Sea. Apart from the crucial sea lines in the south, the only land route connecting Finland to the western allies goes through Northern Sweden and to Norway's Atlantic coast. Reinforcing the Arctic region in a crisis is essential in denying Russia the ability to cut off NATO allies from Scandinavia in the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap or along the Bear Island line.

In addition to the centuries-long shared history and close contemporary relations, Finland therefore had a practical self-interest in having Sweden join NATO as soon as possible. Sweden gives Finland strategic depth, while Sweden, for its part, has always profited from having Finland between itself and Russia. Therefore, after Russia's first invasion of Ukraine and annexation of

Crimea in 2014, Finland and Sweden started expanding bilateral defence cooperation. In 2014, the governments of Sweden and Finland tasked their armed forces to enhance cooperation on both defence policy decisions and specific military areas.[36]

A 2015 joint statement of the ministries of defence confirmed this commitment to deepened military cooperation.[37] In 2018, a defence cooperation Memorandum of Understanding was signed, creating the conditions for joint operational and tactical planning, followed by a joint military strategic concept signed in 2019.[38] In 2020, Sweden adopted a law that extended the powers to provide and receive operational military assistance within the Swedish-Finnish framework and a bilateral host nation agreement was signed in 2022.[39]

The operational results of these agreements have been manifold. But some of the so-called FISE cooperation formats precede the post-2014 agreements: Finland and Sweden have a long-standing cooperation framework between their navies with the Swedish-Finnish Amphibious Task Unit (SFATU), and for example the Amphibious regiment from Sweden and the Swedish-speaking Nyland brigade from Finland have been exercising together since 2001.[40] The air forces have been exercising together on a near-weekly basis trilaterally with Norway within the Cross Border Training framework since 2009.[41] The 2023 letter of intent of the Nordic air forces, including also Denmark, added a key deterrence element into the Nordic-Baltic region: the combined Nordic fleet of about 250 fighter jets (Gripens in Sweden and soon F-35s in the other Nordic air forces) equals that of Britain and France.[42] Dispersed basing of the Finnish F-35s in Swedish territory could become relevant in the future, as one challenge for the Finnish Air Force is its "restricted operating environment, within range of Russian cruise and ballistic missiles and relatively close to its advanced GBAD systems."[43]

It's the Geography, Stupid

Having Sweden as a full member of the alliance is a real game changer. Sweden was the missing piece in the puzzle that has now changed the strategic outlook in the Nordic-Baltic region. The difference that it makes from NATO defence planners' point of view is significant. What has always been a geographical reality, now becomes executable: in 1950, a NATO military committee report stated that "Sweden, by reason of her economic, industrial and military strength, is a factor of considerable importance in any regional defence planning, but at present she is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty. The full cooperation of Sweden, at some later date, would greatly enhance the defensive strength of the Northern European Region".[44] And, which is as valid today as it was in 1950: "Moreover, the Russians cannot ignore the possibility of Sweden joining the Northern Allies when Norway is attacked."[45] Therefore, NATO concluded already in its very early days that "the defence of the [Nordic] region must therefore be considered as a whole with the object of achieving one integrated and coordinated plan".[46]

Almost 75 years later, these considerations finally become a straightforward operational reality, with Sweden and Finland fully integrated into NATO's new regional plans. Even if the assumption was, before becoming full members, that Finland and Sweden would fight on the side of NATO in a potential regional conflict, it was not possible to make official defence plans for and with the two Nordic countries. The NATO membership of Finland and Sweden fundamentally changes

the geography of deterrence and defence in the Baltic Sea and Nordic region, even if it is not a silver bullet that solves the 'Baltic dilemma', i.e., the challenging geographical position of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania caught between Russia and the Baltic Sea, with limited strategic depth for defence. However, Finland and Sweden shift the parameters of any potential battlefield with Russia and give NATO military planners new tools to defeat potential aggression in the Nordic-Baltic region.

Finland and Sweden bridge the geographic gap that disrupted NATO's defence planning between the northernmost member Norway, along with Denmark, Germany, and Poland, to create a unified theatre of operations from the Arctic to the North Atlantic, the Nordic region, and through the Baltic Sea. Now that their territories and military assets can be fully integrated into NATO's defence and deterrence concept, planning and executing of NATO's Baltic defence becomes much easier – and, even possible, in the first place.[47] With Finland and Sweden in the alliance, NATO can now deliver on the 2022 Madrid summit pledge to "defend every inch of Allied territory at all times".[48] At the same time, the situation is now much more complicated for Russian planners.

The almost-joint accession of Finland and Sweden to the alliance has thus created one coherent geostrategic region running from the Arctic through the North Sea and Baltic Sea. Once a buffer for Sweden against Russian aggression, the Baltic Sea would become a regional security link. In times of crisis or war in the Baltics, Swedish air bases can readily receive NATO forces and send reinforcements. This is especially true for Gotland, which has served as a logistical hub often in the past millennium and will be an important puzzle piece for NATO's defence plans for the Baltic States today. Integrated air and missile defence capabilities on this strategic island could reduce and even reverse the dangers to NATO from the Russian so-called anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) bubble around Kaliningrad and the Suwalki Gap.[49] The geography also made the joint NATO application with Finland the only viable alternative for Sweden: in the middle of the Nordic-Baltic region it could not realistically have stayed outside of NATO after Finland made the decision to apply. As Bergquist et. al put it in their 2016 assessment of the effects of Finland's potential NATO accession, "strategic decisions taken by one of the two countries have had immediate and decisive consequences for the other."[50]

NATO's New Northern Flank: A Game-Changing Dilemma for Russia

Finland's more than 1340 km long border with Russia has doubled the total length of the NATO-Russia border, which caused some alarm ahead of the accession of the newest member. But thanks to Finland's notable defence capability, the longer border is an advantage for NATO, as it significantly complicates the outlook for Russian offensive campaigns. If attempting any attack on the Baltic states, Russia would first have to reinforce the border to Finland, which is currently exposed and blank of equipment and troops that have been drawn to Ukraine: Russia stripped even the air defences around St. Petersburg in the early stages of the war.[51] In the Northern Fleet base on Russia's Arctic coast in the Kola Peninsula, the air and sea assets, including strategic nuclear submarines, are still widely intact.[52] However, NATO could now hold these under threat, as the Russian base is located only around 200 km from the Finnish border.

Furthermore, the most significant change from NATO's point of view is that the Baltic States can now be reinforced not only from air and land (from the south through Germany and Poland) but also from sea. A major headache for NATO planners used to be that the Baltic States were an exposed allied outpost, sandwiched between Russia and the Baltic Sea, and therefore relatively easy to cut off from the rest of the alliance especially through the Suwalki Gap between Lithuania and Poland that connects the Russian exclave Kaliningrad to Belarus. Now, Finland's territory has opened up a new supply route to Estonia, connecting it through Northern Sweden to Norway's Atlantic coast – the only land route connecting Finland to the western allies. The Gulf of Finland is so narrow between Helsinki and Tallinn (only 80 km) that Russia's Baltic Fleet is now stuck in the port of St. Petersburg, if NATO so decides.

For Latvia and Lithuania south of Estonia, the picture is somewhat more mixed: Sweden's territory is a gamechanger for NATO by connecting the whole region, from Norwegian High North down to the Danish Straits as an access point into the Baltic Sea in the south. Sweden has pledged to contribute a reduced brigade of up to 1000 troops to the multinational NATO Forward Land Force in Latvia.[53] Sweden is assessed to even have the potential to take on a leadership role in the maritime domain in the Baltic Sea region, with its capable navy specialized in Baltic Sea shallow water and submarine warfare.[54] However, Russia's control over Belarus has mitigated the positive net effect of Sweden's NATO membership for Latvia and Lithuania.

Sweden Has Always Mattered

Since NATO began working on its first defence plans in 1950, it has been clear that Sweden is key for the defence of Northern Europe. Sweden's secret relations with NATO during the Cold War were so close that Americans jokingly called Sweden "neutral on our side".[55] With that background, it is not surprising that Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said in his speech on the occasion of Sweden's NATO accession: "With this membership, Sweden has come home."[56]

The most important detail from a Finnish perspective is that as member of the same alliance, Sweden has now officially committed to defending Finland through a treaty obligation. NATO membership does not change but rather reinforces the fact that Sweden is Finland's closest partner. This, as one key element in the wider context of Finland's NATO membership, leads to the assessment in Finland that Finnish security has never been on a better foundation since gaining independence in 1917 – in a marked contrast to the Swedish assessment that Sweden's security environment has never been worse since the Second World War.[57]

As the Finnish journalist Sami Sillanpää notes in an essay, Finland and Sweden were finally reunited in NATO by the same power that separated them: Russia. In 1809, Sweden was deprived of what it had established in Finland already centuries earlier, and as Sillanpää points out, would be called "enhanced forward presence" in NATO-speak. As a result, both the Finnish and the Swedish assessment of the security situation are true at the same time: Although Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has shattered the post-Cold War European security order, it has had the side effect of jolting the Nordic countries even closer together. Finland and Sweden have never been closer, and therefore safer. And, as Sillanpää concludes: it is simply "kanonbra".[58]

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Noter

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NATO Out of Area Operations after Afghanistan[1]

From in and/or out together" to "less out of area or out of business?

by Michael Sahlin

Résumé

Even though, historically, NATO leaders found particular difficulties in reaching agreement on "out-of area" operations, whether formally naming those as such or not, there was a time, after the end of the cold war, when the expression "out of area or out of business" manifested soul-searching within the Alliance. However, crucial events after the millennium shift, "9/11" in 2001, the Prague summit on e.g. enlargement and the beginning of the Afghan engagement in 2002, and G.W. Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003, soon changed the discourse. But in parallel, the new millennium brought a process of gradually enhanced tension with Russia, in the east-west dimension, thus the ensuing decades saw parallel tracks, "the war on terror" (mainly north-south) and a worsening trajectory in the east-west dimension. Correspondingly, in the succeeding period after WW2, there was parallelism between the Cold War and the process of de-colonization. Combining the two parallel processes with an understanding of the problematic distinction between legitimacy and efficiency provides insight into the political environment of – and prospects for in today's world – "out-of-area" operations. An overview of such operations, past and present, displays a declining trend, coinciding with a similar trend within the UN, despite drastic need, but in the case of NATO restrictiveness is a result of i.a. the weight of the Afghanistan experience and current focus on assistance to Ukraine and generally on enlargement. For Sweden, now a NATO member, these issues will be intricate but potentially vital. The looming Trump factor adds to uncertainty.

> In the past, NATO has known no more divisive subject than the use of its forces outside the area to which they were assigned in 1949. From its inception, the Alliance had been designed solely to defend the North Atlantic area, not interests outside it. The suggestion that its defence perimeter should be extended to encompass the defence of energy interests in the Middle East has always been met with the objection that this would involve a strategic role for which NATO is not designed and which most of its members would resist for domestic political reasons. The question has always been of concern to NATO because whether its members operate with the North Atlantic area or not, whenever forces have been used east of Suez they have had to be withdrawn from the front line.
>
> (C. Coker, *The Future of the Atlantic Alliance*, RUSI 1984).

IT WAS THEN, IN 1984, concerning the tug-of-war between American and European

interests in the context of the NATO of that time, barely two decades before the Prague summit in 2002, when the concept and phenomenon of "out of area operations" came to be established more formally, mainly in the light of Afghanistan (two decades before the highly controversial withdrawal). It was at that time, at that stage, that there had been a lot of talk about NATO's "identity crisis" after the "victory" in the Cold War, that for its survival and continued relevance, the Alliance now needed a new mission and that it was, therefore, a matter of "go out of area (given the geographically and thematically broadened threat picture) or out of business". So anything other than "out of area" would be a loss of investment.

The area was then, and formally still is, defined by Article 6 of the NATO Charter and its wording on (essentially) the territory of the member states, an area that has since been gradually expanded by the enlargement of the Alliance.

So how can NATO's "out of area operations" be described and discussed in today's perhaps even more complicated world? How does the US security interest relate to, or differ from, that of the Alliance as a whole, now also in the perspective of a possible return of Donald Trump to the White House? How does NATO—or the grouping of a certain number of member states in so-called "coalitions of the willing"—as a peace support actor/operator relate to other multilateral actors, such as the UN and a number of regional actors (EU, AU, etc.)—in a situation where, on the one hand, the international increase in tension makes global decision-making more difficult and, on the other hand, the need for peace operations is strongly emphasized by an increasing number of deadly conflicts in different parts of the world? How does NATO's current enlargement policy affect the view of what is desirable and what is possible within the framework of the current out-of-area operations focus? How do NATO's three main tasks harmonize in this respect according to the Madrid/Vilnius strategic "concept"—and what is the practical implication (in this respect) of the Alliance's so-called 360-degree policy?

The questions are many and the answers are tentative at best. Much is determined, in this respect too, by Russia's war in Ukraine and by the US presidential election.

First, however, some important starting points, which together remind us of the importance of taking into account that security policy, including European and transatlantic security policy, is about both the East-West and, at the same time, the North-South dimension.

Two times two parallel processes, the Cold War and afterwards

In order to correctly and realistically describe the political environment that constitutes the background to decisions on and implementation of NATO's "out of area operations", in the past but still in today's world, one can point to two security policy-relevant processes at different stages.

One deals with the Cold War period, from the Atlantic Alliance and NATO until the end of the Cold War in 1991, and the decade thereafter. *The* East-West *dimension* encompasses the various stages of Cold War development, nuclear strategies, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, nuclear stabilization trends, the détente period, the Helsinki Accords, the Afghanistan crisis, Reagan and the Star Wars, the winding down of the Cold War, the decline and fall of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, the

new regulatory regimes (in addition to the global innovations after World War II), US hegemony, and Russia's wobbly path from Yeltsin to Putin. And much more.

Parallel to this, rather in *the* North-South *dimension*, the powerful and stormy decolonization process in the so-called Third World (today "The Global South"), the Vietnam War, the Congo crisis, resulting political instability within the former colonial powers, all these turbulent events with clear roots and sequences of events in the North-South dimension, but with obvious bearing on and connection to the struggle for power and influence in the East-West dimension. We are thus talking here about both the "Third World", as the arena for the various sub-conflicts in the different acts of the post-war East-West drama, and the development, in post-war and decolonization format, of a more independent dimension, North-South.

This parallelism, or double-tracking, which in the 1990s gave way to a perhaps historically unique degree of globalism and multilateralism (albeit under US hegemony), was then replaced by a 20-year period of once again parallel processes, in the sense of a kind of continuation of the East-West and North-South processes of the previous phase: the gradual deterioration of the relationship between the actors in the East-West dimension in parallel with the fight against terrorism, President Bush's "war on terror" from "9/11" in 2001 and, it is proposed, until the Biden-administrated (and Trump-prepared) withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. In one track (east-west): the different points in the Russian-western climate confusion, 2007 (Putin's Munchausen), 2008 (Georgia), 2014 (Crimea and Donbass), 2021 (Putin's ultimatum to the West) and 2022 (the attack on Ukraine), etc., and the balancing act of cooperation-competition-conflict between China and Western countries; NATO and EU enlargement. In the second track (North-South, the fight against terrorism): Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, IS, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Mali, etc. crises and conflicts to the south as a challenge to primarily Western willingness and ability to manage crises and maintain peace. This combination is increasingly problematic for the West as a whole and strategically problematic in various ways.

It can be said of these two dual processes, 1949–1991/2000 and 2001–2021, that the effect of both is to continue to provide substance, and controversy, to issues of peace support operations in general and NATO out-of-area peace operations/missions in particular, and that the trend over the last period has been markedly downward, for all categories of actors, in sustaining and restarting peace support operations. This is, of course, linked to geopolitical developments in general, with growing divisions between the permanent members of the UN Security Council (the victorious powers of the Second World War) and the consequent difficulties in reaching unanimous decisions on the maintenance of existing operations and, above all, on the launching of new ones. This brings us to the second important starting point, the problem of legitimacy-effectiveness.

The legitimacy-efficacy problem

The recent movie "Hammarskjöld" revives memories of the drama of the early Cold War-era experiments with more or less clearly UN-mandated peacekeeping efforts, or operations, or missions. The Congo crisis in particular, like the Cuban Missile Crisis, represented a clear example of the overlap between the North-South and East-West dimensions in the world of that time. Even in that environment, it was by no means easy to

reach agreement in the UN Security Council on interventions, for the sake of peace and humanitarian considerations in geopolitically contested conflict zones in the decolonizing Third World. Then, as now, a fundamental problem of legitimacy; how to agree in the globally recognized forum, the UN Security Council, on a credible and effective mandate for an armed intervention for peace, stability and humanity? And how to circumvent that problem, for the sake of efficiency, in a different format, if the need for action is deemed compelling by the majority, but still retaining (sufficient) legitimacy?

The multidimensional perspective outlined in the above discussion makes it clear that the problem of legitimacy regarding operations "out of area" (in the case of NATO) does not only relate to the global level and the UN Security Council but, as stated in the introductory Coker quote, also has to do with the fact that such operations tend to closely affect the national foreign policy interests of individual member states, especially in those areas where the economic and security policy interests of former colonial powers in relation to the former colonies are involved. The negotiation issue here can be about legitimacy, international division of labour, justifiable use of resources, solidarity and priorities, in one variant (of many) that a member state wishes to reinforce and legitimize its national need for an operation "out of area" by requesting that the operation be carried out with the support and participation of allies or "partners" in a larger or smaller so-called "coalition of the willing", in this case for the sake of efficiency and feasibility, but then perhaps, where appropriate and to the same extent, at the expense of (global) legitimacy.

The fact that this type of often (also domestically) controversial negotiation issues were generally easier to handle in the interim phase between the Cold War and the period from "9/11", defined above, provides a basis for the general thesis that the less legitimacy in decision-making on operations ("out of area"), the more costly, resource-intensive and geopolitically controversial operations that are nevertheless deemed necessary to implement.

A prime example, for obvious reasons, is provided by a comparison between Bush Senior's coalition building to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in 1991, "Operation Desert Storm", and his son Bush Junior's "Operation Iraqi Freedom" in 2003, in the former case a broad "coalition of the willing" with strong legitimacy, in the latter case an extremely narrow coalition—only the UK (we recall Tony Blair's agony at the time) providing coalition fiction and a legitimacy fig leaf. In both cases, therefore, not a NATO operation "out of area", but rather an example of the challenge for NATO to respond to the dominant US's own global interests and other alliance commitments, mainly in the Middle East and South-East Asia. And the US war on terror.

So far, the conclusion is that the basis for a discussion of NATO's "out of area operations" in today's world should be to point to the "roots" of the security policy environment in the two parallel tracks, during the Cold War years and after the turn of the millennium, for the necessary multidimensionality, and to emphasize the inevitable problem of legitimacy-effectiveness. Overall, this highlights the question of where NATO's options and choices consist today, with Sweden as a new and latest member, and now when especially the effort to support Ukraine in its existential struggle against Putin-Russian aggression seems to devour available and expanded resources and available decision-making capacity. At the same time, the international communi-

ty's collective willingness and ability to use armed intervention to help countries and regions suffering from severe conflict—Haiti, Yemen, Sudan, Myanmar, Syria, etc.

NATO out of area operations—ongoing missions; uncertain forecast

So far about basic starting points. Now more specifically about the phenomenon of "out of area operations", based on NATO's publicly available image of itself, in the latest updated version 2023-07-10:

> NATO is an active and leading contributor to peace and security on the international stage. It promotes democratic values and is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. However, if diplomatic efforts fail, NATO has the military capacity to undertake crisis prevention and management operations alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organization... (having) the capacity to undertake a wide range of military operations and missions. It is engaged in operations and missions around the world, managing often complex environments across all domains. The tempo and diversity of operations and missions in which NATO is involved have increased since the early 1990s.

Compared to this ambitious self-presentation, based on the general programme statement in the Alliance's "Strategic Concept" from the Madrid Summit in 2022 and its operationalization in the documentation from the Vilnius Summit in 2023, the picture of actual ongoing NATO missions, in contrast to the list of previously completed missions, appears meagre, almost startlingly so, one might think. These include KFOR in Kosovo and the NATO Mission in Iraq, Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean, cooperation with the African Union (AU) and NATO Air Policing in various member states, the latter obviously not an out-of-area operation (but nevertheless included in the list of ongoing missions). Thus, the current picture of actual ongoing NATO missions, according to the Alliance's definition of this particular part of the comprehensive activity, is no broader than that. The distinction is, as can be seen, not crystal clear between the concept of "mission" in general and the specific subject of this text, "out of area" operations. This lack of clarity may to some extent reflect the tradition of controversy surrounding the concept and practice of out-of-area operations at various stages and given the recurring problem of legitimacy-effectiveness as outlined above.

But regardless of this, in the current list, Kosovo Force (KFOR) emerges as the only remaining large ("classic"?) NATO operation, while the others are more limited, technical, education/training oriented and/or advisory rather than robustly operational. KFOR's special status is also marked by its strong (global) legitimacy with its clear UN mandate and its coexistence with the UN mission UNMIK and its duration since 1999, then a result of the highly controversial NATO intervention against the Milosevic regime in Belgrade, thus a measure of the fundamental role of the Yugoslav crisis in NATO's development, a couple of years before "9/11" and Bush's "war on terror", and the already then observable rift with Russia. KFOR's presence in Kosovo, even strengthened in recent years as a result of continuing tensions between Pristina and Belgrade, and the fact that discussions have recently been held in the United States and elsewhere on the possible re-establishment of KFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina in view of the difficulties of the Dayton Agreement in establishing stability there, demonstrate that the wounds of the Yugoslav wars are still far

from healed. And that this most important out-of-area operation, albeit in Europe, is still deemed necessary. Regardless of trends elsewhere.

Of the other existing missions, the one in Iraq, the NATO Mission in Iraq (NMI), stands out as significant, but in a different way; it is newly established (2018) but of course has roots in and is a consequence of George W. Bush's multi-fatal "Operation Iraqi Freedom", launched in 2003, a year after the Prague Summit and a couple of years after "9/11" and the US/NATO engagement in Afghanistan. A lot happened in those years, the tentative first of the millennium.

The NMI is significant (for the purposes of this discussion) because of its background, its geopolitical sensitivity and its susceptibility to questioning and lack of legitimacy—despite the host country invitation—and thus its uncertain duration. The mandate is said to be "a non-combat advisory and capacity mission in Iraq, which helps strengthen Iraqi institutions and forces so that they themselves can prevent the return of ISIS, fight terrorism and stabilize the country", which for the US is partly a consequence management of the destabilization of Iraq that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" netted, and partly a continuation of the American and US-led campaign against ISIS, in parallel with counterparts in neighboring Syria—with NATO encapsulation as a legitimacy-strengthening framework. However, Iraq's position between Iran, Syria and Turkey has exposed the country, and its complicated domestic political power struggles, to a sequence of events (perhaps most notably the Trump administration's assassination of Iranian ICRG leader Suleimani at Baghdad airport a couple of years ago) that has made it extraordinarily difficult for the al-Sudani government to defend a continued US military presence in the face of a storm of criticism loyal to Iran. Negotiations, extremely delicate negotiations, are ongoing.

The NMI is thus hanging by a thread, and with it the larger question of whether, in today's world, NATO should have an out-of-area role in the Middle East at all. All that remains is that NATO as an organization is one of 87 partners in the US-led coalition against IS, "The Global Coalition Against Daesh", since 2014. It goes without saying that all questions regarding the US (secure) and NATO (insecure) presence and activities in the Middle East (and North Africa) are now massively guided by the dramatic recent events from October 7, 2023 and subsequent action-reaction course.

But in the background there is also the bitter experience of Afghanistan, the mission about which NATO chief Robertson once said "make or break for NATO" and about which the headline quote "in together and out together" long appeared as a key slogan.

Completed missions: mixed net result, but Afghanistan experience heavy

NATO's list of completed missions ("out of area") is considerably less sparse than the list of ongoing missions above. It is officially presented by NATO as follows.

- Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan (2015–2021)
- Counter-piracy operations (2008–2016)
- ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001–2014)
- Operation Active Endeavor (2001–2016) (Mediterranean)
- Peace support operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995–2004)
- Peace support operations in North Macedonia (2001–2003)

- NATO and Libya—Operation Unified Protector (2011)
- NATO assistance to Iraq (2004–2011)
- Pakistan earthquake relief operation (2005–2006)

Thus 11 different missions, some a continuation of earlier (or later) missions, some highly resource-intensive and others less so, of significantly varying character and varying degrees of mandate clarity and success. About each, of course, there are volumes to be written, and have been written. But within this space, the theme must be limited to stating that the experiences of these give a picture of certainly, individually, useful "lessons learned" in various respects, but at the same time a worrying mix of success—failure—pure failure, all depending on the yardstick used for evaluation. For example, the fact that the problems in problem countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Libya and Iraq essentially persist, and have even worsened, is fairly obvious, but this does not necessarily mean that the mission as such should be retroactively labeled a failure; not all rhetorical and, in such contexts, almost obligatory declarations of success need be factually incorrect (the author himself can attest that cooperation between NATO and the EU in the Macedonia of the civil war—now North Macedonia—was actually flawless and successful).

But it is inevitable and urgent in this brief account of experience to attach great importance to the case of Afghanistan, which—despite Robertson's talk of "make or break"—ended in what many have described as a near-catastrophe for NATO, with the disappointing, unheroic as well as dramatic withdrawal in 2021 after two decades of struggle to fulfil a particularly demanding mandate. NATO's responsiveness to dominant US signals was decisively tested both at its inception in 2001-2002, effectively an Article 5 reaction to the "9/11" drama, and at its equally dramatic end following Biden's fait accompli message: enough is enough, let's go!

When we now come to the subject of Afghanistan and the significance of that experience for the current discourse on continued (possibly continued) "out of area" operations on NATO's part, it is important to remember that, for the US's part, the attitude is of course strongly characterized by the heavy experience of the two parallel operations/missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, heavy in terms of both the costs in lives and finances and the questionable net result—in the case of Iraq, moreover, with great retroactive doubt as to the justification and mandate of the operation with the accompanying loss of American credibility on the global stage. But in Iraq it was a coalition of the willing, albeit only with Tony Blair's Britain as the willing partner, not a NATO mission. In the environment of the time, it was not possible to achieve consensus within the Alliance on such a mission, if it was attempted at all.

In Afghanistan, on the other hand, there was a fairly broad, though never entirely unproblematic, collaborative structure with a US counter-terrorism operation ("Enduring Freedom") working with a NATO mission (under various names) and also a UN mission ("UNAMA")—and various other international actors. It should also be recalled that the US dominance in the overall effort was modified over time so that in the final phase, after gradual US drawdown in the transition between the Obama and Trump administrations, the number of troops from other member and partner countries marginally exceeded that of the US. Nevertheless, it was the decision of the European NATO countries, under the gallows, that a con-

tinued presence without the US would be operationally, and perhaps also politically, untenable. So, despite all that had been said and done before, it was "cut and run", under great evacuation turbulence, for the whole of NATO: "together in, together out!".

Adding to the picture is the fact that other NATO and partner countries, in Afghanistan in solidarity with the US, also made significant sacrifices in soldiers' lives in the fight against the Taliban insurgency, mainly the UK (457), Canada (159), France (90) and Germany (62), but also the then partner country Sweden (5)—according to statistics available on the internet. These are significant loss figures, but low compared to the staggering figures on the US balance sheet. To quote an authoritative text from the United States Institute of Peace:

> The American war in Afghanistan incurred staggering costs—for the United States, Afghans and others—over two decades. The US government spent 2.3 trillion, and the war led to the deaths of 2,324 military personnel, 3,917 US contractors and 1,144 allied troops. For Afghans the statistics are nearly unimaginable. 70,000 Afghan military and police deaths, 43,319 Afghan civilians (although that is likely a significant underestimation) and some 53,000 opposition fighters killed. Almost 67,000 other people were killed in Pakistan in relation to the Afghan war.
>
> (Kate Bateman, USIP, Nov 2022).

This is the cost of two decades (the longest US war, NATO's first major out-of-area operation, besides KFOR) of struggle to contain primarily the growing Taliban resistance, to support and stabilize the established Afghan regime, and to introduce Western-style democracy and the rule of law into the contrasting Afghan environment. And the result of all these efforts? Strictly speaking, a disaster, given that the hasty withdrawal was essentially a total defeat, as well as a total victory for the party that had been militarily opposed all these years.

One might have thought that this colossal defeat would also spell disaster, or at least serious crisis, for NATO and continued confidence within the Alliance in the US leadership. But that did not happen, not really, after all. Developments, in the East-West dimension, had run their course—after a lengthy debate within the Alliance about the necessity of abandoning the focus on international operations and instead (re)focusing on the main task of countering the dramatically growing Russian threat. Rather than creating a bitter debate within the Alliance over the Afghan shock, including accountability, the long-term impact was more likely to be felt in the isolationist impact of the Afghan experience on US domestic policy. Probably also as a kind of encouragement to the leadership in Moscow and Beijing through the perception of the Afghanistan failure as a measure of US and NATO weakness or growing weakness, a perception probably largely shared by leading states in the global South.

This brings us to the fundamentally new situation created on February 24, 2022.

Summarizing and concluding discourse. "Out of area operations": what and where, implications for Sweden?

On July 9-11 this year, NATO celebrates its 75th anniversary in Washington. Big and important decisions lie ahead. In the area covered by this text—out-of-area operations and the like—the final document of the Vilnius Summit last year announced the following:

> NATO's southern neighborhood, particularly the Middle East, North Africa and

> Sahel regions, faces interconnected security, demographic, economic, and political challenges. These are aggravated by the impact of climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies, and food insecurity. This situation provides fertile ground for the proliferation of non-state armed groups, including terrorist organizations. It also enables destabilizing and coercive interference by strategic competitors....In response to the profound implications of these threats and challenges within and in the vicinity of the Euro-Atlantic area, we have today tasked the North Atlantic Council in permanent session to launch a comprehensive and deep reflection on existing and emerging threats and challenges, and opportunities for engagements with our partner nations, international organizations, and other relevant actors in the region, to be presented by our next Summit in 2024.

The opening portal paragraph of the document had previously defined the level of ambition:

> We will continue to ensure our collective defence from all threats, no matter where they stem from, based on a 360-degree approach, to fulfil NATO's three core tasks of deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.

These statements are then followed up in paragraph 29 of the document, which states

> We commit to contribute the necessary forces, capabilities and resources to the full range of NATO operations, missions and activities. This includes meeting requirements for deterrence and defense, providing the forces needed to implement NATO`s defense plans and contribute to NATO crisis management operations. Allies will ensure that our forces are ready and have the necessary personnel, equipment, training, spares, logistics, infrastructure, and stockpiles.

It should be noted in particular that the Vilnius document (despite the Ukraine focus) further cements the "strategic concept" formulations on the main tasks of the Alliance, that these continue to refer to "deterrence and defense" on the one hand, and the two "softer" (and vaguer) tasks of "crisis prevention and management and cooperative security" on the other, in a kind of trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness.

It should also be noted that the United States and Europe are not alone in continuing to be threatened by terrorism in various forms, largely emanating from the North-South dimension. The recent terrorist attack on a concert hall in Moscow bears witness to this. We are reminded that in 2001—in the East-West dimension— the situation was still such that Vladimir Putin could have been among the first leaders to contact Mr. Bush in solidarity with the United States. But that was then.

Whether and to what extent these ambitious summit declarations should be read as referring, primarily or at all, to "out-of-area operations" is of course somewhat unclear, perhaps deliberately unclear as part of a kind of strategy, in the run-up to the Washington meeting, to abandon the term itself, insofar as the concept of "out-of-area" in the light of the extremely complicated developments in the world around us is deemed to have lost its operational and political usefulness. More on this below. The level of ambition is high, regardless of the area of application. It will be interesting to see how the NAC authors of the upcoming Washington document approach the task from the Vilnius summit. There we may be able to read how (US and) NATO leaders view this topic—NATO as a global armed crisis management instrument—in the current context.

In the previous text, it has been pointed out that the issue of out-of-area operations, even in its early discourse after the Second World War when it was about the parallel tracks, the Cold War in the East-West dimension (background, course, outcome) and the decolonization process in the North-South dimension, has moved in and been about a kind of interaction between these two dimensions, East-West and North-South. Correspondingly, since 9/11, there have been parallel tracks of a gradual increase in tension in the East-West dimension and the fight against terrorism, in different phases and with varying degrees of connection to the earlier decolonization process. The stages and parallel tracks have, especially for the US and the West, constituted the complex environment for out-of-area operations, including the existence of national interests, and also provided the background for considerations in the context of the trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness. The first years of the millennium, with 9/11 in 2001 and the Prague Summit and its explicit statements both on the expansion of the area and on out-of-area operations as a relevant core task, and the Iraq intervention in 2003, provided the thematic prelude to what was to come, up to 2022-02-22.

This paper focuses on the concept and phenomenon of (NATO) "out-of-area" operations as defined by official NATO documents. These are of course only one part of (US and) NATO's overall activities, also "off-shore", outside the "area". The arguments above about the parallel dimensions and the legitimacy-effectiveness trade-off in the various formats for security policy action at the international level could of course be broadened, and then also complicated by points about how the parallel dimensions interact. Until the Ukrainian war, the first major European war after the Second World War, the norm was that rival powers fought their armed battles mainly in the 'South', often exploiting a conflict environment that had arisen in the North-South dimension. The Congo crisis exemplifies how the international community (Hammarskjöld) tried to manage a conflict that, with decolonization roots, became a mixed North-South and East-West confrontation. The Vietnam War in its French part was a clear North-South conflict but, with the American involvement motivated by rivalry with and the perceived threat from the Soviet Union, became an equally clear East-West confrontation, 'by proxy'. The examples could be multiplied. What about Afghanistan and Iraq?

The mention of these, Afghanistan and Iraq, leads the discussion on to the special role of the United States as the supreme dominator within NATO and whose own global security commitments (and other alliance obligations) the other members of NATO have to comply with, sometimes out of solidarity and sometimes in national self-interest, often with elements of both.

Of great importance for considerations of future "out-of-area" operations, including the trend towards reduced volume as described above, is the widely held American view that new major operations such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, at enormous cost but with questionable or even negative results, are not politically possible and do not have the support of the American population. After the exit from Afghanistan, prepared by Trump but carried out by Biden, it has been said that from now on terrorists will be fought long-range, "over the horizon". "No more nation-building!" What the dominant US says it wants, the rest of NATO has in principle (and in practice) to essentially align itself with. Here, however, we should recall the difference between Afghanistan, where NATO participated in

solidarity, and the case of Iraq, where the US only succeeded in persuading the UK to come on board and provide the necessary coalition fig leaf of legitimacy.

This is one of several constraints on the continuation of out-of-area operations (as defined so far within the Alliance). How a possible return to the White House by Donald Trump will play out in this area is one of many uncertainties that analysts are currently grappling with. But what seems likely is that a new Trump administration will in any case be even more sceptical and restrictive about enforcing or accepting the pursuit of US interests in crisis zones in an alliance format, in whole or in part, for reasons of legitimacy. Perhaps a Trump administration's view on the remaining major out-of-area operation, KFOR in Kosovo, will provide an early indication.

And then there is the question of the relationship between NATO's "out-of-area" operations, as a term and as a de facto operational format, and the current enlargement policy, with Ukraine as a clear example. Is the Alliance's particularly extensive support activity in Ukraine, de facto or de jure, an out-of-area operation, comparable to Afghanistan or Kosovo? This is obviously debatable, although Ukraine is clearly out-of-area and therefore not covered by the Alliance's formally binding security guarantees under Article 5. But is it generally true that Alliance activities in countries with candidate status for NATO membership are not to be considered out-of-area operations? There is a clear definitional weakness to consider in a new security policy context. This may in turn be due to the fact that an enlarged NATO means more national wills to reconcile and thus greater difficulties in making decisions on what, even in this new context, may constitute urgent "out-of-area" operations, especially if new difficulties arise in assessing and relating to the US's choices.

Whatever the outcome of the US presidential election, KFOR may be an important indicator of the extent to which enlargement policy has in practice used up much of the oxygen consumed by out-of-area policy.

On the other hand, as we have seen, NATO's summit documentation signals high ambitions to counter all kinds of threats and challenges in 360 degrees and in regions outside the transatlantic sphere. In this context, the Alliance notes that the need for peace support operations is inversely proportional to the UN system's lack of real ability to cohere the international community's responsibility for peace and security, not least in the North-South dimension, even if the reason for the now dramatic shortcomings lies primarily in notorious disagreement within the Security Council, in the East-West dimension.

What does this composite picture mean for new NATO member Sweden?

To approach this question, it may be of interest to recall the great importance that NATO's "out-of-area" has had for Sweden during the long process when Sweden, based on our experience as an important contributor to UN (later also EU) peacekeeping operations, mainly in the Middle East and Africa, as a partner country of gradually more advanced kind could gain security policy advantages and political goodwill through participation in these, especially Afghanistan. Participation gave us a kind of freedom of action by being presented in some quarters as more or less discreet steps towards future membership, and in others as rather respectable alternatives to membership. Participation in the Alliance's "out-of-area" operations became an important bridge of confidence building between militarily non-aligned Sweden and NATO,

a laboratory for indispensable military interoperability.

Of course, with full membership of NATO, different conditions apply. Although the option of operations in the UN format remains, notwithstanding current difficulties. As a member of NATO, we do not have the same need and interest in out-of-area operations as a means of gaining goodwill with the West in general and the US in particular, and in terms of the resources available to participate in such operations—should new ones be decided upon or existing ones extended after all—clear limitations are likely to have been created by the current focus on support for Ukraine and the restoration of our own defences, and alignment with NATO in general. The capacity for military action outside our country's borders is likely to be dictated to a large extent by the focus of NATO membership on defence against Russian aggression.

But we do not know. Much can change. A possible Trump administration in the US could mean sudden changes, for example through completely new American demands for heavy and real NATO participation in the Middle East of crises and wars, as burden-sharing and/or as legitimization of an American involvement in an extended crisis.

In Washington in July, we may learn more, not least as a basis for assessing what NATO membership will actually mean for us, more specifically.

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Note

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.

The long Swedish road into NATO[1]

by Krister Andrén

Résumé

In reality, Sweden's path to NATO began as soon as NATO was formed. The strategic reality meant that even the militarily independent Sweden was an important cog in the Western defense system. The Swedish invasion defense doctrine during the Cold War, the so-called *marginal doctrine,* was well adapted to NATO's structure and interests in the Nordic region. Historical experience, Finland's position and interests, US interests over time and general stability considerations, have been key factors influencing Swedish security policy. The 1980s was a time of transition with growing concern about the longer-term implications of strategic developments for northern Europe. This concern existed both in Sweden and within NATO. The end of the Cold War broke a trend that otherwise indicated that a continued Swedish path outside NATO would be untenable. Military strategic developments in Europe after the end of the Cold War, combined with strong Finnish interests, meant that NATO membership was not a relevant issue. For more than two decades, the growing need for cooperation with NATO was met within the framework of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP). Political and economic anchoring was also achieved through EU membership. Finland deliberately chose to remain outside NATO, but with increasingly strong ties to the West and a continued build-up of its own military forces. Sweden also chose, not least out of consideration for Finland, to remain outside NATO. Russia's increasingly aggressive revisionism necessitated a reassessment within NATO as well as in Finland and Sweden. A gradual deepening of military cooperation took place with important support from the United States. Russia's ultimately expressed demand in December 2021 for a fundamentally changed European security order, followed by its large-scale attack on Ukraine, changed everything in early 2022. Neither Finland nor Sweden had any real alternative to NATO membership at that point. The future course of NATO will be determined primarily by the requirements of external security policy developments. NATO's overall reaction and adaptation will obviously define the framework for Sweden's long-term priorities. In the current situation, the short-term direction of travel is clear. It will involve substantially increased defense investments, continued consolidation of the existing defense structure alongside measures to streamline regional cooperation and promote long-term capability development. It will also include a broad strengthening of societal resilience. The traditional Nordic interest in balancing deterrence and "reassurance" will in principle remain, but with an increased emphasis on long-term stable deterrence. It will need to include a very substantial strengthening of both regional military capabilities, and regional capacity to receive rapid reinforcements from the outside.

FRIDAY MARCH 8, 2024, the Swedish flag was raised outside the NATO Headquarters in Brussels confirming that Sweden was finally officially welcomed as the 32nd member of the alliance.

There exist many misunderstandings about the real meaning of Swedish NATO membership. Some aspects have been difficult to fully discuss while Sweden was still in the waiting room. This article aims at providing

a realistic picture of the long Swedish road.

The long history of close informal cooperation between Sweden and the key alliance members is emphasized. The formal partner cooperation that step-by-step emerged from the early 1990's is also highlighted. A realistic assessment of strategic realities forms the basis. The critical role played by Finland is particularly described in relative detail.

Security policy has for decades been treated in quite static terms in Sweden, something that Sweden has "had" rather than something Sweden has "pursued". As the world, Europe and of course also Sweden are now in the midst of a strategic earthquake, nothing but a very realistic analysis is relevant. Security issues have to be described and understood in realistic terms. Interests and concerns of allies as well as antagonists have to be realistically analysed. Understanding the Swedish road into NATO requires an understanding of the history as well as of the current situation.

Towards a new realism

May 8, 2022, the Finnish and Swedish governments, acting in close concert, delivered their applications for NATO membership in Brussels to the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg.

The political processes preparing the decisions by the two governments had been speedy, having started in earnest only in December 2021 as a reaction to President Putin's ultimatum two months ahead of the Russian large-scale attack on Ukraine. The declared ambition of Putin was to establish a new partition of Europe with a Russian sphere of interest including the new NATO members in Central Europe as well as Finland and Sweden. The reaction in Finland was immediate and the concerns were made public in the traditional New Year Address by the Finnish President Niinistö.

Within days of the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022 Finland and Sweden initiated sharp reassessments of their long-established policies. The ambitions to jointly search NATO membership were soon evident. They were from the start supported by the US President. The assumption that a Russian aggression would only be conceivable within a large European conflict had been one of the pillars of Swedish non-alignment policy ever since the start of the cold war. It was now rapidly erased.

The political processes in Finland and Sweden were smooth and mutually supportive and when the two countries side by side delivered their requests for membership to the NATO Secretary General in Brussels in May 2022 the parliamentary support in both counties was rock solid. Finland was formally welcomed into NATO in April 2023, while Sweden had to wait almost another year for the final ratifications by Turkey and Hungary.

In the comfort of hindsight, the Swedish waiting time can be seen as a parenthesis. The structural adaptation to membership did in fact essentially advance as if Sweden was already a member.

As a member of NATO, Sweden will have to understand the interests and concerns of all its allies beyond the polite alliance rhetoric. Sweden will confront urgent security issues in the NATO Council. The membership responsibilities also include permanent negotiation processes around numerous tables in Brussels and in other NATO staffs.

This is of course not a completely new game. Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1995 and a Partner nation to NATO since 1994. Nevertheless, member participation in NATO introduces new challenges by being focused on sen-

sitive security issues that often have to be managed in real time.

From popular rhetoric to realism

However, one should not be misled by the earlier political rhetoric. While the political rhetoric has either overemphasized the steadfastness and virtues of military non-alignment or the great risks of remaining ”alone”, a more realistic hard-core approach has always had an important but hidden place.

In the comfort of the long period of military peacetime nonalignment, the security debate in Sweden was for natural reasons dominated by Sweden centric and peacetime centric perspectives. Sweden has been described as being ”peace disturbed” as it has been fortunate to prosper in peace for more than two hundred years. Political leaders have emphasized the importance of stability, but have rarely expanded their perspectives beyond the peace time framework.

Swedish security policy operated within a security environment with wide margins. There is a Swedish saying that “Health speaks with a quiet voice”. The virtues of a stable peace time environment with Sweden and Finland as a stable zone between the Warsaw Pact/Russia and NATO were often emphasized without confronting the obvious problems in an unlikely serious security crisis.

The traditional rhetoric visibly had a continued impact for a few days after the Russian large-scale attack on Ukraine as the still new Swedish prime minister was caught off guard. However, the learning curve was steep. Faced with the realities and with strong external pressures the old rhetoric faced a sudden death. The reassessment back to realism took less than two weeks. In substance it became obvious that only one hard argument against Swedish NATO membership had remained, the support for Finland. The Finnish reversal therefore also meant an immediate Swedish reversal.

Strategic realities

The Scandinavian peninsula carried a heavy strategic weight throughout large parts of the cold war. In case of a serious conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, access to Scandinavian and not least Swedish territory and air space could have been critically important for the NATO conventional defence of Central Europe. The potential role of southern Sweden as an ”unsinkable aircraft carrier” for NATO/US airpower was widely appreciated although not much talked about. It should be noted that the NATO interests in the Baltic at the time were very different from today, with strong Soviet forces and bases all along the Baltic coast as well as in the south in Central Europe.

The large Swedish air base structure by its design also had an inherent potential for receiving quite rapid and substantial outside reinforcements. It is well documented that the structure was constructed with some considerations also of US interests. The strong Swedish air defence as a side effect provided credible protection also for southern Norway which allowed for low level of NATO peace time presence from other allies. The US capacity for rapid power projection in a crisis was assuring, building on extensive peace-time preparations at air bases in Norway and Denmark and possibly also on the potential surge capacity to the comprehensive Swedish air base system.

For the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact denial of NATO access to Scandinavian territory would thus have been vital. However, a Soviet dilemma remained. It largely lacked the conventional means against the then quite strong Western defence of the area. A dis-

comforting implication was that the Soviet military options would have relied heavily on the early use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Starting in the 1960's the Kola peninsula and its surrounding Arctic waters gradually developed into a bastion for the Soviet nuclear second-strike submarine forces. In parallel the Soviet Northern Navy was strengthened for protection as well as for offensive operations against the NATO sea lines of communications across the Atlantic. This all represented a major increase of the strategic interests in the region.

The 1980's was a critical period. The Soviet military power had greatly expanded, while the Swedish defence faced rising problems to sustain its required strength. Recurrent underwater incursions into Swedish territorial waters added to the concerns. Continuation of military non-alignment appeared increasingly difficult.

The sudden end of the cold war confrontation in 1989 saved the situation and paved the way for a stepwise reversal of NATO as well as Swedish defence doctrines. The WP and also the Soviet Union itself were dissolved. The two German States were united and the large standing forces in the centre of Europe were withdrawn and largely dismantled. NATO, essentially with the acceptance of Russia, was opened for several new members from its former enemy camp. It was a totally new situation. NATO, contrary to many predictions, stayed in business, but was redirected from deterrence and territorial defence towards expeditionary warfare, multinational peace operations and broadened security cooperation.

The role of Sweden

Looking back at the long cold war period, conventional wisdom tells us that Sweden maintained a non-aligned position *between* NATO and the Warsaw Pact based on a strong conventional defence and aiming at armed neutrality in case of a war between The Warsaw Pact and NATO.

This is a partly misleading description. It is useful to put on the strategic eyeglasses of the United States and the NATO alliance as well as of the Soviet Union.

The United States had strong strategic interests in northern Europe throughout the cold war. Those interests did not stop at the Swedish border. Noting the fact that Swedish non-alignment was accepted without visible US pressure on Sweden to join NATO, it is reasonable to assume that the then existing situation generally satisfied US interests quite well.

While the Swedish-US political relations have faced some real hard times, particularly during the Vietnam War and a following period, the military cooperation has continued largely undisturbed. The role of the Swedish defence was appreciated and the cooperation in the military-technological and intelligence domains had continuous support in spite of political contradictions.

I can recall many "teasing" comments from NATO colleagues related to Swedish non-alignment. However, they were always respectful and friendly. In short and in hindsight my understanding is that the Swedish way was respected, accepted and in fact discreetly supported by NATO friends not least in Washington.

A reasonably strong conventional Swedish defence, with an emphasis on air defence and air power, provided for the necessary freedom of action in a crisis that the US and its European allies needed. In particular, the Swedish shield was a vital prerequisite for the Norwegian acceptance of a low-profile US peace time presence. The US appears to have had no strong motives to push for a change as long as Sweden played its key role

in the conventional defence of Europe. The reinforcement routes to Scandinavia were sufficiently protected to allow for a US/NATO strategy with a low level of peacetime military presence in Scandinavia.

The Swedish defence threshold was not for free. In relative terms Sweden for a long period spent substantially more on defence than most small and middle-sized European NATO members. Although outside of NATO, Sweden carried its part of the Western defence burden in northern Europe.

I recall a high-level visit from Pentagon around 1980. I was tasked to provide a presentation of a coastal invasion scenario across the Baltic Sea against Sweden in the FOA wargaming centre. Two short comments following my presentation are still remembered. The first was "But do you really assume that NATO is doing nothing?" The second comment was "Thank you for the presentation, but next time I would prefer to hear about a ground warfare scenario in the north!"

His short comments carried the implicit message that the US didn't worry much about the operational situation in the Baltic. It knew that it would quite easily be able to deny the WP access to the Baltic in a conflict.

Some years later I received another quite illuminating comment about US rapid reinforcement plans from a perhaps somewhat outspoken high NATO officer at a visit in Oslo. I do not remember the exact wording, but his message was clear: If the US at some time would come to the conclusion that Scandinavia needed immediate US air power reinforcements, it would not waste any time on diplomatic negotiations. The US stakes would be extremely high if a threat of nuclear escalation was looming. The US would in such a situation be ready to take whatever steps necessary to reduce the risk for a nuclear escalation. Comparing NATO-Norway and non-aligned Sweden, he noted that the difference would be very marginal. Both nations would be informed, when the powerful US air forces were already well on their way to their new bases in Scandinavia.

The overall message was clear. Although formally militarily non-aligned, Sweden at the time was playing its part within the Western defence system. No changes were asked for!

I recall these short and simple anecdotal comments because throughout my continued career they have helped me maintain a sound and realistic analytical framework. The political and diplomatic messaging does rarely provide the full picture. As a professional analyst you must read between the lines and think beyond the official rhetoric. The full story is rarely told explicitly. Even close friends must sometimes be able to read between the lines.

NATO, Swedish and Finnish interests have together paved the way for what is often referred to as the Nordic Balance or the Nordic Stability pattern. The role of Finland is fundamental.

No one should doubt the extraordinarily strong US and NATO interests in a reliable deterrence, but a clearly defensive military posture in the North seems to have been perceived to be in line with US as well as Scandinavian interests. Strongly supported by Norway, NATO designed a careful balancing policy with deterring as well as confidence building components. In Norwegian this was referred to as policy of deterrence and confidence enhancement ("avskrekking och beroligelse"). Efficient deterrence demanded a reliable external reinforcement capacity, while confidence enhancement largely rested on a low level of external capabilities in the region. Those Norwegian – and NATO – policies were never codified in legally binding documents. They rested entirely on mutual respect and on the NATO

and Norwegian readiness to unilaterally change course in response to the situational requirements.

In the 1950's the Swedish policy to go nuclear clearly diverged from US interests. The US pressure at the time must likely played a significant role for the final Swedish decision to abandon its nuclear weapons ambition. It is today well established that the US persuasion included bilateral security guarantees. Sweden was, although outside of NATO, in fact provided with a similar nuclear umbrella as the European NATO allies, the existence of which was kept secret for many decades. Today it is also well established that the formal military non-alignment also included close Swedish-US intelligence cooperation.

The special role of United States in NATO

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is the core of NATO. It expresses the strong Trans-Atlantic solidarity, in essence expressing the US willingness to lead and to extend its nuclear umbrella to its overseas allies. In theory all allies are equal, but the real strength of NATO depends on one ally being substantially more equal than others. This makes NATO different from other interstate organizations.

It cannot be overemphasized that the overarching aim of NATO is to secure peace. The aim is to be able to deter aggression against all the allies, i e to avoid situations where the use of article 5 would be called for.

During its 75 years of existence article 5 has been called for just once, in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attack against the US in 2001. It was a solidarity demonstration by the US allies, but it was hardly the type of decision envisioned in the North Atlantic Treaty.

A decision by the NATO Council based on article 5 would mean that NATO has failed in its main ambition to deter aggression. Readiness and capability to act in case of failure is a necessary element in building credible deterrence, but just as important are measures that can enhance deterrence before it has been irreversibly challenged.

The NATO framework for this reason has some strong complementary components enhancing the possibilities for individual allies to act preventively early in an evolving crisis. The US as the key ally, responsible for the ultimate nuclear deterrent, certainly would never accept to be forced to sit on its hands waiting for the moment when article 5 measures are called for. The US will always strive to be able to act forcefully to strengthen deterrence. Article 5 should never need to be called for.

The twin US military structures in Europe play a vital role. SACEUR, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe in NATO, is always a US general (or admiral). SACEUR in parallel wears the hat of the Commander of all US military forces in Europe. In that role he or she is responsible directly and only to the US President. This means that SACEUR in cooperation with individual allies can act long before any Article 5 situation is on the NAC-table. Looking at the NATO command structure it should come as no surprise that it is connected to the US national command structure at several critical points.

The readiness of the US and of other allies to act early in a crisis is underpinned by a comprehensive structure of bilateral agreements between allies. The US has individual Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs) with all its NATO allies. Those bilateral agreements between the US and its allies are indispensable complements to the overall deterrence. They are flexible instruments, which give the US and SACEUR the tools for early and appropriate preventive measures.

DCA agreements have recently been completed or updated between the US and all the

Nordic states. These agreements regulate the US presence of personnel and equipment on the territories of the individual allies. They include agreed lists of the locations, which are open for US use and control. The Swedish list contains seventeen locations. In Norway there are twelve, in Finland nineteen and in Denmark three. The DCAs with the three Baltic states list a total of around twenty additional locations.

Those bilateral DCA agreement between the US and its allies represent a flexible instrument that gives the US the means for early and appropriate preventive action.

A quick look at the map provides a picture in line with the overall strategic context. Three distinct patterns can be observed. Firstly, there is a northern cluster oriented along the infrastuctural net, Narvik-Kiruna-Boden-Luleå-Rovaniemi. Secondly, there is a large cluster stretching from Norway through middle Sweden to southern Finland and the Baltic states. Finally, there is a third cluster around the Baltic approaches.

The US for obvious reasons needs easy access, good protection and a good communications infrastructure. In addition, it needs flexibility to be able to adapt to future requirements. The host nations, relying on their own military infrastructure, largely have similar interests.

Sweden and Finland

Finland has had and has a vital role in Swedish security policy. The Swedish NATO-process as it evolved was closely linked to the Finnish. The difference between Sweden and Finland has often been summarised in the observation that Finland has a long border with Russia, while Sweden has Finland as its Eastern neighbour. The real process is far more complex and needs to be viewed in its historical context. It is a long story.

For six centuries Finland was an integral part of Sweden. Most of its administrative and economic structure was formed during that period. Finland is the name in Swedish for the eastern part of the old Kingdom of Sweden. It was also referred to as the Eastern Half of the Kingdom. In Finnish the name of Finland is Suomi.

The main link keeping the two parts together was the Sea. The northern part of the Baltic, the Gulf of Bothnia, at the time acted as a mighty highway uniting the western and eastern sides. It is still reflected in the names of the provinces. In Sweden Western Bothnia, in Finland Eastern Bothnia. To the north we find Lapland with one eastern part in Finland and a western part in Sweden. The Baltic Sea has remained the major link connecting the two countries to this day.

The Swedish Kingdom, consisting of mainland Sweden and Finland, was partitioned in 1809 after a disastrous war against Russia. It resulted in Finland becoming a Grand Dutchy in the Russian Empire.

World War I and the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 opened a window of opportunity for Finland to break out of the Russian Empire. After a fierce internal struggle Finland was established as the Republic of Finland in December 1917.

The defence of Sweden for centuries started at the Swedish border in the East. The Russian period meant a change. During the 19th century the Swedish defence step by step was reoriented to meet the new realities. The Baltic Sea in all its length and the land border to Russian Finland became the new Eastern defence perimeter. The defence structure was transformed accordingly to defend the remaining Swedish territory, the new mainland Sweden.

Finnish independence meant that defence conditions changed once again, but with less impact on Swedish defence plans and struc-

ture. Assumptions about the speed of advance in case of an emerging Russian threat against Sweden through Finland were critical as the defence was built on the mobilization of a conscript army and with a significant emphasis on defence of its far away northern land border. Delaying a Soviet attack through northern Finland was a priority and Swedish defence plans built heavily on measures to constrain the logistical capacity of the Finnish communication network. The Swedish capability, which was very limited at the start of the Second World War grew very substantially as the war proceeded. The potential Russian military threat against Finland and the region remained a key dimension for Swedish defence plans during the cold war.

Contrary to the other states along the Eastern shore of the Baltic, Finland had managed to secure its independence, but the costs had been extremely high. Harsh peace conditions were forced upon Finland. Finland had to give up ten per cent of its territory, evacuate half a Million of its population in a short time and pay heavy war reparations to the Soviet Union. Finland was also forced to accept a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union that essentially stated that the Soviet Union in case of a perceived threat would militarily "assist" Finland (The FMCA-treaty, 1948). In addition, The Paris Peace Treaty (1947) added to the burdens by setting hard constraints on its future armed forces.

Based on unpleasant realities and historic experience Finland pursued a security policy characterized by conscious carefulness, avoiding steps that risked providing room for Soviet pressure. This carefulness included avoiding cooperative measures westwards that risked being reciprocated by similar Russian demands. The long-term goal was clear, to build security linkages with western Europe and the Trans-Atlantic Community.

After the cold war the Finnish room for manoeuvre rapidly widened and was cleverly used. Step by step Finland liberated itself from the post-war Soviet-Russian embrace and moved to anchor itself in the western community. After the Six-nations accord on Germany – in effect representing the final peace agreement between the Allied Powers and Germany – the special constraints in the Paris Peace Treaty were declared as void and after the dissolution of The Soviet Union in a similar bold move the FMCA agreement was declared irrelevant.

The precarious Finnish situation always has played a vital role for the Swedish policy choice. It was a Swedish, Norwegian – and US – interest to facilitate a careful reorientation of Finnish policy into solid long-term ties with Europe and the West, while at the same time systematically working to reduce the Soviet influence.

Finland and NATO

While the ex-Soviet Baltic states as well as all the ex-Warsaw Pact states in Central Europe used the window of opportunity to seek NATO membership around the turn of the century, Finland did not. It can safely be assumed to have been a deliberate and carefully considered decision to abstain.

The Finnish deliberations are still far from clarified, but one can safely assume that there were some "hard" factors involved in parallel with the fact that public opinion was clearly against NATO membership.

In parallel with the strengthening of its Western ties, Finland had invested heavily, politically and economically, in a long-term co-operative working relationship with Russia. That was not easily discarded. Militarily, the Finnish armed forces, relieved of its earlier constraints, was still in need of further reinforcement. Closely connected

was the dilemma related to the emerging NATO doctrine focusing on crisis management and peace support operations rather than national defence. NATO doctrine development ran contrary to Finnish interests emphasising continued focus on national defence. In short, the Finnish armed forces at the turn of the century was not fully ready for NATO membership, while the security environment at the same time still was seen as providing margins for remaining outside the alliance.

While Sweden, although non-aligned, was largely following a ”NATO track” in its development of its defence structure after the cold war, Finland could not afford the luxury of a small ”NATO adapted” structure for multinational peace support missions.

The Finnish response was instead to purposefully strengthen its national defence along its own proven doctrine, to consolidate its EU anchorage in parallel with an ever-closer long-term security relationship with the United States and finally to strengthen its partner role with NATO as much as possible. In addition, it strived for increasingly close military cooperation with its Nordic neighbours, not least Sweden.

By publicly declaring a ”NATO option” policy Finland made clear that its position outside NATO was self-defined and could be reversed at any time if circumstances changed.

The Finnish option policy was not rhetorical, but was underpinned by strong efforts to forge real future freedom of action.

The evolution of the Partner roles

Sweden and Finland moved in parallel as partners to NATO. Moving in parallel has been important for both countries as it has greatly facilitated the internal political support along the road. Both countries have strived for a high degree of consensus without any serious internal disagreements.

Finland has been keen to develop its interoperability with NATO to strengthen its readiness to join NATO and supporting the integration of key US systems in the Finnish armed forces, thereby strengthening the military substance of its ”NATO option”. Sweden has striven to increase general interoperability to facilitate participation in multinational peace support operations as well as to strengthen the competitiveness of its defence industry. An earlier focus on a ”Swedish profile” was abandoned as NATO standards were increasingly required for competing in the international market.

Sweden and Finland were quick to join Partnership for Peace in 1994 and similarly moved fast to open formal delegations at NATO in Brussels in 1998. Joining the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) and participation in NATO-led exercises were important for ensuring interoperability within the NATO-led Peace Support Missions in the Western Balkan, in Afghanistan and in Libya.

Following the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the stepwise NATO redirection towards territorial defence, further important steps were taken to bring the two Partner countries closer to NATO. In 2016 Sweden and Finland both signed Host Nation Support agreements. In parallel they also joined a specially created Enhanced Operational Partnership permitting new tailor-made cooperation. A later step was to make commitments to the NATO Rapid Response Pool of forces and to participate in the full range of relevant NATO exercises. By 2020 the two Partner nations had reached a level of cooperation with NATO, where the logical next step would be membership.

The bilateral steps taken by the US and other allies to open for close military operational cooperation with the two Partner na-

tions should also be mentioned in this context. An earlier reluctance to give non-members access to member privileges was step by step abandoned on view of the objective needs.

The final process – additional strategic perspectives

The final process was quick and has already been described, but should be seen in its full strategic context. While many point at the decisiveness shown by the Finnish political leadership and particularly the Finnish president Niinistö, the US role, although somewhat hidden, is likely to have been quite decisive. The evolving US policy towards the Nordic region since 2014 is worth a careful analysis.

Until the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, including its illegal annexation of part of Ukraine, the US maintained a rather relaxed attitude towards a Russian search for a revised European security structure. The Russian aggression against Georgia in 2008 was met with little resistance. The US was ready for a reset of its relations already in March 2009.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 marked a watershed and the NATO meeting in Wales in 2014 initiated a thorough reassessment process within NATO.

It is worth remembering that the inclusion of the three Baltic states in NATO represented no big problem at the time, but later became a real strategic challenge as the Russian relation with NATO gradually shifted from partnership to confrontation.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine represented a turning point. It clarified that Russia, contrary to the principles of the agreed European security order was willing and ready to use military force to change borders in Europe. The need for a robust NATO deterrent posture was once again identified, but in a radically transformed strategic setting.

The NATO response as decided in 2014 represented a turning point, but was still limited in scope. The enhanced forward presence of multinational battalions in the frontline states close to Russia represented a significant trip wire, but was still far from an efficient deterrent capability.

The revisionist Russian policy implied a dramatic increase of NATO vulnerabilities in the Baltic region. While sea denial capacity sufficed for NATO during the cold war, the security guarantees to the three Baltic states and Poland now required a far more demanding sea control ambition. While the initial response was to form a deterrent trip wire capability it was over time evident that a far more robust posture was needed. This implied a far more significant role for Sweden. In parallel the Finnish position became increasingly exposed.

Trans-Atlantic burden sharing

The challenges för NATO and thus for Europe and Sweden are not linked to Russia alone. They are also linked to internal strains within the alliance as interests and responsibilities differ between allies.

The burden sharing issue has followed NATO since its start. It is a permanent issue. The United States is paying a large part of the bill for trans-Atlantic security and its commitments to European security have been extraordinary. It is the US superpower protection, symbolized by the US nuclear umbrella and the US leadership that has made NATO into a success story. The US role is now changing fast. The Trump factor is important and is now driving change within NATO just as much as Russia. But whoever will be future US presidents, the US role is bound to change quite fast.

The European part of NATO, which primarily, but not only, means the member states of the European Union will have to take on a much larger share of the burden as the US interests in and possibilities for support to Europe diminish. It is an issue of responsibilities, capabilities and costs.

The European parts of NATO, including the EU but also Turkey, UK and Norway will have to bear a far larger part of the burden, raising a broad range of political challenges. They will have to be dealt with in and outside of the NATO framework. They are outside the scope of this article but must be noted. The European NATO members will need to invest heavily in security and defence in the coming years. The German *Zeitenwende* is only the beginning. It is today impossible to predict how fast and how high the European defence investments will rise. It is however evident that there will be a major long term shift upwards. The implications for the Nordic area and Sweden will be very significant. Defence expenditures may very well be doubled in the next five to ten years. The questions of future European leadership are equally challenging and will no doubt knock hard on the door of the European Union in the next few years.

The important and rising roles of the EU in the security field should also be noted. Measures to strengthen societal resilience are mainly national or EU responsibilities, while NATO as of now has a quite limited role beyond information exchange and general coordination. The major forum for European cooperation on security issues related to vital infrastructure as energy, communication and cyber is within the European Union. Some issues are of course appropriate to manage also within NATO, but most issues will rather be dealt with in the framework of EU-US cooperation than in NATO.

The European defence industrial cooperation is also largely covered by the EU rather than by NATO, of course with strong links to military requirements and standards formulated within the NATO framework. The European defence-industrial base will take on an increasing importance as the European role in NATO increases. The balancing of European and US interests will largely be managed outside of NATO within the EU-US framework.

Implications for Swedish defence policy

The defence policy debate in Sweden has, since the decision to apply for membership in NATO, been focused on the challenges which are linked to the NATO process. However, the most demanding challenges go far beyond the NATO process. Irrespective of NATO membership the critical challenges are linked to the changed strategic environment. The roles of Sweden and Finland have been fundamentally transformed by the fact that a robust NATO defence of its eastern border, which now includes Finland, necessitates substantial external preparations in Sweden already in peace time.

Present Russian policy and actions leave little room for ambitions by the Nordic states to satisfy Russian demands for confidence building assurances. Building robust deterrence will be the obvious priority. Any future confidence building process must be mutual and has to be initiated by a Russian policy reversal.

That said, it seems nevertheless likely that it will be in the interest of the US that the states in the region and the whole NATO to work for a deterrent structure that enhances crisis stability. The historic balancing act between providing rock solid deterrence and a non-threating posture is of course al-

ways relevant, given the strategic role of the north-western region for Russia. But the balancing point has unavoidably been shifted towards a greater need for US and NATO deterrent capabilities in the Nordic region. It will most likely be reflected in an increased non-Nordic military footprint. The exact composition will have to be carefully considered and related to available Nordic capabilities as well as to the evolving Russian force posture.

US perceptions seem to be well reflected in the broad range of locations listed in the DCAs. It seems likely that the US will aim at flexibility and adaptability linked to evolving NATO defence plans, evolving Nordic force structures and of course Russian behaviour.

The Swedish role in NATO

It should always be emphasized that the Swedish and Finnish membership in NATO does not change the world. Geography remains the same as do many dimensions of hard security. When discussing the implications of the memberships for NATO and the two new member nations, it should be underlined that a very large part of the new measures that are planned are related to the challenges raised by the dramatic changes in the strategic environment rather than by the memberships themselves. The fact that NATO has widened is itself a result of those changes, which make it difficult to separate cause and effect. Overall, the synergies of being part of an alliance built around collective defence should lead to improved cost-efficiency for the individual allies.

The Swedish role will have to be viewed in its full Nordic context. The fact that all the Nordic states are now members of NATO surely opens new roads for cooperation. A broad range of possibilities were identified fifteen years ago by the chiefs of defence of Sweden, Norway and Finland and was followed by a political study lead by the former Norwegian foreign minister Torvald Stoltenberg. Those ideas could now be further explored.

In the present security environment, the solid anchorage of the Fennoscandian region within NATO is vital. Situated next to the Russian strategic bastion on and around the Kola peninsula and essentially being the western edge of the Eurasian landmass it is unavoidably strategically exposed.

The strategic importance of the Arctic region is growing as the global warming is opening new sea lanes between Asia and Europe and giving access to valuable natural resources.

The small Nordic states need the support of its mightier allies, and they need the security guarantees that only permanent strong ties can provide. First and foremost, Finland, with a 1340 km land border with Russia, will need the back-up of a permanent peace time NATO presence to secure deterrence. Ideally the NATO presence should include a solid defensively oriented US component, but leaving the initially available offensive components in the hands of Finland and its neighbouring allies. Combining a permanent NATO command in Finland with preparations for rapid reinforcements would provide for a resilient NATO force structure that can rapidly be adapted to a more aggressive Russian posture.

A special dimension relates to the likely adaptation of the NATO Command structure to the increasing needs in the North. A new NATO Headquarters in the Nordic area is presently being considered. It requires a careful balancing of political and military factors with few ready answers. Strong US as well as regional interests support close links to the NATO Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, USA, while the obvious links

with Poland and Germany in the southern part of the Baltic give NATO Joint Forces Command in Brunssum, the Netherlands, a natural role. Implementation would have to be urgent. Practical possibilities including protection will thus play a decisive role.

The Russian posture and behaviour will always be the key factor determining the NATO posture in the area. Despite, or perhaps because of, its strategic importance, the Nordic area has remained a zone of relatively low open confrontation. Despite its large strategic forces, Russia, like the Soviet Union, has had a relatively low conventional military footprint in the area, contributing to a stable relationship with its neighbours. Whether the pattern of relative stability can prevail in the tense security climate of today remains to be seen. It will essentially be dependent on the evolving Russian force posturing. Growing Norwegian concerns about maritime security in its northern waters are strongly underlined in the new Norwegian defence plan.

The Nordic stability pattern has until recently largely been characterized by a low level of permanent outside NATO presence in the area. The NATO restraints are continuously being adapted to the perceived demands for force levels and readiness. The Russian war against Ukraine has markedly lowered the threshold for open aggressive measures. "Gray-zone aggression" in cyberspace and in the global commons are continuously being carried out.

It is much too early to draw firm conclusions about the future Swedish role in NATO. NATO is evolving in response to the requirements that are defined by the overall strategic context. This presently includes a broad range of major uncertainties.

However, considering the present regional challenges some important conclusions can be drawn. Sweden has a major role in securing deterrence in northern Europe Regional capabilities will be important not least to be able to respond to grey zone threats well below a clear article 5 threshold. This implies a very substantial increase of Swedish capabilities and infrastructural resilience.

Sweden should be able to receive and protect effective outside support, but it also needs nationally controlled means to influence the evolution of a spiralling conflict to reduce the room for speculations about keeping the conflict constrained.

Sweden, like other small members of the alliance should preferably maintain capabilities that can persuade the potential aggressor, Russia, that there is no level of aggression that is too large for Sweden to handle while being too small for NATO to engage in with its full force. By cooperating with its neighbouring allies, the regional threshold can be raised.

By geographic proximity Sweden is a vital support of the back for the collective NATO defence of its members on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea and in northern Scandinavia. This puts heavy requirements on protection of the Swedish territory in an emerging crisis. This also requires preparations in peace time.

The details will have to be defined in close coordination with the relevant NATO allies. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, the North Atlantic Treaty does not put any defined requirements on individual allies. Its article 3 states the responsibility of the individual member to care for its own defence according to its capacity, while at the same time providing solidaric support toits allies. The capacities of different members of course differ widely. Considering the presently thin Swedish military structure, it seems likely that NATO priorities for the short run will emphasize measures inside Sweden rather than measures to strengthen NATO expeditionary forces. Air defence, intelligence

and surveillance, logistical support as well as protection and infrastructural resilience are short term investments that will be high on the list. Considering the significance of airpower in the region it seems likely that a large emphasis will have to be put on consolidating and adapting the Swedish air base structure to be able to serve NATO forces from neighbouring as well as other more distant allies.

Sweden of course will need to contribute to the credibility of deterrence by active participation in the different NATO tripwire units, but considering the NATO requirements on host nation support, a NATO focus on Swedish expeditionary capabilities seem less likely at least in the short run.

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Note

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How does Sweden and Finland's membership affect NATO in the High North?[1,2]

by Anna Wieslander

Résumé

With Finland and Sweden as new members of NATO, the High North comes more into focus for the Alliance. Traditionally, the High North has been primarily handled by a handful of allies, themselves High North states, such as Canada, Norway, Denmark and the U.S., as illustrated by the Norwegian slogan "We are NATO in the North!". NATO as an organization has been little involved due to a delicate balancing act needed to allow smaller allies in Russia's vicinity some sovereign room for maneuver, as well as to reduce the risk of an escalation spiral between super powers. In the new Strategic Concept from 2022, the High North is only mentioned once, in a traditional way where it is referred to as a "strategic challenge" due to "[Russia's] capability to disrupt Allied reinforcements and freedom of navigation across the North Atlantic." At the same time, Secretary Jens Stoltenberg has been clear that "NATO must increase its presence in the Arctic" (August 28, 2022). The reasons behind this shift are not only Russia's military build-up and assertive behavior, but also China's claim to be a near-Arctic state as it increases its investments and presence in the region, as well as the deepened partnership between Moscow and Beijing, which manifests itself not least in the High North. Hence, global power competition is entering the High North, right on NATO's doorstep. With Sweden's and Finland's new memberships, NATO's geopolitical position in the High North will be strengthened, which leads to both challenges and opportunities for Sweden in the Alliance. In this thought paper, I first describe how NATO's presence in the High North is developing. Thereafter, I discuss which interests and questions that lay the foundation for Sweden in NATO as an Arctic state, as well as the value of continuing the established defence cooperation with Finland and the other Nordic allies.

WITH SWEDEN AND Finland as new members of NATO, the Arctic is coming more into focus for the alliance. Traditionally, the Arctic, or 'High North' as it is known in NATO, has been primarily managed by a handful of allies, the Arctic states themselves, such as Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Canada and the United States. NATO as an organization has not been involved, in order to create room for manoeuvre for the smaller states geographically close to Russia and to avoid the risk of unwanted escalation between Russia and the United States. In addition, the absence of military threats in the High North after the Cold War has naturally minimized NATO's role. However, as Sweden and Finland become new members of the Alliance, this dynamic is changing. Citing Russia's military buildup in the region as well as China's ambitions to

increase its investment and presence there, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has announced that "NATO must increase its presence in the Arctic" *(Welt am Sonntag* 22-08-28). The Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Bauer, pointed out in October 2023 that NATO could not be naïve about the intentions of some actors in the region and that the organization must be prepared for the unexpected. (Arctic Circle Assembly, 23-10-21).

With their memberships, Sweden and Finland strengthen NATO's geopolitical position in the High North, which presents both challenges and opportunities for Sweden in the alliance. In this concept paper, I describe how NATO's presence in the High North is currently developing, and then discuss the interests and issues that can form the basis for Sweden's orientation in NATO as an Arctic state. Furthermore, the value of building on established defense cooperation with Finland and other Nordic allies is discussed.

The concept paper is part of an MFA-funded project on the impact of Sweden's and Finland's membership in NATO in the High North. Inputs and background material for the concept paper have been obtained through expert opinions from an international workshop in Stockholm on 7 December 2023, organized by the Atlantic Council Northern Europe Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as background conversations I had at NATO Headquarters and at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany, in addition to specified primary and secondary material.

NATO and the High North

In NATO's new "Strategic Concept" of 2022, i.e. NATO's policy document for the next decade, the High North is mentioned only once, and then as a "strategic challenge", referring to Russia's ability to disrupt Allied troop reinforcements and freedom of navigation in the North Atlantic. Given the scope of the document, this could be interpreted as a limited interest in the region, but at the same time, it is the first time that the High North is mentioned at all in a strategic concept, indicating an increased importance. A shift in this direction was already discernible in NATO a few years ago, initiated by allies in the region who wanted to draw the attention of other allies to security policy developments in the High North, focusing on Russia's military modernization and assertive behaviour, but also China's increased presence.

Canada, which is not part of the NATO Supreme Allied Commander's area of responsibility (hence the distinction between the Arctic and the High North, referring to the European Arctic), is also active in this context. Traditionally, Canada has opposed a NATO role in the High North, arguing that it is a national concern. Denmark has been cautious about supporting NATO activities in the region so as not to interfere with the dialogue with Russia, while Norway has wanted to see a more prominent role for the Alliance and has worked with the United States to bring Arctic aspects into the North Atlantic perspective.[3]

Recently, the Danish intelligence service issued an assessment that the security situation in the High North was expected to become less stable due to increased military activity, as well as the possibility of Russia and China strengthening their cooperation in the region.[4] While the basis of the High North as a low-tension environment remains in the absence of immediate disputes and conflicts over territory or resources, uncertainty and lack of trust have increased.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the sharp deterioration of the security

situation in Europe have accentuated this trend of security reshaping in the High North, in which climate change also plays a prominent role. "We have always said that we have low tensions in the High North. Unfortunately, that is no longer true, at least not in the same way," said Jens Stoltenberg at a meeting of the Nordic Council in Oslo in November 2023. It was the first time this was clearly expressed by NATO's top representatives. NATO has increased its presence to show that the High North "is not a place where NATO can be threatened or forced to do things contrary to its interests", he continued.[5]

Deterrence and defense

NATO is a defense alliance, so its interest in the High North is primarily linked to opportunities and risks in defending its allies. The following developments are of particular importance in this regard.

This is based on the fact that since 2022, NATO has assessed Russia as the most significant and direct threat to the security of the Allies and to the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area,[6] to which the High North belongs. In recent years, Russia has increased its military capabilities in the Arctic through the modernization and construction of military facilities, an improved command structure, and the infusion of modern weapons systems and long-range technology. Although Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has led to a significant reduction in the Russian army's presence in the High North, the naval and air forces are considered to be basically intact. The level of Russian activity in the region is expected to remain at roughly the same level as before the war, with extensive naval and air force patrols, military exercises, submarine activity in the North Atlantic and the routine use of tele-warfare such as GPS jamming against allies.

The "defense bubble" that Russia has built up over the past decade through its bastion defense to protect its base area on the Kola Peninsula and the Northeast Passage has a direct bearing on the defense of NATO territory in the north, as well as on the protection of supply and troop supply chains and undersea infrastructure in the North Atlantic, which are at risk of being disrupted by submarines and ships that Russia has stationed in the region. Russia's strategic nuclear capability, which is predominantly stored there and projected by submarines, also has a direct bearing on NATO's defense considerations.

Just as Gotland risks being drawn into a conflict at an early stage if Russia were to seek to expand the defense bubble from Kaliningrad to secure freedom of operations, the Allies' northern territories risk being exposed to similar Russian attempts to expand the defense bubble from the Kola Peninsula. In the event of a conflict, Russia also has an interest in securing the outflow to the North Atlantic and making it more difficult for the Allies to operate there, with Russian submarines as a key resource.

China's increased activities in the High North have mainly been in the economic and research fields, although some joint military exercises with Russia have also taken place, although not at any advanced level.

Chinese investments in dual-use assets such as satellites, sensors and icebreakers, combined with high ambitions to be present in the region, give NATO reason to follow developments closely, but militarily this has not prompted any planning.

NATO's overall assessment shapes the Alliance's objectives in the High North: to deter Russia in particular, and to defend its allies. This is what the Secretary General is

referring to when he emphasizes that the High North "is not a place where NATO can be threatened or forced to do things contrary to its interests". It is also why Stoltenberg emphasizes the importance of increased presence. Whoever is present has power and influence. Being absent when other global actors increase their presence in the High North could be interpreted by others as a lack of ambition, which could weaken NATO's ability to protect allies under Article 5.

Military tasks and capabilities

NATO's military planning and activities in the High North can be broadly categorized in terms of presence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and combat capabilities.

NATO's increased presence in the High North, unlike the eastern flank, has not been through a permanent troop presence, but through increased patrolling and exercise activities, such as the large-scale military exercise Trident Juncture 2018 and the Norway-led Cold Response 2022 and 2024.[7] The exercises aim to both increase combat capability and send strong signals about NATO's commitment to the region and its security. NATO has also strengthened its command structure in the region through the establishment of Joint Forces Command (JFC) Norfolk in Virginia, USA.

Surveillance and reconnaissance is another key area for NATO in the High North, where further efforts are needed. The High North covers huge areas, very few people and little settlement. Activities can be very difficult to detect due to darkness and ice. NATO has few joint surveillance assets, the core being AWACS aircraft, which means that investments by individual allies are crucial to the overall capability, such as Norway's and the UK's P-8 reconnaissance aircraft, which are also used for anti-submarine warfare. In this context, it is worth noting that Germany has also purchased P-8s. In addition to investments in hardware, the actual exchange of data and information between allies can be intensified and help to strengthen the common situational awareness.

NATO is also working to strengthen the ability to fight in the High North under the harsh climatic conditions that prevail. There are a number of challenges here: ensuring that soldiers and their equipment can cope with cold, snow and darkness, and that infrastructure, communications and logistics flows function and can be maintained. In the broader perspective, operational plans for the High North and related capability development are being developed as the regional defence plans adopted by NATO at the Vilnius Summit in 2023 are now being launched in concrete terms.

Increased consensus and understanding

On the political side, NATO has strengthened its focus on developments in the High North by creating opportunities for allies to learn more about conditions in the region and how security policy dynamics are shaped in that context. This has been done, for example, by providing expert briefings to NATO ambassadors and by holding a meeting of the circle of security policy chiefs in Iceland, although development in the High North has not been a separate agenda item at any foreign ministers' meeting—so far, it may be added.

With military resources tied up in the war in Ukraine, Russia is increasingly relying on hybrid operations and the threat of nuclear posturing, a form of psychological warfare. The importance of being able to counter Russia's ongoing hybrid warfare

also in the High North is emphasized in NATO. Recently, a series of sabotage incidents have highlighted the importance and vulnerability of the extensive system of underwater infrastructure in the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, which provides energy and data flows of great importance to the Alliance. This has led NATO to set up a unit at its headquarters to specifically monitor this issue, as well as a liaison center in the UK where private actors can also report incidents. The High North is also weighing in on NATO's relatively new and growing work on climate security, as climate change is hitting the Arctic particularly hard and in many ways changing the conditions for security and military operations.

Challenges for NATO in the High North

As NATO turns its strategic gaze to the High North, a number of challenges emerge. The United States, whose resources always weigh heavily in the alliance, not least in the High North, certainly has updated strategies for the Arctic but lacks many of the resources needed for their implementation. Increased presence is hampered by the fact that the US has only one functioning icebreaker, compared to Russia's 40 or so. The US also suffers from deficiencies in communications equipment, infrastructure and cold-climate combat capabilities.[8] Despite an increased US focus on the High North, it is not prioritized at an overall level, which is reflected in the budget and division of responsibilities within the US administration, where the Arctic is not treated as a separate region. Overall, investments in resources to ensure NATO's ability to meet its Article 5 commitment in the High North are very costly and it remains to be seen whether the political will exists to match these.

On the political side, despite work that has begun, there is still limited awareness among the broad circle of allies of the security situation in the High North and the complexity of security and defense in the region

Politically, a balancing act is also required regarding the governance of Arctic issues in NATO. While the Arctic allies seek increased involvement by others, they want to maintain some national room for maneuver in order to be able to navigate a complex external situation.

NATO's deterrence should be firm, credible and balanced. It should signal commitment, unity and willingness to defend, without appearing aggressive.

Channels of communication with Russia must be kept open to avoid misunderstandings and unwanted escalation.[9] Major powers such as the UK and France, and to some extent also Germany, have significant political and military resources to contribute, but at the same time they are not Arctic states, which can pose challenges. On the other hand, regional groupings within NATO that risk excluding other allies are not appreciated. This goes against the basic spirit of the Alliance and its 360-degree approach to threat and security.

Sweden's direction—some starting points

With Sweden and Finland in NATO, the geopolitical center of gravity shifts northward in the alliance, and the Nordic region takes on a clearer and more coherent contour. Since all the Nordic allies are also Arctic states, the Nordic circle is the natural hub for Sweden in these matters.

Within NATO, there is acceptance that the Nordic countries are leading on issues related to the High North, while it is important that they are inclusive, not only towards

other Arctic states such as Canada and the US, but also more broadly. In principle, it should be possible for all allies to monitor and comment on NATO's engagement in the High North. Informal regional groupings can move things forward, but the door to others must be kept open.

The Nordic countries have long cooperated on Arctic issues, not least in the Arctic Council.[10] The goal of maintaining the High North as a low-tension area characterized by stability remains and forms a common Nordic basic vision. Similar wording is found in the US and Canadian Arctic strategies. Russia is also considered to basically share the objective, as such an environment serves its economic interests, which are extensive due to the natural resources in the region.

At the same time, maintaining the low level of tension is challenging, as Russia's behavior is unpredictable and increasingly confrontational. Russia's increased cooperation with China is also a source of uncertainty. "Can we still say we have low tensions without sounding naive?" as one Nordic diplomat put it.

Swedish initiatives on NATO in the High North could include

- Proposal that NATO, in order to create a stronger strategic overview of the High North in line with Swedish and Nordic interests, conducts a comprehensive threat assessment using the International Staff, the International Military Staff and the committee structure, similar to what was done for Baltic Sea security in 2015.[11] Such an approach should be broad and include both political and military aspects, as well as the hybrid dimension. The process would involve all allies and give them the opportunity to endorse the analysis. This is in line with the ambition to strengthen NATO's strategic consultations. Such an analysis could be embraced by the North Atlantic Council, for example at foreign minister level. It could then be regularly reviewed and updated.
- That during such a process Sweden can build on offering lectures and briefings by experts on the High North, as has been done successfully in the past with Russia, which, incidentally, remains a sought-after skill in the Alliance. This could usefully be done not only at NATO headquarters and staffs, but also in training courses for officials from allied countries conducted at the NATO School in Oberammergau, the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the NATO University in Rome. Sweden should also continue to invite representatives from Allied countries to study visits to Sweden to raise awareness of High North issues.
- To continue with the high level of ambition in the military field to offer advanced exercise and training opportunities in the Arctic environment in close cooperation with the Nordic allies. The UK-led JEF force and bilateral defense cooperation with the United States provide a framework for advanced deepening in this regard. Exercises and training are key to enhancing interoperability and readiness, and to strengthening the capacity of Allies to fight in cold weather conditions.
- That Sweden and the Nordic allies should develop the readiness and capability to operate in the High North without being overly dependent on the US in the first stage. Initiatives where the Nordic countries "pool" resources, such as the Joint Nordic Combat Air Force and the Swedish-Finnish Battle Group, should therefore be further developed within the framework of NATO's new regional plans and capability process.

- Increasing exchanges and deepening cooperation between Allies on surveillance, intelligence and reconnaissance in the High North should be a priority area linked to capability development in accordance with the NATO Capability Process.
- As the command structure for High North is not fully developed, Sweden should remain active in coordination with the Nordic allies. The Swedish intention to support JCF Norfolk with personnel and military resources is important so that the question of which command Finland and Sweden should belong to can be resolved in the long term.

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Notes

1. The text was originally written for the Atlantic Council, which authorized its publication in *KKrVAHT*.
2. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
3. Danoy, Jim and Maddox, Marisol: "Set NATO's Sights on the High North", *Atlantic Council*, 2020, p. 77 esp.
4. Quinn, Eilis: "Denmark promises increased focus on Arctic as it takes over NORDEFCO chair", *The Barents Observer*, 2023-12-29.
5. "No Longer Low Tension in the High North, Says NATO Secretary General", *High North News*, 2023-11-01.
6. *NATO Strategic Concept 2022*.
7. However, the US had permanently rotated troops into Norway in 2017–2020 and recently the UK has established Camp Viking in northern Norway as a base for British operations in the Arctic.
8. Kehrt, Sonner: "US Military Can't Sustain Arctic Operations, 'Let Alone Dominate,' Experts Say", *The War Horse*, 2024-01-18.
9. Friis, Karsten; Wilson Rowe, Elana; Sfraga, Mike and Sverdrup, Ulf (eds.): *Navigating Breakup: Security realities of freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic. Input Report for the Arctic Security Roundtable at the Munich Security Conference 2023*, NUPI and Wilson Center, 2023, pp. 59, 62-63.
10. By design, the Arctic Council is not concerned with military security.
11. Wieslander, Anna: "NATO must engage in the Arctic", *Defense One*, 2019-09-16.

NATO and the Nordic/Baltic region—a strategic and operational assessment[1]

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Résumé

A strategic and operational assessment of the Nordic-Baltic region: the importance of the High North cannot be overestimated. Russia will protect its second-strike capability at any cost. Doing that, Russia will try to create an exclusion zone when it comes to hinder NATO air and naval operations as far south as possible into the Norwegian sea. A secondary effect of this ambition, if successful, might be that bringing reinforcements to Scandinavia will become quite a hazardous endeavor for the alliance. Which in turn would make it doubtful if NATO can reinforce its Nordic members and the Baltic states by sea. Russia trying to create an air defense zone to the west of the Kola peninsula will affect Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian land territory. The conclusion being that: Norway, together with UK, Germany and US must contain the Russian Navy as far north as possible and that Finland and Sweden will carry the main burden when it comes to repulse any Russian offensive on land. Presently Sweden does not have the means to be a major player in such a concept. In the Baltic Sea area, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are all dependent on allied reinforcements to be able to ward off a Russian attack. The main problem being lack of ground forces and air defense assets. Their limited resources, both regarding economy and population, make it necessary to bring in these assets from the outside. Of the two alternatives: by sea across the Baltic or by land, the latter is a doubtful option due to Russian possibilities to influence movements of larger units through the Suwalki-gap, either by attacking and closing the gap, or by using artillery and drones deployed in Kaliningrad or Belarus. The difficulty to move larger units through the Suwalki-gap makes the option to use the Baltic Sea an attractive alternative, assuming that shipping can be protected. The main threat probably being submarines, antiship missiles and mines. To cover the time gap between the arrival of reinforcements from the US and the UK, Swedish assets could probably play a decisive role in the Baltic states.

THE NORDIC-BALTIC region[2] is a key area for NATO, which therefore places high demands on the Alliance's deterrence and warfare capabilities. In the Northern Areas, roughly defined here as the northern Nordic region and the surrounding sea areas,[3] Russia has a pronounced need to be able to counter possible attacks on its base areas on the Kola Peninsula and to protect its strategic nuclear submarines in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. The threat to the Baltics is of a different nature. There, Russia may see opportunities to realize some of its resurgent imperial ambitions, but also to exploit the countries' vulnerable position to undermine NATO's credibility as a security guarantor.

The article aims to analyze the challenges NATO may face in making it credible that the Alliance can defend the Northern Areas and the Baltics. The defense of the more southern

parts of the Scandinavian peninsula will be addressed only to the extent that it clearly affects operations in the above-mentioned directions, which are deemed to be of the greatest strategic importance to the Alliance and which are probably also the most interesting from the Russian point of view. The defense of Finland is only concerned to the extent that it affects NATO's operations in the northern North and the Alliance's support to the Baltic states. It should be noted, however, that Finland's armed forces are by all accounts the best prepared in the region to fight a war if necessary.

Both geographical directions, the Northern Areas and the Baltic Sea region, are treated from two points of view: what would be advantageous from the Russian point of view and as a consequence; how should NATO be able to act as a deterrent and what does this require of the necessary warfare capability of the Alliance. In both cases, the discussion concludes with some reflections on desirable Swedish capabilities and how best to contribute to the Alliance's deterrence and warfare capabilities.

The article is part of the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences' project SV-A-R, which is presented in detail on the Academy's website.[4] This connection to the project also means that the overall security policy aspects, such as factors that could affect the United States' involvement in Europe or the NATO-EU relationship, are only discussed very briefly, as they are dealt with in other parts of the project. The same applies to the significance and implementation of "hybrid warfare", although, for example, successful cyber attacks against the Swedish electricity supply would affect the Alliance's ability to use the Swedish railway network. This is an important capability linked to Sweden's role as a hub for reinforcement transportation to both the northern Nordic and Baltic regions.

Northern areas from the Russian point of view

The Norwegian Defense Commission points out in its 2023 report that: "There are many indications that Russia will increasingly lean towards nuclear weapons as a more central part of its security policy during a transitional period."[5] A conclusion that suggests that the northern regions will not lose importance in Russian eyes, rather the opposite.

In addition to the great and likely increasing importance for Russia of protecting its submarine-based nuclear capability, the threat that the Kola Peninsula-based forces may pose to Atlantic sea lanes to Europe, and those to Scandinavia across the North Sea and Norwegian Sea, must also be taken into account when assessing possible Russian intentions.[6]

To protect the base areas on the Kola Peninsula and the strategic nuclear submarines, Russia has developed what is often referred to in Western debate as the Bastion Concept. It aims to create a deep defense zone that will give the Northern Navy freedom of action at sea, especially in the Barents Sea, but also protect the bases. The protection of the extensive gas extraction on the Yamal Peninsula is also an important task.[7] At sea, the zone extends from the Kola Peninsula down to the Norwegian Sea and north up to the Arctic Ocean. However, it should not be seen as an impenetrable bubble, which would be an unrealistic objective, but rather as a concept aimed at imposing a very high cost on an adversary in the event that it attempts to deploy its own forces in the zone.[8]

The concept also includes creating a threat to NATO's Atlantic links and to the sea routes to Scandinavia. This is probably a fairly limited threat, at least as far as the Atlantic links are concerned. However, NATO cannot ignore it and must therefore

allocate resources to meet that eventuality. The announcement two years ago of the addition of further conventional submarines to the Northern Fleet is probably part of such planning.[9] The development of weapons in general, such as the existence of the Kalibr cruise missile, based on both surface ships and submarines, with ranges of several hundred kilometers, in some versions up to 1 500 kilometers, means that the protection of maritime transport to Europe and Scandinavia cannot be neglected.[10] Although several types of anti-ship missiles have very long ranges, the weapons carriers, ships and aircraft, must have bases from which they are launched. These bases must be protected. A major problem from the Russian point of view for the use of such long-range systems is probably target data information, which means that the threat to NATO's sea links to Europe and Scandinavia also has a space dimension.

In this regard, from a Nordic-Baltic perspective, it may be worth noting that even if Russian resources are not sufficient to affect maritime transportation across the North Atlantic to Europe, maritime traffic to Scandinavia may be exposed to considerable risks. Such a lower level of Russian ambition would spare the Northern Navy's submarines and aircraft the great risks associated with trying to cross the GIUK gap, which is likely to be well monitored by NATO.[11] In the more limited, and more easily implemented, "Scandinavia option", both military reinforcements and supply shipments to the Nordic/Baltic area could probably be affected to a fairly large extent, possibly even interrupted.

However, creating a maritime defense zone is not enough. NATO countries Norway and Finland both border Russia and are in close proximity to Russian base areas. The distance from the Norwegian border to Murmansk is about 100 km, from the Finnish border about 200 km. From the northern Norwegian air bases there are also short approaches to the Russian strategic nuclear submarine operating areas. The incentives for Russia to expand the air defense zone around the bases on the Kola Peninsula and also to try to prevent NATO from using the air bases in northern Norway are strong, very strong.

Depending on the size of the forces Russia has at its disposal to expand the defense zone in the North Calotte and to act in the surrounding sea areas, or conversely, how weak NATO is in the region, there is the possibility that a Russian operation could have high-level objectives. If Russia were to occupy the Norwegian airfields and ports down to Bodø in Nordland County, for example, NATO's ability to base air and naval forces in northern Scandinavia would be drastically reduced. This would have serious consequences for the Alliance's ability to prevent Russian forces, mainly submarines and long-range aircraft, from operating in the Norwegian Sea. The importance of the northern Norwegian air bases is illustrated by the fact that just this year (2024), Norway and the US entered into a new basing agreement (equivalent to the Swedish DCA with the US)[12] whereby the US is allowed to use the two air bases Andöya and Bardufoss in Troms County.[13] Both are located slightly north of Narvik. In addition, Russian combat forces capable of supporting operations in the Norwegian Sea would be about 1 000 kilometers closer to their area of operations. The possibility of supplying allied reinforcements to the north via Narvik would disappear and Trondheim, where the US Marine Corps had pre-stored materiel,[14] would also be considerably more exposed.

High Russian risk-taking and the use of Trojan horses, for example, cannot be ruled out. Rather, various methods based on sur-

prise appear to be the most likely, since NATO's ability to counter-attack depends to a very large extent on the amount of advance warning the alliance might receive. Otherwise, a coup-like attempt to occupy Norwegian airfields and ports using sea or airborne forces is probably too risky, even though Russian planning is no stranger to either high risks or losses.

Although the primary purpose of Russian military operations in the northern Nordic region is to protect its own bases and forces against air and naval attack, Russian planning must also take into account that, depending on the situation, NATO may also pose a threat on the ground. For example, one cannot ignore the risk that US Marine Corps units may be able to carry out fairly extensive landings behind Russian units advancing through Finnmark. They also pose a latent threat directly to Russian territory if NATO were to succeed in gaining air and sea supremacy in the Barents Sea.

Northern areas from a NATO perspective

The first, and biggest, problem NATO decision-makers have to deal with in relation to Russian military potential in the North, whether or not Russia starts offensive operations, is: does the Alliance dare to fight Russian military infrastructure on the Kola Peninsula, and Russian submarines in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean at all? How would decision-makers in Russia react to what could be perceived as a threat, or direct attack, on Russia's second-strike capability, the ultimate guarantor of Russia's survival as a nation in the event of a conflict with the United States (or China)? There is a risk that NATO will have to fight a war in the far north and the Arctic with its hands tied. Russian offensive actions on the territory of NATO countries and even in the Norwegian Sea can be met with force, but fighting the areas from which the threat emanates may be "out of bounds". There is also a great risk that "self deterrence", an over-interpretation of the risks, may play a major role in NATO's assessment process. It binds itself in such a way that it cannot effectively counter a Russian attack.

Another strategic conclusion of the same magnitude as Russia's perception of the threat to its second strike capability is that if the Alliance fails to prevent Russian anti-ship systems from operating in the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea, there is an imminent risk that any reinforcements will not be able to be deployed to the Nordic-Baltic area. This in turn could jeopardize the defence of the Baltics and, by extension, the Nordic area. The first case alone, that the Baltics cannot be defended, would put the Alliance in a position where it would have to plan for a reconquest of the Baltics, a likely protracted continental war of immense dimensions. Alternatively, if the reconquest option is not implemented, it would clearly show that the Alliance, and thus the US, cannot stand up to its obligations. This would likely lead to several states, such as Japan and South Korea, currently dependent on the United States for their security, perhaps feeling compelled to seek other security policy solutions, including considering acquiring their own nuclear weapons. These issues are already being discussed in Tokyo and Seoul.[15]

A further problem of strategic significance may be the threat to Norwegian gas and oil extraction in the Norwegian Sea. With Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the drastic reduction in European gas imports from Russia, Norway's gas assets have become increasingly important for securing Europe's energy supply. In 2023,

Norwegian gas accounted for 30% of the EU's gas needs.[16]

Among the strategic challenges, there is also a wild card whose importance is extremely difficult to assess, China. In the event of a conflict between Russia and NATO, how will China react: strictly neutral; covert support for Russia, which is then in conflict with China's main global adversary; or, paradoxically, perhaps even support NATO in order to gain advantages at Russia's expense in Asia? The question cannot be answered, as the answer probably depends on how the global situation is assessed in Beijing at the given moment. However, NATO cannot ignore the problem and therefore needs to have some kind of planning to face a threat in the Arctic that may also include a Chinese component.

The threats NATO faces to the Alliance's maritime links and land territory lead to a number of operational conclusions. Perhaps the most important is that the ability to provide maritime security in the Norwegian Sea and, in particular, the North Sea must be assured. Failure there is likely to have strategic consequences for the defense of both the Nordic region and the Baltics. From a national perspective, it is clear that Norway has a key role to play, and will have to bear a heavy burden, in protecting maritime links to the Nordic-Baltic region. This is both in terms of its own capability and in supporting the efforts of other countries, including by offering basing facilities in Norway. In addition to Norway, the countries that can be expected to participate in operations in the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea are: the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. All in all, this means that Norway will have to invest considerable resources in participating in and supporting naval activities in the Norwegian Sea. This means that it will fall primarily on Sweden and Finland to counter the Russian threat on the ground, at least before any reinforcements can be brought in. Available Norwegian ground forces should be focused on operating primarily on Norwegian territory, where they can counter threats such as raids and bypasses via the sea and airdrops against base areas and supply lines. It should be noted that the Russian Northern Navy has a tradition of amphibious operations dating back to the Second World War.[17] However, for reasons of sovereignty and the need for practical preparations in peace, as well as the link to naval operations, Norway should have a reasonably good capability to counter a threat on the ground in Finnmark on its own, at least in the early stages.

Spitsbergen and Bear Island pose a particular problem for Norway, where it must be ensured that Russia cannot coup-like occupy either island and use them to deploy sensors and long-range anti-aircraft and anti-ship systems, which would make it significantly more difficult for NATO to operate in parts of the Arctic Ocean, the Barents Sea and the Greenland Sea.

For Sweden and Finland, the requirement to be able to respond to a Russian offensive in the North Calotte poses two major challenges: the limited availability of early deployable units in the area and the possibility of deploying units reasonably quickly. The area is sparsely populated, so the potential to mobilize personnel who live in the region, and thus would be quickly available to meet an attack, is limited in both countries. Although Finland has a large army, a very large army by European standards,[18] the possibilities for reinforcing northern Finland are limited by the threat to the Finnish heartland, the southern two-thirds. This is where the majority of the population lives and where most of the Finnish economy is located, i.e. what constitutes the country's ability to defend it-

self. The fact that this part of Finland also borders on the resource-rich St. Petersburg region, which can thus be the base for extensive military operations, accentuates the problem. The Swedish heartland is not threatened in the same way, which is why Sweden should have good opportunities to make a substantial contribution to the defense of the Northern Calotte. However, such a focus is not without problems: Sweden currently has only a few ground combat units at all, and even fewer that have the ability to fight in the environment of the northern North; the connections between southern Sweden, where possible reinforcement resources could be found, are also very vulnerable. The distance between Mälardalen and Luleå is about 1 000 kilometers and any transport would have to cross ten major rivers, each crossed by only a few bridges. The potential to knock out or damage these with modern long-range missiles means that transport across Sweden in a north-south direction could be seriously disrupted.

The supply of foreign reinforcements to the northern Nordic region faces similar problems, how to get there, how to ensure supply? To some extent, the problems can be solved by pre-storing equipment and supplies in northern Finland or northern Sweden and then flying the personnel in. This is an attractive solution as it not only solves part of the transportation problem but also means that units can be in place quickly. However, even if units are earmarked for operations in a particular area, in most cases they also have additional tasks if events do not unfold as planned. For the United States, playing in a global arena, it would be very risky to commit too many resources to just one possible war. This means that if there is talk of more extensive reinforcements, the bulk of the material will have to be transported by sea to the area of operations; it will not be in place in advance. Incidentally, some of the same reasoning can be applied to the supply of Swedish units from southern Sweden. Should their equipment be pre-stored in the north so that only the personnel need to be transported to the intended area of operations, or should the unit's equipment also be available in the south to ensure that the unit can, reasonably quickly, also solve other tasks than just in the north?

In the case of the North Calotte, three possible reception areas for sea-borne reinforcements are identified:

- Narvik in northern Norway, which is close to the likely area of operations, a couple of hundred kilometers, and has reasonably easy land connections through Swedish Lapland. However, sea transportation is very risky given the proximity to the Northern Navy base areas.
- Trondheim, where the threat to maritime transport also exists but is probably easier to overcome as the distance that Russian submarines, aircraft or missiles have to cover to reach the area of operations has increased by about seven hundred kilometers. Here, however, the problem of fairly long and vulnerable land links through Norway and Sweden, mainly rivers to be crossed, begins to make itself felt. The biggest transportation problem is probably the desire to be able to transport heavy equipment such as tanks and heavy artillery systems by rail.
- Swedish ports on the West Coast are probably the option that offers the best chance of protecting maritime transport, while involving the longest, most time-consuming and vulnerable land transport.

Since the availability of ground forces will be limited, especially in the early stages, and the transportation of reinforcements is associated with risks that may cause considerable

delays, air forces, both Nordic and potentially deployed, will play an important role in initially delaying a Russian advance on the ground. This will require the development of basing capabilities in the northern North and the pre-stocking of large quantities of weapons. Long-range ground-based combat systems will also have an important role to play in covering large areas, both in the early and later stages of an operation.

The number of ground combat units will always be limited in relation to the size of the area of operations. Conducting a static defense will therefore not be possible. The battle will therefore have to be conducted on the move over very large areas, for example, the Swedish and Finnish forces that primarily have to meet an enemy advancing through northern Finland must therefore also be prepared to carry out attacks in a northerly direction into Finnmark. An attack that could involve movements of several hundred kilometers.[19]

The argument that the need for ground combat units in the North Calotte can be limited because of the roadless terrain, and difficult terrain conditions in general, is often given too much weight. The area is extraordinarily large by southern Swedish or continental standards. The combined land area of Troms, Finnmark, Swedish Lapland, Norrbotten and Finnish Lapland is about 85 % of the area of Germany, or almost twice the size of the entire Baltic States.[20] Moreover, the road network is considerably denser than is apparent from a superficial view. The forest road network is extensive and there are rarely long distances between different road ends that allow one to "jump" from one road system to the next on load-bearing ground, thereby creating advance routes. In addition, modern combat vehicles, both tanks and armored personnel carriers, have a considerably higher accessibility alongside the roads than was the basis for Swedish war planning in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The trials conducted, for example, when a new tank was purchased in the early 1990s gave a frightening picture of how we had underestimated the implications of vehicle development.[21] There is a risk that by relying too much on the difficulties that the terrain in northern Sweden and Finland can offer an attacker, we will make the same mistake that the French General Staff made in 1940, when it assumed that the defense in the Ardennes could be solved with limited forces because the terrain there would not allow an advance with large units.[22]

To this should be added tactical considerations. For example, what does it mean that the attacker is the one who chooses the time and place for an attack. This means, among other things, that in many cases he is likely to be the first, for example through helicopter airdrops, in places where it is optimal to destroy connections that would delay his advance.

Overall, the ingredients of NATO's collection of capabilities to counter Russian operations in the High North and surrounding maritime areas should consist of

- very well developed capability to conduct anti-submarine warfare and maritime security in general in the Norwegian Sea.
- capability to protect bases and other infrastructure in northern Norway against both air attacks (including protection against various types of missiles and drones) as well as good ability to meet threats on the ground in the form of sabotage, raids and airdrops.
- capability to counter fairly extensive Russian ground operations in mobile combat throughout the area between the Russian border and Troms County in Norway.

- capability to use ground-based, long-range systems to combat ground targets.
- be able to deploy large air forces with a good ground combat capability to operations in the northern Nordic region at an early stage.
- ensuring rail and road connections from the south to the north of Sweden.

Some conclusions for Sweden regarding the defense of the northern North

Of the capabilities listed above, Sweden's most important contribution to the Alliance's ability to meet and repel a Russian attack in the northern areas would primarily be linked to ground operations and air defense. Some areas that appear to be particularly important are:

- to provide a large part of the required ground forces, including: a couple of brigades with high mobility and attack power; long-range indirect combat systems, such as rocket artillery; drones for both reconnaissance and weapons operations; fighter units for fighting in the depths of the attacker's territory.
- to create a base system for air forces in northern Sweden that allows both Swedish and foreign air forces to join forces for operations in the northern areas.
- ensuring the ability to transport Swedish and foreign units and supplies from southern Sweden to the northernmost parts of the country, by being able to protect and restore sensitive connections, which requires, among other things, air defense, engineering units and extensive resources for protection and surveillance.
- The central location of Norrbotten in the area, and good connections by rail, road, air and even by ship to Luleå, suggest that Sweden should also play a central role in the logistics of operations in the northern Nordic region.

The above could constitute a rough outline of the "Capability Targets" that NATO should set for Swedish capabilities in the northern Nordic region.[23]

Baltic Sea Region

The area can be roughly divided into the following areas: the northern Baltic Sea with the Gulf of Bothnia,[24] Åland and the Gulf of Finland, which require certain specific capabilities, and the southern Baltic Sea, where the defense of the Baltic States and related problems are the main drivers of NATO's capability needs.

Northern Baltic Sea

The importance of the Gulf of Bothnia is mainly constituted by the need to be able to conduct maritime traffic between Sweden and Finland if ship movements in the Baltic Sea proper become too risky. The possibility of maintaining shipping between the two countries is of great importance for Finland's supply, but also for the supply of military reinforcements and supplies. Similar transportation by land would be more time-consuming, would not allow for the transport of as large quantities of goods and would probably also be affected by an attacker's attempt to disrupt the north-south connections in Sweden. Sea transportation via the Gulf of Bothnia is also a way to supply combat forces in northern Sweden, Norway and Finland, if land connections to the north of Sweden are interrupted or disrupted.

The importance of the Åland Islands is a function of the need to protect the sea lanes in the Gulf of Bothnia, as the possession

of the archipelago provides opportunities to make it more difficult, if not impossible, for Russian submarines to enter the Gulf of Bothnia. Should Russia succeed in occupying the archipelago and deploying long-range anti-aircraft and anti-ship systems there, all shipping to southern Finland and the northern Baltic would be seriously hampered. In addition, both Swedish and Finnish air operations would be adversely affected. In addition to having to fly detours to avoid the risk of aerial warfare, there could be a threat to nearby air base areas. The distance between Mariehamn and Arlanda or Uppsala is about 130 kilometers and it is about the same distance to Turku. Not a great distance for a modern air defense system like the S 400, nor for a rocket artillery system like the Russian Tornado, provided target data can be obtained.[25]

The Gulf of Finland can be closed to surface ships relatively easily by deploying anti-ship missiles on Finnish and Estonian territory. Both countries have qualified such systems.[26] The short distance between Finland and Estonia means that the use of mines would also be an effective way of blocking the Gulf from both surface and sub-surface vessel movements. The bay is only 48 kilometers wide at its narrowest point. The former importance of Kronstadt as a naval base has thus been significantly reduced. However, new construction and repair activities are carried out there.[27] The base therefore still has military significance. In the event of war, it would probably be used mainly as a base for submarines, which may have some ability to get in and out of the Gulf of Finland. Despite extensive German and Finnish mines during the Second World War, it was not possible to prevent Russian submarines from entering the Baltic Sea until a submarine net was stretched from Naissaari in Estonia to Porkkala in Finland.[28]

Southern Baltic and Baltic Sea—strategic importance

The strategic importance of the Baltics is very much linked to NATO's credibility as a defense alliance. NATO must be able to make it credible that the Baltic countries can and will be defended. If the alliance fails to provide the necessary deterrence, from a Russian perspective, the risk that Russia's imperial ambitions will once again encompass the Baltic states increases dramatically. The consequences of such a failure would likely have repercussions both regionally and globally. In Europe, some states might begin to pursue a policy of accommodation out of fear, or with a focus on purely national interests, without regard for the security of allies. The survival of the Alliance would be threatened. As already mentioned, linked to the need to maintain maritime links across the North Sea to the Nordic-Baltic area, the consequence of a failure to defend the Baltics could be that US allies such as South Korea and Japan would begin to doubt both US willingness and ability to contribute to their defense and then consider their own nuclear weapons programs. Such thoughts have already been cautiously aired in both countries,[29] indeed even in Germany.[30] How NATO's, and by extension American, failure in the Baltics would be interpreted in Beijing is difficult to predict. However, the likelihood that Taiwan's security would thereby increase is probably small.

NATO's 2022 Security Strategy also points to the need to stop an aggressor early on, including to avoid terror and persecution of the civilian population in occupied areas similar to what has happened in Ukraine in recent years.[31] A moral aspect that is intimately linked to the values the Alliance was once created to protect.

Russian operational perspective

From the Russian point of view, a military operation targeting the Baltics is a relatively straightforward undertaking. The countries have a long land border with Russia, relative to their size. The distances are relatively short, usually only about one to two hundred kilometers before a Russian attack reaches vital targets such as capitals or ports and airfields. The latter are important for receiving reinforcements.

The rapid deployment of large forces in the face of an attack is facilitated by a well-developed rail and road network on the Russian side in the direction of the Baltic States. This is a legacy of the time when the Baltic states were part of the Soviet Union, and before that of the Tsarist Empire. For example, Latvia's border with Russia and Belarus is crossed by some twenty better roads, including three European roads, and three railway lines.[32] Large parts of the countries' territory, together more than fifty percent of their total area, are also within artillery range of Russian or Belarusian territory.[33] The use of drones also benefits from the relatively short distances. The basing of air forces in the Baltics, as well as the use of ports, will be associated with high risks unless effective countermeasures are taken.

The Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, together with Belarusian territory, provides good conditions for creating flank protection for an operation in the Baltics. Building hard-to-fortify lines of defense in Belarus and Kaliningrad can be done long before a possible attack on the Baltics. However, blocking the so-called Suwalki Gap, the mutual Polish-Lithuanian border, can only be done when an attack is launched. However, the gap is only 60 km wide and can probably be taken, and partially blocked with mines, before NATO has time to act with larger forces. In addition, the entire area can be covered from the start with artillery fire from Kaliningrad and Belarus, and the distances also allow the deployment of large numbers of smaller drones.

The fact that the Baltic States have a land border with Russia means that there are good opportunities to protect the initial stages of the Russian operation against air attacks with anti-aircraft systems deployed on Russian and Belarusian territory. This is similar to what is currently happening in Ukraine, with the Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal in 1973 being the classic example.[34] Russia will also be able to use its own aircraft, as its own air bases will be close to the areas of operation in question.

From the Russian point of view, the problem of isolating the Baltic States from the outside world in connection with a military operation against one or more Baltic countries is mainly linked to how to prevent reinforcements from being brought to the area by air or by sea transport across the Baltic Sea. Being able to use Gotland for the deployment of sensors and long-range anti-aircraft and anti-ship systems would be a distinct advantage. This would affect NATO transports to the Baltic States. The Estonian islands of Ösel and Dagö would also offer similar advantages to the possession of Gotland, but with the disadvantage that they would be more exposed to combat from the Estonian mainland.

NATO—operational perspective

The Baltic countries' own armed forces are very small in relation to the threats they face. Roughly speaking, Estonia has two brigades and four territorial defense battalions. The country also has a British-led battalion under

the NATO Forward Land Forces (FLF), the majority of which are reasonably modern: Combat Vehicles 90, tracked artillery and rocket launchers are present in some high-priority units;[35] Latvia has a standing brigade that today also includes foreign components of what constitutes the FLF, and in addition local defense units organized as four territorial defense brigades;[36] Lithuania has three brigades and six territorial defense battalions, the German battalion in Lithuania is to be transformed into a permanently stationed brigade by around 2027.[37]

Extensive rearmament and modernization programmes are under way in all three Baltic countries, including the supply of modern artillery systems, anti-tank vehicles and air defence systems. The foreign units present in the Baltic States under the FLF, which currently comprise approximately one battalion battle group per country, will in future be expanded to form one brigade per country, which will, however, only be complete after the elements not present on the ground (normally the bulk of the brigade) have been supplied from the respective home countries.[38]

Because the Baltic countries' combined land border with Russia is long, in the order of seven hundred kilometers, and because the attacker is numerically superior with the ability to create threats in several directions at the same time, and is also the one who can choose the time and place of an attack, he will only have to meet limited parts of NATO's resources in the Baltic region where he attacks. The forces normally present in the Baltics will always be insufficient to repel a Russian attack if they cannot be reinforced. Especially in the form of qualified counter-attack units that can be deployed quickly in the direction(s) in which the attacker is gathering strength, and air defense units to meet the full range of air threats: drones, missiles of various kinds and qualified attack aircraft.

The problems associated with bringing ground combat units to the Baltics are threefold: the general lack of such units in the Alliance, especially among its European members; the possibilities of bringing them there; and the time aspect, they must not arrive too late.

Since the time aspect largely determines how and when possible Swedish reinforcements in the Baltic region can be most useful, here is a brief summary of how the Swedish Defense Commission views the possibilities of other countries, primarily the United States, to reinforce the Nordic-Baltic region. In its report of April 26 this year, the Defense Committee assesses that the following time frames apply to the provision of substantial resources: air forces days to weeks; naval forces weeks to months and ground forces months.[39]

There are several options for providing land-based reinforcements. The Multinational Corps Northeast (MCNE), headquartered in Szczecin, in northern Poland, could be an instrument for early reinforcement of the Baltic defense. As a rule, corps do not have a fixed structure; they are resourced according to need and location. However, the need to coordinate what is happening in the Baltics right now, including the creation of three divisional staffs and the integration of existing units into those structures, means that the Corps is currently focusing most on unit development and war planning in the Baltics. We are talking about reduced divisions with two or three brigades and limited divisional resources.[40] In the event of a threat of war, the Corps could be reinforced. At present, in 2024, it could possibly be reinforced with one Polish and one German division, provided they are given a few months for mobilization operations

before war breaks out.[41] Depending on the situation and the time available for preparations, it should not be ruled out that the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) could also have a role in this geographical area.[42] This would not only relieve the MNCNE, but also show that the Alliance is serious in a crisis situation. Within the framework of NATO's planning, it is likely that American units could also be given a role in this area, but even there it will take time before they can be in place.

In the longer term, around 2030, NATO's resources in Eastern Europe will have increased to a fairly large extent, mainly because Poland is then expected to have six divisions.[43] Poland has also recently set up its own corps staff.[44] However, it is questionable whether any corps, wherever it comes from, and even if it has several subordinate divisions and is fairly well prepared, could reach the territory of the Baltic countries from Poland before it is too late. To do so, it would first have to break through the Suwalki Gap, which Russia would reasonably seek to block as a very first measure in the event of an attack on any Baltic country.

In addition to physically blocking the gap itself with mines and mortars, the whole gap can be affected by indirect fire from both Kaliningrad and Belarus. Not only will the gap be difficult and time-consuming to cross, but it will also have to be kept open so that thousands of vehicles, most of them unprotected trucks, can continuously pass through the gap to supply the combat units that will advance several hundred kilometers in a northerly direction. It is about 250 kilometers as the crow flies from the Polish border to Riga. It is doubtful whether this is possible, unless the artillery and drone systems in Kaliningrad and Belarus, that can re-mine cleared mines and combat vehicles crossing the gap, have been largely knocked out beforehand.

It is therefore likely that both Kaliningrad and nearby parts of Belarus will also have to be taken as part of an operation to enable larger forces to advance through the gap. This could be both difficult and time-consuming. The fighting in Ukraine over the past two years has clearly demonstrated the difficulties of disrupting defensive formations supported by field operations and indirect fire. This should not be as surprising as it sometimes seems in the debate. Rarely do campaigns follow the course of the 1967 Six-Day War or the 1990 Kuwait War, when a rapid advance into the depths of the opponent's grouping led to the collapse of the defense within days. All in all, there are reasons to consider solutions other than an advance through the Suwalki Gap to support the Baltics with ground combat units in the early stages of a conflict.

The alternative, if the land route is a doubtful possibility, is to fly and ship the necessary reinforcements across the Baltic Sea. The threats to such a solution also appear more manageable. The Russian naval bases in the Baltic Sea, Baltiysk and Kronstadt, are both difficult to utilize after the outbreak of war. Any resources in Kronstadt are effectively trapped in the Gulf of Finland. With the possible exception of submarines, which might be able to get past the Finnish and Estonian anti-ship missiles and mines designed to block all traffic in and out of the Gulf of Finland. Perhaps the bigger threat is Russian naval forces in the Baltic Sea, in Kaliningrad. But even there, there are questions about the chances of Russian ships surviving both at the quayside and if they try to get out into the Baltic Sea. The naval port of Baltiysk is less than 40 kilometers from Polish territory and can therefore be reached with artillery fire without major problems. This includes

conventional as well as homing shells. The entire Frisches Haff is less than 50 kilometers from the Polish border and thus offers no protected anchorages. The distance to Baltisjk from the Lithuanian border is less than 120 kilometers, beyond normal artillery range but well within the range of rocket artillery, such as HIMARS, which is being procured for the Lithuanian Armed Forces for delivery in 2025.[45,46]

It is also difficult for ships, including submarines, to get out into the Baltic Sea from the Baltic Sea as it can only be done through a channel about four hundred meters wide. It is not only Russian submarines that can lay mines, so can NATO's.[47]

The overall conclusion regarding the threat to NATO shipping in the Baltic Sea is that Russian surface forces will have very limited ability to act, to the extent that they have not gone to sea before the outbreak of war knowing that this will be their only action. However, this is a possibility that cannot be ignored, for example as part of a coup-like occupation of an important coastal area or island. Russia's means of influencing the delivery of reinforcements and supplies by sea to the Baltics will then consist of submarines and land-based and airborne missiles, but also submarine-laid and airdropped mines

Weighing up the Russian perspective and NATO's consequent need to be able to act both as a deterrent and, if necessary, to defend the Baltic states, a list of desirable capabilities in the Baltic Sea region would look something like this:

- in the Baltic States, peacetime preparations in the form of field operations that can be protected by various weapon systems whose effects can be rapidly concentrated in threatened areas, can force an attacker to launch time-consuming and costly attacks close to the border.
- to protect infrastructure that is critical to receive reinforcements against an advancing enemy on the ground, and against a very wide range of air threats. Counter-attack capabilities and air defense systems effective against different types of targets are most important.
- that foreign support and reinforcements can be delivered in several stages, following the principle "better a little in time, than a lot delivered too late". The sequence could be: rapid/immediate air and missile deployments; a first round of ground combat units pre-stocked in the Baltics and flown in; early arrival of heavier units from the immediate area who can fight for time until more distant reinforcements arrive.
- to defend the islands in the Baltic Sea: Gotland, Ösel, Dagö and Åland even before the outbreak of war.
- that naval forces in the Baltic Sea have good anti-aircraft and anti-submarine warfare capabilities to protect maritime transport, as well as ships with good mine clearance capabilities to keep shipping lanes and ports open.
- offensive ground combat capability in Poland and Germany that is powerful enough to allow a highly ambitious offensive into the Baltics, even if it is behind schedule.

Several of the capabilities that should be available are under development, including: fortification of the Baltic States' borders with Russia, development of the countries' ground forces to protect areas important for receiving reinforcements, and pre-stocking of material so that forces included in the FLF can be rapidly reinforced with personnel. What is lacking is additional anti-aircraft and ground combat units that can reinforce the initial units at an early stage, pending

the arrival of larger reinforcements, especially from the United States. There is also a shortage of warships to protect transportation across the Baltic Sea, especially in the early stages of a possible conflict.

Some conclusions for Sweden regarding the defense of the Baltic Sea region

Sweden is well placed to contribute to the defense of the Baltics, and thereby also increase NATO's deterrence. The strategic consequences of a possible failure of the Alliance to defend the Baltics mean that Swedish contributions must be assessed from a strategic point of view, and not only from an operational perspective. The following list of desirable capabilities may therefore, in relation to its limited size, have a disproportionate impact on security in northern Europe.

Sweden should:

- have prepared for a very early reception of other countries' air forces at Swedish bases and support their operations in the Baltic States,
- conduct a large-scale, early deployment of ground combat units in the Baltics, a few brigades, to cover the time gap between a possible Russian attack and the arrival of reinforcements from further afield,
- contribute to the defense of coastal areas on the other side of the Baltic Sea, such as Ösel and Dagö,
- have a good ability to protect maritime transport in the Baltic Sea against submarine and air threats over time.
- be able to carry out operations with Swedish submarines to both hunt down Russian submarines and to help prevent Russian naval forces from leaving their bases,
- be able to defend Gotland against a limited Russian attack at an early stage, without extensive preparations and transportation of resources.

Here it may be worth recalling the old truth that even credible planning to reinforce/intervene can also contribute to deterrence. If an opponent's reaction to an action I plan to take is judged to be such that I risk failure, I may refrain. Credible planning to ensure that Sweden, within the framework of the Alliance's actions, can quickly contribute substantial resources to support the defense of the Baltic region is therefore perhaps Sweden's most important contribution to continued stability in the Baltic Sea region.

Closure

Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO has greatly improved the Alliance's ability to defend the entire Nordic-Baltic region. The defense of the northern Nordic region can be coordinated and the countries' military forces will find it easier to support each other. Norway can thus more clearly focus its resources on the strategically crucial task of helping to keep the sea routes to Europe and Scandinavia open, from both a European and a Nordic perspective. This is done by making it more difficult for Russian anti-ship, anti-submarine and anti-aircraft systems to take effect. The joint role of Sweden and Finland in countering Russian ground penetration in the northern Nordic region is clarified and can be effectively prepared. Finland's operational depth for conducting air operations will increase and the protection of sea and air links can be coordinated with Sweden. The use of Swedish territory and preparations to support the Baltic countries will increase the Alliance's ability to defend them against a Russian attack. A clear focus for the Swedish Armed Forces

to help cover the time gap in the Baltic region before ground combat units from countries outside the immediate area can arrive would further contribute to increasing the Alliance's deterrence capability.

At present, all countries in the region, with the possible exception of Finland, have serious gaps in their ability to contribute to the Alliance's deterrence through credible war-fighting capabilities. The problems and shortcomings can be addressed, and some are already being addressed, but the next few years give cause for concern.

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Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. The Nordic-Baltic region is here roughly defined as the Nordic and Baltic countries, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the Barents Sea, the Arctic Ocean and the White Sea. However, geographical boundaries for military activities will always be fluid, partly because different weapon systems can operate over very long distances, such as cruise missiles.
3. What is referred to in the article as the Northern Areas roughly comprises: the Norwegian Sea, the Arctic Ocean, the Barents Sea, the White Sea, Norway (including Spitsbergen), Sweden and Finland north of the 65th parallel.
4. "Projektet SV-A-R: Sverige i EU och NATO – Avskräckning och Resiliens", *KKrVA*, *https://kkrva.se/projekt-sv-a-r/*.
5. *Forsvar for fred og frihet,* NOU Norges offentlige utredninger 2023:14, p. 78.
6. The Russian Northern Navy is the strongest of the Russian navies and comprises approximately the following number of ships: 7 strategic nuclear submarines; 20 attack submarines, both nuclear and diesel-electric; 10 large frigate-type surface combatants; 7 smaller missile boat-type surface combatants; 6 aviation regiments with long-range aircraft for reconnaissance and anti-ship warfare, attack aircraft, fighters, etc.; 5 anti-aircraft regiments with a mix of long-range and short-range systems; 1 coastal artillery/rocket brigade, 3 naval infantry regiments (although large parts of these are currently thought to be in Ukraine); many different types of special units for sabotage, electronic warfare, etc. Data on the number of ships of different types is uncertain, given that some may be in reserve, in shipyards, etc. "Northern Fleet", *Wikipedia*, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Fleet*.
7. In 2020, the Yamal fields produced 20% of Russia's gas; in the long term, by 2030, the fields were expected to account for 40% of Russia's gas production. "Yamal project", *Wikipedia*, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamal_project*.
8. Boulégue, Mathieu: "The militarization of Russian polar polities", *Chatham House*, 2022-06-06.
9. Delanoe, Igor: "The Russian Navy and the Arctic", *Network for Strategic Analysis*, 2023-08-23. The article states that six Project 0636.3 submarines will be added to the Northern Navy.
10. "Kalibr (missile family)", *Wikipedia*, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalibr_(missile_family)*. The system is available in several different versions and can be launched from many different platforms and deliver different warheads.
11. GIUK, Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom.
12. Defense Cooperation Agreement Sweden—USA, agreement between Sweden and the United States regarding the stationing of American combat forces and the storage of supplies in Sweden, which includes the granting of 17 locations for this purpose, *https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/1fd234cd10ec43ba8c-*

da50b09f2501ab/agreement-on-defense-cooperation-between-sweden-and-usa.pdf.

13. "Flertall for flere nye amerikanske militaerbaser", *NRK*, Nyhetssenter Nordland, 2024-02-12, the agreement also applies to garrisons and naval bases, in addition to the mentioned air bases.
14. *Marine corps prepositioning program Norway, Stock Photos and Images*, Alamy, *https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/marine-corps-prepositioning-program-norway.html?sortBy=relevant* and "Pål Jonson deltar på Tröndelagsmötet i Norge", *Government Offices of Sweden*, 2024-01-11, *https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2024/01/pal-jonson-deltar-pa-trondelagsmotet-i-norge/*.
15. Romei, Sayuri: "Watching Ukraine, South Korea and Japan eye nuclear weapons. Here's what the US should do", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 2023-07-20. The alternative with, for example, South Korean nuclear weapons is unlikely to be complicated by political differences of opinion in South Korea, over 70% of the population is in favor of national nuclear weapons according to "War and peace in Asia", *The Economist*, 2024-04-13, p. 49.
16. *Where does the EU's gas come from*, European Council, *https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-gas-supply/*.
17. "Petsamo-Kirkenes offensive", Wikipedia, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petsamo%E2%80%93Kirkenes_offensive#Soviet*.
18. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I: National Capabilities*, Report No. FOI-R--5527-SE, p. 72, *https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--5527--SE*. The Finnish army alone consists of 185 000 people, the total Finnish defense force consists of about 250 000 people, in addition to trained reserves of several hundred thousand people.
19. For example, the distance from Rovaniemi in northern Finland to Alta in Norway is about 400 km.
20. Square kilometers: Troms 25 876, Finnmark 48 631, Swedish Lapland 109 702, Norrbotten 26 671, Finnish Lapland 92 666, Germany 357 592, Estonia 45 226, Latvia 64 573 and Lithuania 65 286.
21. Henricsson, Ulf: C PS hand letter 34/91 to ÖB, CA and others.
22. Berben, Paul and Iselin, Bernard: *Die Deutschen kommen*, Ch Wegner Verlag, Hamburg 1969, p. 40.
23. In the NATO planning process, military capability targets are drawn up for the members of the Alliance at approximately four-year intervals. This process is based on the Alliance's strategic concept and the political orientation of the various countries for their role in the Alliance. *NATO Defense Planning Process*, NATO, 2022-03-31, *https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49202.htm*.
24. The Gulf of Bothnia is used here as an umbrella term for the Bothnian Sea, the Kvarken and the Gulf of Bothnia.
25. This is not to say that all flight operations at, for example, Arlanda would cease, but flying with large transport aircraft would become more risky. From the Russian point of view, the major problem would probably be to obtain sufficiently good target data. Examples of air defense systems could be the S 400 Triumf, "S-400 Triumf", *Wikipedia*, *https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-400_Triumf* and the Tornado long-range rocket artillery system, "Tornado (multiple rocket launcher)", *Wikipedia*, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tornado_(multiple_rocket_launcher)*.
26. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I: National Capabilities*, p. 76 regarding Gabriel anti-ship missile in Finland, p. 89 regarding Blue Spear 5G anti-ship missile in Estonia.
27. Kjellén, Jonas: *The Russian Baltic Fleet—Organization and role within the Armed Forces in 2020*, *https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--5119--SE*, p. 31, 33.
28. "Anti-submarine net across Gulf of Finland 1943", *WWIIForums*, 2003, *http://ww2f.com/threads/anti-submarine-net-across-gulf-of-finland-1943.4273/*.
29. Romei, "Watching Ukraine, South Korea and Japan eye nuclear weapons. Here's what the US should do".
30. Karnitschnig, Matthew: "Germany's nuclear awakening", *Politico*, 2024-02-16, *https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/berlin-bulletin/germanys-nuclear-awakening/*.
31. *NATO Strategic Concept 2022*, paragraph 21.
32. Map, Baltic States 1:600 000, Jana Seta Map Publishers, Riga LV, ISBN 9984-07-281-9.

"Better roads", in this context, should be seen from a military point of view, i.e. useful for maintenance transportation for larger military units. They are not what Sweden would consider a good country road, paved with at least two lanes etc. In several cases it is a better gravel road with acceptable bearing capacity.

33. Artillery range has been assumed here to be 50 km.
34. Kopets, Keith F.: "Breaching the Bar-Lev Line", *Proceedings*, Vol. 129, No. 10 2003. "The Egyptians used the surface-to-air missiles to make Israeli pilots fly closer to the ground and into the range fan of the air defense artillery. So effective was the Egyptian air defense team that Tel Aviv ordered its pilots not to fly within ten miles of the canal."
35. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I*: *National Capabilities*, pp. 91, 93.
36. Ibid., p. 99, 101.
37. Ibid., p. 111, 116.
38. *NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance*, NATO, 2023-12-08, *https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm*.
39. *Stärkt försvarsförmåga, Sverige som allierad*, Ds 2024:6, Ministry of Defense, p. 105.
40. *Forces*, NATO, *https://mncne.nato.int/forces*.
41. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I: National Capabilities*, p. 129, 148.
42. *About us*, NATO ARRC, *https://arrc.nato.int/about-us*. The ARRC is a predominantly British Corps headquarters, designed to be deployable at short notice virtually anywhere to conduct fairly extensive land operations, several divisions. The Corps has no fixed allocation of units but is allocated according to task and availability.
43. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I: National Capabilities*, p. 130.
44. Ibid., p. 130.
45. "HIMARS, The long-range, mobile, precision fires launcher interoperable with C2 systems", Lockheed Martin, *https://lockheedmartin.com/en-us/products/himars.html*.
46. *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2023 Part I*: *National Capabilities*, p. 113.
47. *Ubåt A26*, FMW, *https://www.fmv.se/projekt/ubat-a26/*.

Can we trust NATO—can NATO trust us?[1]

by Bo Hugemark

Résumé

In the debate before Sweden's U-turn three names were main arguments against NATO membership: Erdogan, Orban and Trump. Ironically, after the application was delivered, two of those leaders delayed the ratification for two years. That has bred doubts about NATO's credibility: could a single member out of diverging interests or for ideological reasons stop or delay an article 5 decision? That problem may have worsened because hybrid warfare makes it difficult to define "armed attack." A delayed reaction to an armed attack can give the aggressor a chance to create a fait accompli, followed by a nuclear threat to deter liberation. That risk is imminent in the Baltic states. Today's tripwire defense should therefore be strengthened to create deterrence by denial. Sweden will have a key role in that process. Worse than the risk of mutinies by European states is the unpredictable outcome of the US presidential election. If worse comes to worst, NATO must find new ways to manage crises or meet aggression. The operational planning should be used as a tool for building Coalitions of the Willing. In a potential crisis in Northern Europe the already existing cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic states might be the nucleus of a CoW. After many years' dogmatic non-alignment Sweden in a short time became an enthusiastic NATO member. There is still a little phantom pain here and there, e. g. as regards combat troops abroad. However, old Nordic kinship and solidarity, a decade of joint defense exercises and, not least, Finland's role as a vanguard will help to cure it. But there should also be recognition that the dogma of nonalignment as a condition for Nordic stability was an unverified myth.

THE OPPOSITION TO NATO membership (remember that?) largely revolved around three names, Erdogan, Orban and Trump. Erdogan would take us to war in the Middle East, Orban was a generally unlikable right-wing extremist with dictatorial tendencies, and so was Trump, who was also unpredictable and the commander of NATO's largest war force.

Ironically, after the then Swedish government, having repeated ad nauseam the mantra that Swedish membership would threaten the stability of northern Europe, put President Niinistö in charge and forced a 180-degree turn, it was the first two gentlemen who delayed entry, two years beyond the two decades since the storm clouds appeared.

In the relief that the process is over, some doubts linger. If individual members could put a stop to a Swedish entry that the others, not least the major powers, described as extremely important, what does that say about the Alliance's decision-making capacity and credibility? Simply put: can we trust NATO?

NATO has gone through and survived many crises and now it has been strengthened by Russia's war of aggression. But we have yet to see a real threat of aggression against NATO countries. The core of the alliance, as everyone knows, is Article 5. But, as not

everyone knows, it does not impose a mandatory requirement for a member state to resort to military means. On the other hand, operational planning implies that member states accept a role in the event that Article 5 is triggered.

A decision in the North Atlantic Council requires consensus, so is there a risk that intervention could be prevented or delayed by a veto? Some factors that could be divisive are:

- that the alliance has expanded in different directions so that the strategic interests of the member states diverge
- that some member states deviate significantly from the presumed community of values expressed in the second sentence of the preamble to the Washington Treaty
- that the hybrid war may lead to disagreement on whether/when an armed attack under Article 5 occurs

It cannot be ruled out that these factors could lead to Russia creating a *fait accompli,* succeeding in occupying part of NATO territory, perhaps also gaining a position that favors further offensive action. The same result could be achieved by a surprise attack with limited forces. Something like the "Hamburg grab" that figured in Western threat scenarios during the Cold War. Russian hopes of support from the Russian-speaking population, subjected to persistent propaganda, could tempt, for example, a "Narva grab".

Tripwire does not work

NATO's deterrence of Russia has so far been based on a "tripwire defense". A typical example of this principle is the exchange between Generals Henry Wilson and Ferdinand Foch in 1910, in which the former asked what the smallest British force needed to reinforce a German attack and was told: "One British soldier, and we will see that he is killed." Another example is the Cold War "AMF", the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force, intended primarily for action on the Alliance's flanks, northern Norway and the Turkish Straits. But the difference with these cases was that they involved concrete possibilities of reinforcement and repulse, in 1914 the lone soldier was followed by a British army corps at Mons, in the Cold War Soviet landings and airdrops would be met by superior air power.

In the face of a surprise invasion of the Baltic States, with the current balance of forces, NATO will find it very difficult to prevent the occupation of large parts of the Baltic States. A liberation operation will take a long time. And here is a new problem: Russia can use nuclear deterrence to, in tactical terms, "defend the target". We have seen how Russia proclaims in Ukraine that conquered territories are Russian. With Putin's demonstrated ability to falsify history, he may well invoke the pre-1991 situation and add the doctrine of Russia's obligation to protect Russian speakers in other countries.

The conclusion is obvious and has also been drawn in NATO: Russia must be deterred by *deterrence by denial*, by concrete obstacles to success. Pre-positioned forces on Russia's borders must not be mere tripwires but must also be able to delay ground offensives and prevent airdrops long enough for reinforcements to arrive. NATO must station more ground troops in the Baltics and Poland, secure all routes to reinforcements, and forward base air forces. In all these respects, Sweden has a key role.

In the reasoning above, I have addressed the elephant in the room, a potential President Trump. With good reason, his unpredictability makes rational analysis impossible. One can certainly try to reassure oneself before the presidential election that his last term was not a disaster for NATO, that on the contrary the alliance was given incentives

to increase defense spending and that the American presence in Europe actually increased. But the madness has since increased and the prospect that he would surround himself with sane advisers diminished.

All in all, it cannot be taken for granted that the optimistic mood of the Alliance's 75th anniversary celebrations and the determination to help Ukraine will continue in the face of a direct threat of war or an outright attack affecting only the countries of one region, say the Baltic. If an operation is prevented or delayed, there is hopefully still the possibility of using parts of the operational planning for a joint action by individual member states, a "Coalition of the Willing".

Of course, such an effort is not something that can be put together in a flash. It requires preparations, which, on the other hand, cannot be done openly without seriously reducing the credibility of the alliance. But a good foundation for a Coalition of the Willing is laid by regional cooperation such as the Nordic-Baltic cooperation that began with the Hultqvist doctrine, was pursued and increased during the waiting period and is now taking place within the framework of the Alliance. This cooperation has also involved states outside the Nordic-Baltic area.

Can NATO trust Sweden?

Sweden's commitment to NATO is as enthusiastic now as it was negative a few years ago. How sustainable is it in the future in a changing world? Are we prepared to take a key role in a Coalition of the Willing?

Many years ago, Mr. Dalsjö coined the Groucho Marx doctrine as a consolation for our exclusion. It referred to Groucho's statement "I don't want to be a member of a club that can accept me as a member". Dalsjö believed that Sweden as a member would demand so many exceptions and special privileges, as well as riding roughshod over various decisions, that the effect of the alliance would be undermined.

Some of these tendencies were anticipated when we were about to apply for membership. There were calls from various quarters for us to make our application conditional on not having nuclear weapons on our territory or bases, "in the same way as Norway and Denmark". This was false or ignorant historiography; Denmark and Norway had no reservations; the restrictions were decided by themselves when they became members.

There were no reservations. The government has declared that there is no reason whatsoever to have nuclear weapons in the country and has described demands from the left to legislate on this as superfluous.[2] There will be no permanently based units either, but the memorandum of understanding for host country support in 2015 and the agreement on defense cooperation between Sweden and the United States in 2023 allow for temporary basing if necessary.

Together with the Swedish Armed Forces' many years of interoperability with NATO units and joint exercises over a decade, this does not support the Groucho Marx doctrine. Rather, it supports the claim that Swedish politicians want to be best in class. But how deeply does this resonate with the people?

In 2009, Sweden issued a declaration of solidarity as a surrogate for NATO membership, a kind of separate and unilateral security guarantee. It anticipated Swedish military assistance to EU and neighboring countries. In the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences' analysis, I noted that it presupposed three F's: *Forces*, *Preparations* and *Anchoring* (with the leadership and the public) and that the first two could easily be met. The latter, however, could only be achieved through explicit alliance membership. Indeed, the Declaration of Solidarity remained unknown to the Swedish people, as reflected in the claims about the sudden

and unexpected abandonment of non-alignment without debate.

We are now slowly increasing the number of *units*. *Preparations* continue and are accelerating as we are now part of the Alliance's planning. And *the anchoring* appears satisfactory, with public support stable after the 2022 turnaround.

The change of heart may be assumed to be mainly due to the fact that the focus was then on the need for Swedish security. The fact that membership also entailed obligations to help others was less talked about. During the earlier debate, many NATO friends warned against talking about the need for Swedish membership to protect the Baltic states; it was Sweden's security that was at stake.

With membership, it became clear that Swedish defense would not only defend the homeland, and there was a somewhat dizzying debate about tasks abroad. An example of ignorance of what NATO is was heard in an advertisement for a feature in Dagens Eko:

> Should those currently doing their military service be forced into combat on behalf of NATO?

Much has been said about the Swedish identity, which is said to be a commitment to non-alignment and peaceful conflict resolution. One manifestation of this is the following excerpt from an interview in *Svenska Dagbladet* with Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas on March 22, 2024:

> SvD asks the Estonian if she has any thoughts on whether and how Sweden's entry into NATO two weeks ago might affect the otherwise hard line that other countries around the Baltic Sea, such as her Estonia and the rest of the Baltic states, but also Poland, have held towards Russia since the war began.
>
> Is there a fear that the hard line is being softened?
>
> Kallas avoids answering the question of whether Sweden can take a different line from Estonia on the war, Russia and Ukraine. Instead, she replies that the two new members, Finland and Sweden, are shifting the alliance's center of gravity northward, towards the Baltic Sea.

Why the Prime Minister avoided answering the strange question was not clear from the report. But she must have wondered. Why would Sweden want a less "hard line" against its threatening neighbor? After all, she has not been indoctrinated with the unproven "truth" of Sweden's non-alignment as a precondition for stability in northern Europe.

There are probably phantom pains from this dogma here and there. But hopefully they will be cured in friendship and practical cooperation with Nordic neighbors, with Finland as an example. But we also need to critically examine how the myth of our stabilizing role could become a sacred dogma for decades.

The author is a colonel, writer and member of KKrVA and KÖMS.

Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. Hugemark, Bo (ed.): *Till bröders hjälp. Med sikte på en svensk solidarisk strategi*, Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, 2011.

Nuclear weapons and Sweden?[1]

by Lars Wedin

Résumé

NATO's deterrence strategy is based on a combination of nuclear and conventional capabilities. This raises the question of nuclear weapons in Sweden: should Sweden join NATO's Nuclear Sharing program? The answer is no, as this would require rearming with American F-35s instead of Swedish JAS 39s. Nor does the deployment of nuclear weapons within the framework of the DCA between Sweden and the US seem reasonable given the costs and necessary authorizations. Nor is there a surplus of US nuclear weapons in Europe. Temporary basing of nuclear-certified fighter aircraft (F-35 or Rafale) is a possibility but involves risks and probably high costs. Swedish joint exercises with US bombers offer the same advantages but not these disadvantages.

AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT issue in the Swedish debate is the deployment of nuclear weapons in Sweden. Left Party leader Nooshi Dadgostar's statement: "no nuclear weapons next to my daughter's nursery school"[2] shows the need for a review of the issue. Why would NATO want to place nuclear weapons next to a kindergarten? Why would NATO want to place nuclear weapons in Sweden at all? Why would Sweden want NATO to do so? Is it technically and treaty-wise possible?

Deploying nuclear weapons in Sweden is of course a political issue. But it is also a question of strategy and technical possibilities. It is these two latter aspects that will be examined in this article.

A decision to deploy nuclear weapons in Sweden requires authorization from the Swedish government. Since NATO does not have its own nuclear weapons, decisions must also be taken by a nuclear weapon state—the United States and/or France; the United Kingdom is not an option since it only has strategic nuclear weapons based on submarines.

Military strategic foundations

Historically, a distinction has been made between strategic nuclear weapons and tactical or sub-strategic ones. Strategic nuclear weapons—with a range of around 10 000 km—can be carried by aircraft, ground-based missiles (ICBMs) or missiles on board nuclear submarines (SLBMs on SSBNs). Only Russia, China and the United States have all three variants; France has airborne and submarine-launched nuclear weapons, while the United Kingdom has only submarine-launched ones.

Strategic nuclear submarines are very difficult to detect; they therefore represent a country's second-strike capability, i.e. even if it is attacked with nuclear weapons, it has the ability to retaliate, which is crucial for international stability, as no nuclear state can attack another nuclear state with impunity without suffering major and unacceptable damage.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended for use in combat; they are also called battlefield weapons. Today, however, they are

most often referred to as sub-strategic weapons, which is an umbrella term for all nuclear weapons that are not strategic.

However, it can be argued that any action with nuclear weapons is strategic. Range, nuclear yield etc. may vary but the effect is always strategic. In France, this interpretation is generally adopted. An opposing view is that nuclear weapons that are not strategic—shorter range, lower yield payload—can create some flexibility in nuclear strategy and thus contribute to keeping the potential adversary in uncertainty.

Nuclear weapons have not been used in real terms since the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. The virtual use of nuclear weapons—for deterrence or coercion—is, however, more or less constant and has become particularly relevant in the context of the war in Ukraine.[3]

Test explosions are prohibited under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) but are carried out from time to time by North Korea and, in the near future, perhaps by Iran. Such tests are by nature virtual and intended, in addition to testing the functionality and reliability of the weapons, to underline the credibility of deterrence or threat.

There is a wide range of theories on the use of nuclear weapons. One question of great importance is whether the use of a tactical/sub-strategic nuclear weapon more or less automatically leads to total nuclear war. Since nuclear weapons have not been actually used since 1945, no one knows. In the West, it is generally assumed that any first use of nuclear weapons leads to an escalation to total nuclear war—Armageddon. The exception is, possibly, nuclear weapons deployed in the open sea.

The Russian leadership regularly reiterates that a nuclear war should not be fought and cannot be won according to the view formulated by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in early 2022.

Some data

B61: is a gravity bomb (free fall). It can be used for ground or air detonation. The most modern variant is the B61 mod 12. It is specially developed to penetrate well-protected staff sites, etc., as it has a high penetration capability. 3.5 m long, diameter 0.3 m, span 0.5 m, weight 520 kg (mod 11). Precision guidance (inertial navigation and GPS). Warhead: selectable 0.3, 5, 10 or 50 kT.

French ASMP-A—not intended as a battlefield weapon, but as a 'last warning' before an operation with strategic weapons. Weight: 840 kg, length 5.40 m, diameter 0.35 m, span 0.96 m. Range: about 500 km. Speed: Mach 3. Accuracy <10 m, inertial navigation—no homing device. Warhead: 300 kT.

There are no other nuclear weapons that could be brought onto Swedish soil in any context.

Deployment

There are three ways to place nuclear weapons on Swedish territory:

- Put them in storage.
- Carry them on an aircraft temporarily based in Sweden
- Bring them on board a warship.

The first option is part of what is known as *Nuclear Sharing, whereby* the US stores the US B61 nuclear bomb in certain European states, which in turn prepare aircraft capable of carrying this weapon. The US could also store nuclear weapons for its own use at a base in Europe, but this is not the case today. We will come back to this issue.

The second option would involve one or more fighter aircraft being based at a Swedish airbase on a more or less temporary basis,

carrying nuclear weapons. Current weapons are the B61 mentioned above, and the French ASMP-A missile carried by the *Rafale* fighter. American B-52 or B-1 bombers (which are no longer nuclear-certified) have such a range that they do not need to be based in Europe.

Among naval forces, nuclear weapons are primarily carried on board strategic nuclear submarines—SSBNs. These never enter a port except for their special bases. An SSBN is physically too large for the Baltic Sea and, since their protection is based on non-detection, entry through the Baltic Sea outlets is impossible. No Western attack submarines carry nuclear weapons today. The only Western surface ship to carry nuclear weapons is the French *Charles de Gaulle,* whose aircraft can carry ASMP-A. It is inconceivable that she would enter the narrow Baltic Sea; it is also doubtful whether she can get under the bridges over the Sound or the Great Belt. American surface ships do not currently carry nuclear weapons.

However, the Republicans are considering developing a ship-borne cruise missile with a nuclear warhead, the SLCM-N. This would be carried by attack submarines but could probably also be carried on board surface ships. US attack submarines are also too large to enter the Baltic Sea. However, the US Navy opposes such arming. It should be noted that during the Cold War, some visiting US Navy warships almost certainly carried nuclear weapons.

Storage rack

Technical conditions

It must be emphasized that a nuclear weapon is not handled just like that. Security is rigorous for deployment, transportation, personnel and storage.

The then head of the US Navy, Admiral Gilday said[4] to *Defense News* about the above-mentioned SLCM-N: "Having served on a nuclear-capable surface ship in the late 1980s, that mission does not come without a cost. There is a significant amount of attention that has to be paid to any platform that carries that type of weapon in terms of training, in terms of sustainability, in terms of reliability, in terms of the force's readiness to be able to use and be able to conduct that mission".

For an aircraft to carry a particular weapon—for example, a nuclear weapon such as the B61—the aircraft must be adapted to carry it. There have to be weapons stations to carry the bomb, but just as important is the integration into the aircraft's weapon systems—computers, etc. This requires access to precise and secret data about the weapon in question. Furthermore, the pilot and ground crew must be trained and certified.

The B61 can be carried by a certified version of the Tornado and F-16 aircraft, which are now being replaced in the first instance by one or more versions of the US-produced F-35 aircraft, which must also be certified. Other US airborne nuclear weapons are carried by the B-52 and B-2. ASMP-A is carried by the outgoing Mirage 2000N as well as the Rafale F3 and Rafale M (aircraft carrier version). The JAS 39 would have to be modified to carry nuclear weapons, requiring access to highly classified data on the respective systems.

In continental Europe, aircraft are generally based in dedicated shelters.

When the weapon is not mounted on the aircraft—i.e. normally—it must be stored. NATO does not have any nuclear weapons of its own, so these bombs are under US control under a system called WS3. It consists of a weapons storage vault (WSV) and electronic monitoring and control systems. A vault can

hold up to four nuclear weapons and, when in the down position, provides ballistic protection through its hardened lock and reinforced side walls. The WS3 system allows storage directly under the aircraft intended to carry the bombs. The placement inside the aircraft's shelter increases the survivability of the weapons in case of attack. It also prevents a (potential) enemy from monitoring the preparations to use the weapons by satellite or other reconnaissance. The electronic protection systems include various classified sensors, together with electronic data transmission and security equipment such as video, motion detectors, closed circuit television and thermal imaging cameras.[5] The personnel managing the stores are specialized in this activity: Munition Support Squadrons (MUNSS) are geographically separated units under the command of the US Air Force located in Europe. They are co-located at several main NATO bases and work in conjunction with the host nation's NATO affiliated flotilla. Their strength varies between 125 and 150 military personnel at each base.

The mission of MUNSS is to receive, stockpile, maintain, store and control the U.S. munitions assigned to NATO, currently the B61. By order of the U.S. President, MUNSS provides the munitions to the Commander of the NATO Flotilla.

Western nuclear weapons (American, British and French) are equipped with a fuse called PAL—*Permissive Action Link*—which prevents detonation of the weapon unless the responsible commander has decided to act. For the B61 in Europe, these codes are the responsibility of the US Air Force—so the bombs cannot be deployed unless the US gives its consent.

In parentheses, the British submarine-based nuclear weapons have PALs operated by US Navy personnel.

France has a similar system. Here, a special unit within the gendarmerie—la gendarmerie de la sécurité des armements nucléaires (GSAN)—is responsible for the security and government control of these weapons

It is not known what measures would need to be taken to temporarily base US F-35 or Rafale aircraft with nuclear weapons in peacetime. In any case, special surveillance by US and French personnel would be required, in addition to ground personnel for clearance etc.

Nuclear Sharing

Of the three NATO nuclear powers (France, the United Kingdom and the United States), only the United States has provided weapons for *Nuclear Sharing*. As of November 2009, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey are part of this program. These countries are also believed to have aircraft with crews certified to deploy earlier versions of the B61. The idea is therefore that the US will stockpile and otherwise manage these bombs until deployment orders are given, at which point they will be fitted to the host country's aircraft. These arrangements will have to be reviewed in the near future when earlier versions of the B61 are replaced by a new version B61-12. Until this has been done and new aircraft have been certified, etc. the system is unlikely to be able to penetrate Russian air defenses.

It should be emphasized that Nuclear Sharing involves the host country storing US nuclear weapons and deploying them with US permission.

DCA[6]

An interesting question is whether the DCA between Sweden and the US allows the latter to store nuclear weapons for its own

use, outside the Nuclear Sharing Program, in Sweden.

However, this is hardly possible. The US would have to build up the same infrastructure as in the Nuclear Sharing case at one or more Swedish air bases. Under the agreement, building permits and Swedish authorization are required to bring material into these "bases".[7] The likelihood that these permits would be granted is small.

Treaty conditions

The treaty conditions for the *Nuclear Sharing System are* regulated by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) from the early 1970s, which has been ratified by all the states concerned, as well as by Russia and China. A central interpretation of this treaty made by NATO is that it ceases to apply in the event of war. Only then is it possible for the US to allow NATO to activate the system. Until then, cooperation is limited to exercises (e.g. to protect nuclear weapons systems before and during deployment) and training activities in which all NATO states can participate, as well as planning activities within the framework of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group, of which Sweden is also a member.

Sweden has ratified the NPT; can Sweden still participate in NATO's Nuclear Sharing Program? Can Sweden temporarily base aircraft with nuclear weapons? The answer is yes to both questions as long as the weapons are controlled by one of the recognized nuclear weapon states; practically the US or France. It is not prohibited to make installations in Sweden that make it possible to receive nuclear weapons. However, it is not permitted for Sweden to receive and control nuclear weapons, for example on a converted JAS 39.

'Article I [of the NPT] prohibits the transfer of nuclear weapons, but not of nuclear weapon delivery systems.[8] It does not prohibit consultation and planning on nuclear defense between NATO members, nor does it prohibit "dual-key" arrangements. But it does prohibit transfers to a multilateral entity unless that entity has a federal identity with a unified foreign policy, i.e. a federal Europe could succeed the British or French nuclear status, but NATO could not." "It [the Treaty] does not deal with arrangements for the deployment of nuclear weapons within Allied territory because this does not involve any transfer of nuclear weapons or control over them unless and until a decision is taken to go to war, at which time the Treaty is no longer binding."[9]

Discussion and debate

The storage of nuclear weapons in Sweden under the *Nuclear Sharing* Program would require major efforts in terms of fortification and other protection. The B61 could theoretically be placed in Sweden, provided that WS3-type protection and handling of American personnel (MUNNS) are provided. A conversion of the JAS 39 to a nuclear weapon-carrying version is extremely unlikely—the US would in all probability prefer to sell the F-35 to Sweden. However, such a sale is also highly unlikely given the cost of the aircraft, its technical problems, and SAAB.

Swedish participation in NATO's *Nuclear Sharing* Program is therefore hardly conceivable, since we will continue to use JAS 39s, and these aircraft will not be converted into nuclear weapons carriers. Moreover, participation would be costly.

However, accession would not constitute a violation of the NPT.

The DCA could theoretically be used to stockpile the B61 on behalf of the US in Sweden. But this would require the same in-

frastructure and surveillance as above. This would require permission from Sweden, including a building permit. It is hardly likely that such would be granted. Furthermore, the B61 is currently only intended for *Nuclear Sharing*. There are no other American nuclear weapons in Europe today.

It is difficult to see that stockpiling the B61 would bring any decisive military strategic advantages given Sweden's membership of NATO and our DCA agreement with the US.

Any other nuclear weapons stockpile "near my daughter's kindergarten" is impossible if Sweden does not leave the NPT.

Temporary basing of nuclear-armed aircraft in Sweden

What would be the operational benefits of basing F-35 with B61 or Rafale with ASMP-A?

Virtual

Temporarily basing the F-35 with the B61 nuclear weapon in peacetime would show the United States' unreserved support for Sweden in a crisis situation (*linkage)*. However, the aircraft does not have to carry nuclear weapons—it is enough that Russia (no other threatening state is involved) believes that the aircraft may have nuclear weapons. But for Russia to believe this, the same protective and logistical measures are required as in the real case.

What these measures are or what they would cost is not known.

The advantage of such a basing is that Russia's decision-making situation would be complicated.

A basing of nuclear-certified Rafale (not all Rafale are) would bring the same benefits.

One objection is that the Swedish Air Force is practicing escorting American B-52 and B-1B *Lancer* bombers in Swedish airspace. Aerial refueling from American KC-135s has also been practiced. In principle, these exercises send the same signal without the aircraft having to be based in Sweden, with all that this would entail in terms of the need for protection and logistics.

There is also an obvious risk of demonstrations of a more or less militant nature at a base in Sweden. This could undermine Swedish credibility.

In real terms

The F-35 o r Rafale based in Sweden would have a longer range into northern Russia compared to a base in central Europe. Both weapons would be particularly suited to combat hardened command posts. Furthermore, the threat of a nuclear weapon would force the enemy to disperse to avoid excessive casualties and thus be easier to defeat by conventional means.

One objection is that northern Russia can be fought by ships in the North Atlantic. A counterargument is that basing them in Sweden would mean a new threat direction. Moreover, no warships, except the *Charles de Gaulle*, carry nuclear weapons on board; and the ship would be likely to operate not in the North Atlantic but in the Mediterranean in the event of war.

Basing the F-35 or *Rafale* on Gotland would considerably increase the number of missions per unit of time against the Baltic States—nuclear or conventional—but it would also be a very vulnerable base. The Russian ability to scout for take-offs on Gotland and then increase readiness would also simplify air defense for Russia, compared to using rear bases with greater uncertainty in direction and time.

A fundamental objection is that forward basing on Swedish territory goes against all the principles of air power. Aircraft (and in this case also weapons) are most vulnerable

on the ground. In the air, they have protection, primarily through movement and the effects this creates on the time factor. Range for strategic resources is a problem that is most easily solved by aerial refueling, where aerial refueling over Swedish territory, for example, provides significantly better range than basing in Sweden would do. Aerial refueling is a limited resource, but undertakings of this type are perceived to have the highest priority.

The B61 is a gravity bomb and thus must be dropped close to the target. An operation would require extensive support from conventional forces to succeed, as it would have to penetrate Russian ground-based air defenses and other elements of their area defense—A2/AD *(Anti-Access/Area Denial)*. Opening a corridor into a target area would require very large fighter and SEAD/DEAD *(Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses/ Destruction of Enemy Air Defenses)* resources to combat the offensive air defenses of the target area. Furthermore, such a rapid reload cycle with nuclear weapons is less likely to be needed, not least in view of all the other air resources required for a composite enterprise of this complexity, with consequent planning and coordination requirements.

The Rafale with ASMP-A would require less protection and SEAD/DEAD because of its long range. On the other hand, this weapon is intended for a "last warning" before a strategic nuclear strike and not for a prolonged campaign. Thus, there is hardly any need for T-basing for reloading.

Basing bombers (B-1, B-52) in Sweden in war is hardly a viable option because they do not have the ability to disperse and move as smaller fighters do. The bomb load in turn would require extensive measures for protection etc.

However, temporarily basing fighter aircraft forward can be interesting for shortening deployment and readiness times, but it relies on being able to cope with dispersal and mobility if it is to survive on the ground. Above all, forward basing is interesting from the perspective of time for approach and return flights and reloading. But these advantages apply to normal conventional weapon loads that do not require the protective measures required by nuclear weapons and are not hampered by the B61's requirement to be dropped close to the target. It is for these reasons that Sweden is trying to put together a strong Nordic concept with Swedish JAS 39s and F-35s from the other Nordic countries, as well as possible supplies from other states.

Executive summary

Stockpiling nuclear weapons in Sweden, which in practice would require Sweden to participate in NATO's Nuclear Sharing program, seems unreasonable. It is inconceivable that Sweden would convert JAS39s into nuclear weapons carriers or that Sweden would buy American F-35s.

Temporary basing of nuclear-certified fighters (F-35 or Rafale) to show solidarity with Sweden is possible and would complicate Russian decision-making but carries risks and likely high costs. Swedish joint exercises with US bombers offer the same advantages but not these disadvantages.

The wartime basing of nuclear-capable F-35s or Rafales would bring limited benefits but also significant drawbacks. An attack on Russian territory with the B61 bomb on the F-35 would require very extensive operational, tactical and logistical measures. An attack with the Rafale armed with ASMP-A also offers no advantages given the French doctrine of not using nuclear weapons for battlefield warfare.

On the other hand, basing conventional fighter aircraft in Sweden could be important in creating a faster deployment cycle. With Sweden in NATO, the entire Nordic-Baltic area should probably be integrated in terms of air warfare (reconnaissance, air defense, attack, etc.).

The author is a Commander, a member of the KÖMS, KKrVA and an associate member of the Académie de marine (Paris).

Notes

1. This article has been prepared in consultation with Members Lars-Erik Lundin and Carl Bergqvist and convener Jean Dufourcq. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. "Dadgostars svar – efter kritiserade kärnvapenuttalandet", *Expressen*, 2022-04-28, *https://www.expressen.se/tv/nyheter/dadgostars-svar-efter-kritiserade-karnvapenuttalandet/*.
3. See article "Strategisk signalering och militär diplomati" in *KKrVAHT*.
4. Eckstein, Megan: "The Navy doesn't want nukes on ships, despite interest from some combatant commanders", *DefenseNews*, 2022-05-13, *https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/05/13/the-navy-doesnt-want-nukes-on-ships-despite-interest-from-some-combatant-commanders/*.
5. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weapons_Storage_and_Security_System*.
6. The Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) is a bilateral military cooperation agreement between Sweden and the United States. The agreement gives the US unrestricted access to 17 Swedish military bases, parts of which are reserved exclusively for the US.
7. Dalsjö, Robert: *Build it and they will come? Det svenska försvarssamarbetsavtalet med USA*, FOI Memo 8503, 2024-04-16.
8. Unlike the previous INF Treaty.
9. Donnelly, Brian: "The Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation articles I, II and VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", *web.archive.org/web/20090105200406/http://www.opanal.org/Articles/cancun/can-Donnelly.htm*.

Swedish total defense and NATO membership[I]

Problems to be solved and opportunities to be seized

by Björn Körlof

Résumé

This article focuses on a few different aspects of the Swedish concept of total defense and its possible implications following Sweden's membership in NATO in February 2024. However, the article mainly deals with questions pertaining to the civilian part of the total defense that arise after Sweden joined the alliance. The first aspect analysed is that the Swedish concept of total defence, for a long time, was closely linked to the Swedish security policy posture of non-alignment with the intention to stay neutral in case of war between the big powers in Europe. This posture necessitated a very high degree of self-reliance, both regarding military means and civilian perseverance as well as an organization of the total defence that could—in case of an armed attack—lead coordinated military and civilian efforts to defend the country, also in different parts of Sweden at the same time. After these introductory descriptions, the article focuses on some of the most essential requirements for the civilian part of total defense that arise from NATO's Seven Baseline Requirements for its member states. Therefore, the article deals with the importance of secure leadership and command in peacetime and wartime of the different organizational levels of public administration and the needs within the area of civilian protection. The article also remarks on the need to analyze closely the important logistics questions that arise from NATO's host nation support policies and their applications to Swedish transport facilities and other support functions, which must be considered in a comprehensive Nordic view. At the end of the article the author offers some very short remarks on the question of protection against nuclear weapons and the upcoming discussion in Sweden on nuclear weapons on Swedish soil. Since questions of nuclear deterrence are considered in a special part of the SV-A-R project the risk of warfare with the use of nuclear weapons is therefore here only briefly analyzed with the view on how to protect the population and essential functions in the society in case of attacks with such weapons in Sweden.

HOW THE DIFFERENT elements of OUR total defense can work in a NATO context is the theme of this article, which, however, can only focus on a few salient factors which most obviously need to be rethought and, in some respects, also considered for action.

The background of total defense in the Cold War and beyond

Limitations of the article

Swedish membership of NATO turns several ingrained ideas about the background to how our total defense is structured, and how it is supposed to work, more or less upside

down. Many questions need to be addressed, particularly in the field of civilian defense, which have so far only been discussed very loosely. However, it is likely that the development of the civilian elements of our total defense, which is now being pushed forward, is to a large extent possible, with various modifications, to reconcile with our membership of NATO.

In this article, therefore, a clear priority is given to issues that primarily have a bearing on the civilian part of total defense. This is not least due to the fact that the military has been cooperating with NATO in various forms for several years and that membership of the Alliance does not therefore entail the same radical rethinking for the Armed Forces as will be the case in important respects in civilian defense.

What is primarily important for military defense concerns the build-up of a considerably larger number of wartime units, as well as important issues concerning the protection of transport to the Swedish west coast, across Norway and across the Baltic Sea, and logistics with various support resources, which are dependent on NATO's operational war planning. This planning is of course in its important parts surrounded by secrecy and cannot be penetrated in an article of this nature. However, there are of course several important coordination issues between military and civil defense that will be affected by NATO membership.

It should be emphasized, however, that the civilian capacity-building efforts now being planned would have had to be carried out regardless of NATO membership, i.e. as a necessary consequence of the earlier disarmament and the Russian threat to the entire Nordic and Baltic region.

To understand how total defense was originally conceived, as well as how it now needs to be adapted, it is necessary to first take a brief look back to gain insight into what it is that now needs to be revised, mainly in terms of thinking, but also partly in terms of operations.

The previous security policy doctrine guided total defense thinking

Swedish total defense thinking emerged as a result of three main factors. In various respects, all of these factors will be partially altered when we now enter the NATO community.

The first important factor is, of course, the fundamental change in the basic doctrine of Swedish security policy, non-alignment in peace, which aimed to ensure that we would not automatically be drawn into war and thereby, by seeking to avoid this "automaticity", create the conditions for adopting conventional neutrality in the event of war in our world. It is important to be clear here that "non-alignment" does not have any binding meaning in international law, which a declaration of neutrality has in relation to parties at war with each other. Neutrality is legally binding and requires the neutral state to adopt a number of attitudes towards the warring parties, including that none of them should be favored over the other.

The Swedish view was that it was completely hopeless in terms of credibility to be able to adopt a neutral position in the event of war in the world around us if the country was previously bound by membership of a military alliance. Our security policy doctrine was determined not least by concern for Finland's sensitive position and relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviet refusal to include Finland in the Warsaw Pact was probably due, at least to a significant extent, to the Soviet realization that this would have meant that Sweden would have

joined NATO. This would have led to several negative military-geographical and military-political complications for the Soviet positions in Northern Europe.

These various negative effects for Russia are now coming to the fore with the accession of both Finland and Sweden to NATO. However, these countries' NATO membership is a direct consequence of Russia's unwillingness to respect the European legal security order after the invasion of Ukraine and the explicit threats against Sweden and Finland. If Russia had wanted to maintain the European security order established after the fall of the Soviet Union and build on closer and trusting cooperation with the EU and NATO, it is not certain that Finnish and Swedish membership of NATO would have been as necessary to implement as it has now been with Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The credibility of our Cold War security policy doctrine demanded, as the government said, that our country would not, even under serious political pressure or threat, abandon non-alignment. The credibility of the realism of this firmly held policy—both internally and externally—therefore required not only repeated serious declarations, but not least that our country in virtually all important respects would be able to cope on its own in the event of high alert and war, when we intended to be neutral. That our neutrality stance in the event of war in the world around us could be trusted—i.e. that we actually intended to and really could take care of ourselves until we were attacked—was seen as a fundamental part of our security policy doctrine.

But if we were attacked, of course, both non-alignment and attempts to remain neutral would fail, and we would have to choose wartime alliances at our own discretion for the ultimate good of our country. That such a situation of aggression could arise during the Cold War and that we would then strive to be part of a Western community was seen as almost self-evident, and was certainly understood by the Soviet Union, which explains its nevertheless cautious attitude towards Finland. The fact that Sweden was maintaining relations with the West that could provide rapid military assistance if the Soviets did not respect the relative stability of the Nordic solution was certainly known in the Soviet Union. But it is also well known that the Soviets carried out extensive intelligence activities against our country to try to clarify whether our non-alignment and neutrality stance could really be trusted and how the Soviets could actually attack Sweden militarily in the event of various military complications.[2]

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the liberation of the Baltic States, Poland and East Germany and their integration into the EU and NATO, and, not least, Finland's withdrawal from the Friendship and Assistance Pact with the Soviet Union, the security and military policy map in our immediate area was radically redrawn. When, following Russia's attack on Ukraine, Finland and Sweden also applied for membership of NATO, these restructurings of the security situation around us were naturally of such a radical nature that the previous Swedish security policy doctrine appeared to be completely out of touch with reality.

Our total defense, which has thus been built up over a long period of time as a decisive support for a previous security policy stance, must now be reassessed in the light of a completely new security policy, a policy based on solidarity-based Alliance participation in both military and civilian operations, and which provides a credible deterrent against any attack on any Alliance member. In this context, an attack on a member of the Alliance in our immediate area is obviously the first point of departure for planning, in terms of specifically targeting various mili-

tary and civilian support operations. But an attack on an Alliance member further away from us will also test our solidarity with such a member, which must also be part of our mental preparedness, and which can also lead to concrete efforts to support such a member, as we expect corresponding solidarity from them if we are attacked.

Experiences of the two world wars

A second important factor, in addition to the fundamental security policy base, influencing the build-up of total defense was our country's experience of the two world wars. They showed that no part of society could be expected to be left outside the effects of war. In many areas of society, wars in our vicinity could also have profound and serious consequences, even if our country was not involved in the war effort. This was the case, for example, if large numbers of refugees were to arrive in our country or if we were to be cut off from supplies in key areas on which the supply of people and our defense efforts depended. Experience, not least from the various complications of the Second World War, showed that such effects could occur at short notice and have long-lasting and profound consequences.

An important part of our stance during the Second World War was determined by our heavy dependence on important trade with the outside world. Not least our dependence on oil made it necessary to negotiate agreements with both the Axis powers and the Allies on the conditions for maintaining trade with different countries on reasonably equal terms between the various belligerents, which was required if neutrality towards these parties was to prevail. This was of course complicated by the fact that the two belligerents had established various blockades and barriers against each other in the North Sea and Skagerrak, which Sweden had to be able to pass through without risk of hostilities. After extensive negotiations with the two warring sides, this led to the so-called merchant shipping, which was the maritime trade that Sweden conducted during the war, mainly to and from Gothenburg. Almost 80 ships were involved in this traffic, 10 of which were sunk during the war.

The realization from the war that our oil dependency was so critical led to the need to create the conditions for extensive emergency storage of oil in caverns, which continued throughout most of the Cold War; a prominent example of our country's need to establish credibility for our security policy.

The experience of the two great wars also showed that modern war was total in the sense that it could affect society as a whole. Such effects led, among other things, to the realization that bombing attacks on urban areas could have devastating effects on the civilian population in the form of widespread casualties and large refugee flows. But the experience of the wars was also that, as technology, trade and so on developed through various interdependencies within the business community, society had also become increasingly vulnerable to various disruptions. These purely physical and material effects of a war, into which we risked being drawn, would therefore require a defense that included defenses against severe impacts in all parts of society. These comprehensive analyses led to a concept of total defense which, in addition to purely military defense, came to include all the essential civilian dimensions of society.

The most important elements of our total defense structure during the Cold War concerned the protection of the civilian population, but also the supply of food, energy, necessary inputs in important areas of so-

ciety and—not least—information to the population, showed previously neglected efforts during the wars. A new psychological defense was also created immediately after the Second World War in the light of the wartime experience of the authoritarian states' extensive propaganda activities.

However, civilian medical preparedness was also built up with the support of compulsory medical care, as were preparations to greatly increase the number of beds in various peacetime hospitals and additional so-called emergency hospitals. Medical transportation, especially from northern Sweden to southern Sweden, was also planned, not least with medical transport trains.

The civilian elements of society's total defense therefore needed to cover all major societal activities, including large parts of the business community, and preparations needed to focus on being able to meet almost any conceivable military threat, but also the effects of prolonged lockdown.

The security policy doctrine therefore required such extensive mobilization of various resources that the realm would survive without external assistance, which was of the utmost importance for the credibility of the non-aligned stance. This in turn required extensive planning, training and exercises that coordinated military and civilian activities throughout the country, not least so that the military could receive extensive civilian support in various important operational areas in the defense of Sweden.

This latter aspect of coordination of total defense meant, among other things, that the military higher regional division into military areas needed intensive and close cooperation with a counterpart on the civilian side, which required a powerful state civilian decision-making body above the counties. This created a structure of responsibility on the military and civilian side that could carry out the necessary coordination of activities at the central, higher regional and lower regional levels in the form of the county administrative boards and the local level through the municipalities. All these levels on the civilian side required a wartime organized form of command, which in turn required wartime deployment of large groups of competent personnel to staff the wartime organizations. These levels of responsibility needed continuous exercise activities where different plans at the various levels were tested and updated in the light of experience from different war games. This involved all key actors, public and private, in total defense activities at all levels of society.

Since we could not make ourselves dependent on other countries for our supply of munitions, it was also necessary to build up an extensive and qualified munitions industry which, independent of other states, could supply the Swedish Armed Forces with domestically produced munitions, and could produce all the important weapon systems according to the needs of our military defense. This gradually led to the emergence of large and heavy branches of the munitions industry, including combat aircraft, combat vehicles, combat ships, submarines, artillery systems and ammunition production. These important industries still exist and will play important roles in the build-up of our defense capability that must now take place in the years to come, as well as playing a role for several other NATO states that demand various weapons systems that Sweden produces and which, among other things, have already played an important role in Ukraine's defense war.

The entire total defense, i.e. both its military and civilian components, was to be supported by extensive military conscription for all men, as well as civilian conscription and compulsory service for other needs outside

military defense. The government also supported extensive voluntary defense activities that included training and service, mainly in the Home Guard.

Planning, training and exercise activities in peacetime can therefore also be said to have been total, as all of our legally designed wartime preparedness legislation was assumed to be taken into account in all of these activities. Thinking in terms of high readiness and total defense in terms of all types of activities that included societal resources that could be needed during high readiness and war (human, material and over a long period of time), was thus seen as necessary for overall deterrence and credibility reasons. It is well documented that our total defense exercises were closely monitored by the Soviets during the Cold War.

Administrative preparedness, i.e. the comprehensive legal regulation of total defense activities, both in peace and during high alert, was considered a fundamental part of total defense activities. In particular, the comprehensive legal regime that could come into force at high readiness and which entailed far-reaching changes in powers and obligations throughout society (e.g. the right to prescribe, disposal, rationing, removal and destruction, forms of duty, etc.)

Finally, a third factor was also psychological. A resource mobilization that encompassed all important societal activities therefore also needed a total effort by the population, and a mental attitude that meant a high level of willingness to defend and resistance to the threats. The forms of compulsory service and the extensive support for voluntary activities were also intended, not least, to signal to an aggressive foreign power that an attack would be met by total popular resistance, ultimately with preparations for the so-called "free war", i.e. a form of guerrilla activity.

The whole background to the Swedish concept of total defense thus has its original basis in a completely different security policy context than the one we have now entered. Deterring attacks was the natural starting point throughout the Cold War, but deterrence in principle only referred to attacks on our country. What would have happened to our security policy doctrine during the Cold War if the Soviets had attacked Norway or Denmark or Finland is not entirely clear, however, since our security policy was based on a form of 'status quo' respected by the major powers in Northern Europe.

It should be remembered, however, that when the Soviets attacked Finland in November 1939, Sweden did not declare itself neutral, but rather as a 'non-combatant' in order to enable extensive military aid to Finland. That a military attack by the Soviets during the Cold War against one of our Nordic neighbors would have put a particularly severe strain on our security policy doctrine at the time must be taken for granted, and in retrospect it seems more or less unrealistic that this doctrine could have been maintained under such conditions.

Many questions thus arise about the fact that our way of thinking in terms of total defense in terms of the underlying security policy now needs to be revised and how the new security policy conditions may affect our total defense.

Disarmament and rearmament!

As the Cold War began to wane in the late 1980s and early 1990s, various activities within the civilian and military components of total defense were gradually scaled back. The government's assessment was that the risk of a serious security policy crisis was very low, and that if such a crisis were to

develop, there would be plenty of time to regain defense capabilities, both on the civilian and military side. Military defense units were rapidly disbanded, conscription was used up by fewer and fewer individuals and was eventually declared "dormant". Personnel supply was based on recruitment procedures, and the focus of military defense was primarily on maintaining certain competencies and the ability to operate with certain resources in foreign missions.

In the early 1990s, extensive planning and activities in large parts of the civilian part of total defense gradually began to be phased out, as did large parts of the resilience in various supply areas that had been built up through the storage of various supplies and the ability to change or continue important production.

However, the basic legal structure was retained, and the statutes were published annually in a compilation volume of statutes that is still referred to as the *Totalförsvarets författningshandbok*. The administrative preparedness can thus be said to have been retained as a kind of legal framework. But the authorities ÖCB, the functional authorities, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, the Swedish Board for Psychological Defence and the civilian commanders' organization were dismantled and only some of their activities were incorporated, in a greatly reduced form, first in the authority that was named the Swedish Emergency Management Agency, and then in the authority that came to be called the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). Significant parts of the preparedness activities of the county administrative boards, the municipalities and the county councils were also closed down, as were the links between the public sector and the business sector, mainly in the form of the war-critical K-companies.

This dismantling of virtually the entire civilian part of total defense meant in turn that large parts of the knowledge that existed within total defense in terms of planning, training and exercising for high readiness and defense of our country were gradually lost, and that the connection between the, still valid, legal structure and the actual content of the activities for the needs of total defense, dissolved. However, the dismantling also meant that purely human and material resources for the needs of total defense were dismantled, which meant that shortages of various personnel needs or supplies also became significantly more difficult to manage in peacetime crises.

When, in 2015, following Russia's violation of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, the government decided to resume planning for war in total defense, it turned out that this "resumption" required extensive investigations and, not least, major efforts to rebuild the public responsibility structure, carry out sharp planning, enter into agreements with the business community to achieve security of supply, achieve sustainable personnel supply by activating conscription and other forms of duty, start training and exercise aimed at increased preparedness for war, etc.

These efforts are still not nearly complete after almost nine years since the decision to reactivate was taken. It thus turned out to be very easy to disarm but extremely time-consuming and costly to rebuild the various important elements of total defense.

It is thus a fundamental fact that Swedish total defence was built up over a long period of time in the 20th century, largely dismantled in the early 2000s, and then started to be rebuilt more tangibly from 2018 within a security policy framework that, as late as 2022, when we applied for NATO membership together with Finland, was still—in

principle—characterized by non-alignment with the aim of being able to assert Swedish integrity and independence in a position of neutrality in the event of war in our surrounding world.

Total defense has therefore largely begun to be built up with the support of domestic capabilities, both military and civilian, in order to create credibility for the basic security policy stance, although our membership of the EU and other important changes in technology and trade have strongly influenced important parts of this new build-up. However, it is a fact that the total defense decision taken as late as 2021 was based on a security policy doctrine of Swedish military policy independence, even though increasing cooperation with NATO had begun several years ago.

Overall NATO stance towards Russia

Membership of NATO now means that non-alignment has completely disappeared as an instrument of security policy, and instead our participation in an alliance in a spirit of solidarity will be decisive for how our total defense will be built up and function. Total defense must therefore now be focused and built up to such a strength that it helps to deter attacks against the alliance as a whole.

This means that no part of the Alliance should be perceived as having such political, military or civilian weaknesses that Russia could be tempted to test the credibility of the Alliance by attacking in various forms an Alliance member perceived as weak or behaving in such a way that other Alliance members would have political difficulties in providing solidarity support.

Such political difficulties may arise from domestic political developments in several NATO states leading to increased ideological polarization and difficulties in building consensus decisions in the NATO circle and blocking important decisions.

Virtually all NATO and EU states assume that for the foreseeable future we must assume that Russia will pose a very serious threat to the security and integrity of Western Europe, although the threat may vary over time and affect different states in different ways.

President Putin has transformed the Russian economy and business sector into a more or less clear war economy in the long term, while at the same time the supply of personnel to the armed forces is being directed towards an increasingly rigorous recruitment of soldiers for a growing military war machine. The long-term growth of Russian warfare capabilities must be assessed as alarming and strong.

At the same time, virtually all EU and NATO states also state that Russia must not be allowed to win the war in Ukraine and that all Western states must therefore prepare for long-term and strong support for Ukraine's resistance to the Russian attack, which must also not be allowed to end in a frozen conflict with Russian occupation of large Ukrainian areas.

Long-term support for Ukraine and the prevention of a frozen conflict with continued Russian occupation and growing threats to other states therefore seem necessary for Western Europe to seek to master. There is also a risk that under a new Trump administration, the United States will not serve as a wholehearted support against Russian power politics. Cracks in Western European unity towards Russia also surface from time to time, posing significant problems if they become protracted and manifest in unwillingness to support Ukraine. Such disagreements only serve to support Russia's long-term power ambitions.

The chances of domestic political conditions in Russia changing in the direction of

less authoritarian rule and a transition to more democracy and greater freedom for different opinions are considered by most to be very small. It seems naive and unrealistic to base a Western European policy on a change in Russian attitudes, based on hopes of a change in power relations within Russia leading to a less authoritarian and less imperialist regime.

It is therefore of great importance that NATO and the EU can agree on a long-term sustainable strategy for a Russia policy. An important cornerstone of such a policy has now been presented by the NATO Secretary General, which aims to ensure that NATO can agree on strong support for Ukraine for a long time to come.

It is vital that the West does not allow itself to be misled and succumb to Russian threats. The resources of the West—and only in Europe—have considerably greater economic and military resources than Russia. In addition, there is a well-developed and technologically strong defense industry. A long-term sustainable development of military defense that can also support Ukraine in the long term is also available if cohesion and directional decisions can be taken within the EU and NATO.

The transition of key industries and supplies in key product areas to reduced dependence on Russia and China is underway and may lead to increased autonomy in Western European decision-making regarding strategic security of supply.

However, political stability in the West is subject to tendencies of ideological tensions within countries that may lead to increased political uncertainty with difficulties in achieving long-term sustainable policy decisions within the EU and NATO circle.

It is necessary to pursue a common Western policy aimed at militarily and also economically containing—and deterring—Russia's aggressiveness for the foreseeable future and having the resilience to repel any Russian attack by military means, while providing Ukraine with the economic and military strength it needs to ensure that Russia is not allowed to win this ongoing war.

It is essential that resilience must also be demonstrated in active and robust decisions that show that Western states are prepared to make significant sacrifices now and in the foreseeable future to achieve the capacity to withstand and repel attacks should they occur. The concept of deterrence should only work if the combined civilian and military capability of NATO and the EU is strong enough to provide credible resilience. Credibility ultimately rests on the ability to meet nuclear threats with our own nuclear weapons capability.

It is therefore necessary to gradually develop such economic stability and self-sufficiency within the West that does not involve dependencies with Russia or China.

It is necessary for the political leadership of the various Western countries, as well as the EU and NATO leadership, to constantly reiterate that Russian aggression will not pay off and that the West will not tire in its support for Ukraine. It is necessary to clearly reiterate to the Russian political leadership in every context where it is possible, that a Russian hope for fatigue or attrition will not succeed.

It is necessary to closely monitor Russian influence activities, not least the threatening rhetoric, aimed at undermining confidence in this Western posture and to counter this undermining influence activity in various ways. Means and methods to counter Russian propaganda need to be developed so that the West can counter it with well-designed and credible countermeasures.

It is necessary that the EU's fundamental democratic principles and the rule of law are

highlighted and made important elements in political declarations, discussed in the media, etc., but also anchored in the entire education system in Western Europe.

It is necessary to seek to support in various ways various actors, outside and inside Russia, who seek to work for democratic Russian development and an end to the war in Ukraine. Such support must take into account the danger that these actors may face from the Russian regime if they work against its objectives.

It is necessary to continue to publish in the West easy-to-read, but factual literature on Russian history, the rise of authoritarianism and the undemocratic features of Russian society. They should also be published in Russian, as there is still ample opportunity for Russian citizens to order such literature from the West.

It is necessary, as far as possible, to establish contact and public dialogue with various representatives of Russian culture, science, etc. and to seek to publicize such dialogue with a view to highlighting the points on which different views between the West and Russia diverge and on what factual grounds they do so.

Total defense in a new formal context. Our form of government and some other legal issues on how to deal with threats

Total defense in a NATO context

According to the National Defense Act, total defense includes both military activities (military defense) and civilian activities (civil defense). From a NATO perspective, however, the two areas of activity within total defense are now clearly focused on a war that means that our country, with its total defense, becomes responsible for being able to credibly deter attacks against ourselves in the first place, but which basically requires the ability to create deterrence together with the other members of the alliance, ultimately with nuclear weapons to be able to ward off attacks against NATO, seen against the alliance as a whole.

This change in our security policy thus entails not only an actual reorientation of the concrete activities of total defense in various areas, but also, and not least, a fundamental reorientation of our mental attitude to why we have a total defense and how it should be used in the new security policy context. This "context" is now very much a question of the threat situation in our immediate area, where our solidarity with our Nordic neighbors and with the Baltic States and Poland can be directly put to the test in concrete terms, and where the readiness and resources of our total defense may be needed.

Five different areas that may have a bearing on these issues are discussed below.

This applies first to various legal issues related to the law of preparedness, but not least to the requirements that NATO imposes on its alliance members (the so-called Seven Baseline Requirements), and this article focuses on some of these areas. It concerns our ability to exercise command and, in addition to the highest government bodies' ability to exercise command, it also affects to a large extent the responsibility structure for civil defense within the public sector, which was decided as recently as two years ago. It concerns our ability to provide adequate protection and security for the civilian population, which must also include issues of managing large-scale refugee flows into our country, and it concerns our ability to maintain adequate security of supply of goods and services for the main elements of military and

civilian defense within the country and in our immediate vicinity.

Finally, and fifthly, this also applies to the actual activities that the various parts of the total defense will focus on conducting during heightened readiness and ultimately war, where the focus can be expected to be directed primarily towards support for various NATO operations within our country (so-called host country support), but not least how the various parts of the total defense can support NATO operations primarily in our immediate area in Northern Europe. Here there may be weaknesses, for example, in various parts of our infrastructure that need to be addressed in the near future in order to respond to various parts of operational operations that follow from NATO's operational war planning.

The Constitution and defense against "armed attack"

The activities of total defence are still based on a legal regulation that has its basis in a number of important provisions in the Instrument of Government (RF, Chapter 15). It prescribes various important forms for how decision-making is to take place in the highest state bodies in the event of heightened readiness and war, for example that the Riksdag can switch to so-called war delegation, that the legislative procedure can be simplified, that the Government's powers are extended and that powers can be delegated from the Government to subordinate authorities, etc. The Act on National Defense, etc. with associated rules in ordinances and other laws, which, for example, relate to the responsibilities of various authorities as well as rules relating to municipalities and regions, which are linked to the provisions of the Instrument of Government, prescribe how heightened preparedness is to be announced and which statutes are then to be applied by various public actors. This applies in particular to statutes that relate solely to war conditions and that are conditional on the Government deciding to raise the level of preparedness for war or the threat of war. These increases may take place in two stages or with a direct transition to maximum readiness.

The two concepts of "heightened alert" or "highest alert" refer here unambiguously to increases in alert that are conditioned by the risk of or ongoing armed attack ("danger of war" or "war"). The concept of war is in turn closely linked to the form of armed attack on which the UN Charter is based.

However, our form of government has for a long time been based on the clear actual security policy that Sweden has declared for a long time, and which was mentioned above. This policy has involved a Swedish nation striving to adopt a form of non-alignment aimed at neutrality under international law in the event of war in the world around us. Our total defense was thus directed primarily towards a far-reaching effort to deter attacks against our country, to seek to avoid the country being drawn into war, and thereby ultimately to defend Sweden as an independent nation.

It is relatively clear that by "armed attack" the Instrument of Government means an attack directed only against Sweden. It is therefore somewhat unclear what would happen to preparedness if another nation in our vicinity were attacked. It is perhaps possible to interpret the need to increase preparedness as part of an assessment that there was a "danger of war" if an armed attack was carried out against a nation in our vicinity, as happened to some extent during the Second World War. But even the concept of "danger of war" in the Instrument of Government should primarily refer to danger of war that could affect Sweden.

However, the actual political developments in the world around us have now, in a short

space of time, led to a radical change in our security policy. This change has significant consequences for the legal basis of our security and total defense policy, and therefore the fact that we are now members of the NATO defense alliance must now also be included in the legal discussion. If an alliance member in our vicinity, for example one of the Baltic states or Finland, is subjected to an armed attack or a clear threat of such an attack by Russia, this must, according to the NATO Charter, reasonably be perceived as more or less also directly directed against other NATO members, including Sweden, and should thus lead to increased readiness for war, even if the attack is not directly directed against us militarily.

Our legislation is thus based on a very formal judicial system which essentially concerns armed attacks against our country. This "system" may need to be more adapted to the alliance status we now have and the security and military-political reality we have around us, i.e. will "armed attack" against another alliance member be of such a nature that the government of our country must raise the level of preparedness for war and has our form of government envisaged such a system?

The question therefore arises as to whether the provisions of our Instrument of Government can actually be applied in this way, given the way in which these provisions were originally drafted and the security policy situations they were originally intended to cover, i.e. the danger of or direct attack on our country, and obviously not an attack on another country. The consequences of NATO membership are thus clear in that the RF must be seen in a partly new light in these respects. Is it possible, without amending the text of the law, to reinterpret the RF so that it can also be intended to cover this new situation?

Modern statutory interpretation practice is often reluctant to extensively seek to "interpret" or "interpret" the will of the original legislator for cases that the legislator did not foresee when the law was enacted. Moreover, the provisions that were incorporated into Chapter 15 RF in the early 1970s are to a large extent based on even older provisions in the previous constitution and thus clearly have their basis in an older Swedish "neutrality doctrine".

The interpretation of law is often based on the idea that the ultimate guiding principle of legislation must always be the interests of people living today. This way of understanding older law implies a need to continuously review laws that are not in line with current situations or circumstances. It also means that while great respect must be shown for the existing RF, it must also be possible to have a serious discussion if at any point it has come to not describe or cover situations that seem highly relevant in the security policy situation we now find ourselves, with NATO membership as the main security policy guiding star. This aspect of constitutional preparedness does not appear to have been analyzed in detail.

The question is thus whether our form of government (RF, Chapter 15) is designed to give the government and parliament sufficient legal scope to act adequately against threats that arise against us through our membership of NATO, primarily the situation where another member is attacked, and whether this may more or less clearly mean increased readiness in the sense of the RF. To put it somewhat bluntly, the question can be put like this: When is Sweden at war if a situation under Article 5 of the NATO Charter arises for another member of the alliance? The reason why the question must be asked is that our RF is essentially built on the basic assumption that we are non-aligned and that only attacks on us in the true sense of

the word should trigger increased readiness for war. However, is an attack on another member of the alliance to be regarded as a threat of "danger of war" and thus a legal basis for increased readiness? Is it possible to interpret the RF as now also including "danger of war" by attacking another member of the alliance, and is such an extensive method of interpretation legally permissible?

A state of neutrality in the event of an attack on a member of an alliance may now be regarded as more or less obsolete as far as Sweden is concerned.

The form of government and new threats

A quite different consequence of looking at the RF with its older prerequisites is that new threats are not adequately taken into account. Ensuring orderly, legally compliant forms of political decision-making at the highest level of government has recently been examined by a study, "Strengthening Constitutional Readiness",[3] which seeks to address some of the problems with the current constitutional arrangements.

The question that has been discussed in this context is how the normative power between Parliament and the government should be shaped in a balanced way in the face of the new threats without introducing various forms of states of emergency.

Developments over a long period of time have shown that states are subjected to various types of hostile and aggressive acts, often combined with various types of political threats, which do not constitute armed aggression within the meaning of the UN Charter, but which nevertheless constitute a tangible violation of a nation's integrity and independence.

Against this background, it is important to focus on and discuss several different important issues, all of which can be said to relate to the governance of our country, except in the case of direct threat of war, or war, where it clearly includes those conditions in which we ourselves or any member of our alliance in our vicinity is under attack. The question is how we should legally view the concept of 'aggression', which includes various threats or acts of aggression that are not directly considered as military armed attacks in the traditional sense.

An important issue relates to peacetime stresses or attacks that emanate from foreign powers but are not considered to be accidents, traditional crime, pandemics, serious economic disturbances, etc. The latter forms of stress on society can normally be handled by different public actors according to the laws that normally apply and can be applied in peacetime. But how the state should act against "attacks" that are not clearly "armed" (in the sense of the UN Charter) but can clearly be perceived as aggressive acts by a foreign power, is in many ways unclear in terms of responsibility.

Such "attacks" may include the orchestration by foreign powers of various methods that, for example, prevent or disrupt essential activities by sabotaging key facilities, damaging infrastructure, disabling critical computer systems for longer or shorter periods, deliberately disinforming public opinion and seeking to undermine trust in authorities, etc. These are precisely the types of attacks that preceded Russia's direct military attack on Ukraine by a long time. They are thus attacks that can be characterized as multi-critical and multi-sectoral. The leadership that the government should be able to exercise in such circumstances may need to be characterized by a more direct and rapid adaptation of, and use of, various means aimed at protecting essential national interests and probably creating the conditions for increasing preparedness for direct military attacks.

The question is also whether we should not work together with our NATO and EU allies to ensure that various forms of countermeasures can be used in a proportionate manner against the power that (in various covert forms and through proxies) orchestrates such methods against us. The fact that Russia has been resorting to such methods of attack against various Western states for several years, in addition to Ukraine, is indisputable, and is also part of the well-described forms of the Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov since 2014.[4]

As mentioned, this issue has recently been examined in the report "Strengthening Constitutional Preparedness" and, given the limited directives, has not in all respects led to analyses of the threats now described and their impact on legal issues in the RF.

In a state of war, or danger of war, according to Chapter 15 of the Swedish Constitution, it is clear that the kingdom can be governed in a different way than in peace, that the legislative process can take place considerably more quickly and that the management of various activities can also be exercised much more directly and quickly than in peacetime. But for this to happen, the level of preparedness for war, or the threat of war, must be raised, which is necessary for the entire arsenal of emergency law to be applied. Our NATO membership raises the question of when our preparedness for the threat of war and war should be increased. Does it apply if another NATO member is attacked, a question that should probably be answered in the affirmative, possibly with a guiding new interpretation of RF, or actually new wording, something that requires investigation and preparatory work with a new meaning. But what forms of attack other than armed attack should be able to lead to heightened preparedness, and is there a need to tighten up the possibilities for the government to be able to "lead" even if preparedness for war has not been raised?

Total defense "activities" in a NATO context?

The concept of total defense has a very close connection to our form of government (RF, Chapter 15), which is not always noticed, since this chapter speaks of war and danger of war and the Act on Total Defense speaks of preparations for war and activities during heightened readiness (i.e. war, or danger of war). The concept of war in the RF and the Act thus becomes the important point of connection between them, a concept that was touched on above.

Against this background, total defense is described in the legislation as both "activities" that include preparations for war and all such "societal activities" that may be needed in the event of increased readiness and that can then be conducted with the support of comprehensive prepared legislation and that can only be applied in the event of increased readiness. The term "societal activities" is thus understood to include public, private and publicly supported voluntary activities and that these societal activities must be prepared in peacetime with the support of comprehensive planning, construction, training and exercise activities. All these activities must also be based on the use of private resources through contracts and large human resources, which must ultimately be based on various forms of duty and voluntary commitment.

Both of these activities, civil and military, are thus to be regarded as total defence activities under the National Defence Act, and both activities are focused on conditions characterized by heightened or maximum readiness for war, and thus not on peacetime stresses of varying severity or difficul-

ty. Our legal system, supported by the RF, has thus far taken the position that either there is legal peace, or there is a legal danger of war, or war. There is no legal 'middle ground' under the RF. A legal regime that could be called a "state of emergency", has so far been rejected by the state authorities as a legal solution to problems that may arise in situations that lie "between" war, or the threat of war and peace.

The question is whether this peace-war distinction, which is so sharply upheld in our RF, is also adequate in view of the developments that have taken place in such areas as "gray zone" and "hybrid war" since the Constitution was adopted 50 years ago. Not least, it is clear that the extensive cyber attacks against various important societal activities must be able to be met with more adequate protection and countermeasure resources already in peacetime.

The structure of responsibility in total defense as a form of governance in NATO

Key management functions in a NATO context

If it is considered that the concept of total defense on which the Act on Total Defense is based is still reasonable to try to maintain, however, several important points arise to discuss in the perspective of how our total defense is managed in a NATO context.

One of NATO's seven civil defense requirements for Alliance members refers to "ensuring political decision-making and central command functions". The wording is written in general terms and needs to be clarified in several respects for Sweden, not least with regard to the link to the Swedish concept of total defense.

The military part of total defence should have been prepared for several years to be able to be integrated into a military command system such as NATO has and where the organization requires that our military operational resources can be integrated into this command system and used for operational efforts in NATO-led operations. The overall command structures are the subject of discussions now that Finland and Sweden will be included with their resources in NATO's war planning. However, at lower military levels, Sweden has in fact been practising various forms of military command in a NATO context for a long time. The focus of Swedish military activities in NATO's operational war planning for various war situations is the piece of the puzzle that now needs to be quickly put in place in more detail, as well as decisions needing to be taken on the overall command structure in Europe and Sweden's role in this.

In various respects, this planning can also have a significant impact on the civilian part of total defense, since the focus of military activities also has a significant impact on how the civilian part of total defense should focus its planning for activities during heightened readiness and war in a NATO context. This focus relates not least to civilian support for various military operations within our country and in our neighborhood.

NATO's requirements for ensuring political decision-making and central command functions for the civilian part of total defense should here primarily refer to the ability to lead a nation in the event of war. If the focus here is thus placed on the civilian component of total defense, according to the Act on Total Defense it covers two important time perspectives.

The first perspective refers to the *activities in the form of preparations that need to be made in peacetime in order for* civil defense to be able to be conducted at a

heightened state of readiness with the intended effect on total defense as a whole, i.e. also with regard to support for military defense. These preparations must therefore relate to cooperation and coordination in a NATO perspective and should to a large extent need to take place in relation to various types of war in our immediate area and NATO's operational war planning for these cases. These preparations must be managed in peacetime in such a way that there can also be a rapid and smooth transition to a wartime organization that can manage civil defence activities in the event of heightened readiness and ultimately also war

The second perspective refers to the *societal activities to be conducted during heightened readiness in the* light of the preparations made in peacetime and taking into account the nature of the attack in time and space. This latter activity is thus the one NATO requires in one of its basic requirements. However, the leadership that can be exercised in the event of danger of war and war must in all essential respects already exist in peacetime in organizational, material and personnel terms, and must also be trained and exercised for such operations within the framework of the war and NATO operations that have been prepared.

For Sweden, it will therefore be of the utmost importance to analyze whether the responsibility structure we have created in civil defense from autumn 2022 to prepare and lead operations in war is so robust that it can be said to meet NATO's requirements. It is thus a "war-organized" civil defense that we must take as a starting point in this analysis. And it must refer to a war-organized civil defence that is so coordinated with important neighboring countries that questions of endurance, resilience, etc. cannot be seen solely from our country's point of view, but must be seen as, and prepared for, coordinated action across national borders, primarily with our Nordic neighbors, but also with the Baltic states and probably also with Poland and Germany. It must also be assumed that civilian cooperation will also be needed with the United Kingdom and the United States/Canada if military and civilian assistance from these states is directed towards northern Europe and needs to be integrated as important "activities" with our civilian defense.

The first question that then needs to be raised is whether the management system at central government level, above the currently established sectoral structure, is strong enough to cope with the stresses of war. The fact that this is posed as a question is related to the fact that the ten current sectoral areas, with their respective very different areas of activity, are not now managed in a coordinated form in any other way than from the government, and there divided among several ministries.[5] There is thus currently no central authority with decision-making powers under the government that can manage civil defence as a whole, although the defence commission has to some extent discussed solutions that point towards such a management institution in peacetime. Such a solution is based on a change in the role of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB).

This issue of unified command of civil defense was the subject of discussions during the Cold War and the question was, among other things, whether a form of "civilian OBE" should be established. Such a solution was rejected at the time and even today it seems very doubtful whether such an authority with such far-reaching and sharp powers over large parts of society should exist.

A new role for MSB, if the sectoral responsibility for civil protection and rescue services is transferred to another authority, could in peacetime be to serve as a staff authority for the government and facilitate the work of balancing and prioritizing different

capability efforts in peacetime and preparing proposals for the civilian budget framework to the government, not least with regard to the priorities of the various sectoral areas. This is a function that is partly similar to the role that the then ÖCB had in relation to the then established so-called functional authorities and to the government.

In addition to a basic organization in the form of a small peacetime unit, a more competent staff function in the Government Offices would be required to manage civil defence from the government's side during heightened readiness. In peacetime, therefore, a stronger civilian command competence at the central level than we currently have is obviously required if we are to adequately become a functioning member of the Alliance. Not least, there should be a need for continuous interaction with certain senior decision-making functions in NATO's leadership in Brussels.

Thus, in peacetime, this function should be located in an authority outside the government that can serve as a coordinating function under the government with regard to civil defense, with tasks as mentioned. However, such an authority should not have other tasks than these, for example, not have sectoral or contingency responsibility for specific areas of civil defense activities, as the role is basically to coordinate such activities. In the event of a high state of readiness, this function should be able to quickly become part of the Ministry of Defence's civil defence unit and competently propose the necessary priorities between support to different NATO members in different parts of the country through sectoral and civilian areas and implement the necessary coordination measures with military defence, as well as propose to the government the decisions that need to be taken within such overall directions. This in turn requires the sectoral and civilian areas to be able to provide reliable and timely input to such a staff function.

Such a solution to the problem of command and control at the central level would also greatly facilitate the interaction and coordination with surrounding NATO states required by the basic requirement set out by NATO.

Responsibility structure for management under the government

The basic arrangement decided on, with regard to the responsibility structure in civil defense, should essentially be an acceptable arrangement also in a NATO context, but it presupposes a clear refinement of areas of responsibility within the sector structure, i.e. that one and the same sector authority should not be responsible for several different sector areas.

It may also turn out that the current sectoral areas are not sufficient, and that additional sectoral areas and preparedness authorities may need to be decided. It can be noted that in its report submitted in December 2023, the Defense Committee proposes new sectoral areas and disagrees on how the civilian leadership under the government should be designed. Supply issues are also the subject of investigations and important decisions of principle are also lacking in this area, where there are also proposals to increase the number of sectors. It is of great importance that decisions can be made quickly on these issues, as it is very unfortunate if decisions are delayed on command activities in several very important areas of civil defense.

The responsibility structure established two years ago presupposes interaction between military and civilian activities at a higher regional level, i.e. the civilian area level, which was very much the case during

the Cold War. It is currently unclear which higher regional structure the military may choose, but it is necessary that this level of the responsibility structure be clarified as soon as possible if clear leadership in a NATO perspective is to be exercised in relation to the needs that our neighboring countries may require in various war situations where clear leadership at a higher regional level becomes very pronounced.

Here, the perspectives are largely directed towards the needs for cooperation that exist, for example, in the North Calotte, the Baltic Sea region and other regional areas that extend across national borders and that may include significant transport planning for military resources, logistics for large quantities of goods, as well as medical care and patient transport, in all cases also across the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

When we speak of a war-organized civil defence, this means that all parts of the currently established responsibility structure have prepared for a rapid transition to war organization (i.e. all sectoral authorities, preparedness authorities, civilian areas, county administrative boards, regions and primary municipalities), and that these organizational structures are trained and exercised for such tasks. This should be a prerequisite for the effective management of civil defense from the moment the decision is taken to raise the level of preparedness, thus ensuring that all societal activities to be carried out during the highest level of preparedness can indeed be managed effectively.

Such a form of war-organized civil defence, geared also to operations coordinated with our neighboring countries in NATO, requires, as the Act on Total Defence also clearly states, extensive preparatory activities in peacetime. These peacetime preparatory activities also require clearly defined command activities.

This latter form of peacetime management involves planning approaches with clearly stated objectives for building capabilities, i.e. different resources that can be deployed for different wartime purposes. Building up such capabilities requires cost estimates and budget considerations that should be linked to the civil defense objective and NATO's Baseline Requirements, which in turn are broken down into requirements for capabilities in the various sectoral and civilian areas. The latter capabilities should, of course, also have clear links to military operational directions, which in turn have clear links to NATO's military directions that affect us and our NATO neighbors. In this context, it is clear that the operational conditions for military operations appear radically different between, for example, the Arctic and the Baltic Sea regions, which also greatly affects the management of civil operations in these different areas and how they are prepared in peacetime.

This means that the resources identified in the different sectoral areas that need prepared reinforcements in case of high readiness must also have a clear geographical profile that is linked to NATO's military operational directions, military support needs and anticipated civilian consequences, in particular with regard to civilian protection, refugee issues and health care.

In order to create stability in the trade-offs between different sectoral areas in a NATO perspective, a civilian five-year budget framework should be established, and clear planning guidelines should be drawn up for the five-year build-up and focus of civilian defense, both in terms of sectoral guidelines and civilian area guidelines. These planning directions must be issued by the government, as they must include political responsibility for important priorities in time and space. This means that the direction of civil defence is linked to the five-year decisions that are

also intended for military defence, i.e. a five-year total defense decision.

It is thus clear that the management of civil defense in peace must follow the responsibility structure that has been established and that it is also necessary that directives from higher levels to lower levels in the responsibility system must be able to be given (so-called right to prescribe) regarding emergency preparedness in peacetime as well. This is particularly important in relation to the regions and primary municipalities, as they must be subject to the right to issue directives on emergency preparedness in peacetime, which must not be hindered by municipal autonomy.

Protection of the civilian population

Emergency services, shelters and evacuation

One of NATO's key requirements for its alliance members is the ability to protect the civilian population. Issues of civilian protection have recently been examined, and extensive proposals have been made for the expansion of municipal civil protection services, including compulsory civilian service for a large group of civil protection personnel. It is also clear that a detailed inventory of shelters and protected areas needs to be made so that priorities can be set for the development of such areas in those areas where attacks on the civilian population are likely to occur or where acts of war must be anticipated. Issues relating to the stockpiling of protective masks must also be resolved quickly, as it is too late to start production of such requirements if attacks against urban areas occur early in a conflict phase.

Experience from Ukraine clearly indicates that Russia makes no attempt to avoid attacks on large cities and towns as well as on important infrastructure hubs such as energy supply, transport routes, ports and airfields, etc. Dramatic damage to the civilian population must therefore be expected if no well thought-out and effective preparations for protection are made.

Therefore, in our country there must also be renewed practical planning for the total or partial evacuation of vulnerable urban areas and, correspondingly, planning for reception sites for such evacuation. It is also necessary to address the issue of spontaneous displacement. Such flight may occur in large numbers and relatively suddenly both from our neighboring countries, and within our own country. These refugee groups may require extensive care, with occasional great need for assistance, which also includes various medical needs. In order for the various municipalities, counties and regions to be able to create space for such care, it is necessary to find ways, already in peacetime, to engage large parts of Swedish civil society's various organizations with their buildings and not least volunteers with adequate training in various forms.

Health care

Our medical preparedness for war is of vital importance for both military and civilian defense. We need to prepare for the fact that in war a large number of casualties may occur in different parts of the country and that this may affect both civilians and military personnel. It is very likely that we will also have to prepare to be able to help surrounding states in the NATO alliance with major medical operations.

First and foremost, our medical preparedness must be prepared for instantaneous, very large-scale trauma care operations, which also include rapid medical transportation. Major injuries in a war zone in the Arctic, for example, should require medical transport by several different modes of trans-

port, but medical transport trains, which were planned during the Cold War, can be an important resource for meeting medical transport needs.

Establishing trauma care with the capacity to deal with numerous and severe traumatic injuries in different parts of the country will be a major challenge for Swedish healthcare in the coming years. Planning for the deployment of staff with medical training, the preparation of premises for emergency medical care with surgery and the storage of medical equipment and medicines, as well as training and exercise, must be the focus for a long time to come. Moreover, this is taking place in a situation where Swedish healthcare is already severely strained in several aspects, not least in terms of personnel. Health care in war must therefore be able to make use of all healthcare personnel in the country, regardless of where or what they are working on in peacetime, and also provide the personnel needing it extra training and practice. However, special funds for the development of healthcare in the event of increased readiness can also be seen as an important contribution to healthcare in peacetime, not least in terms of staffing.

Security of supply with many complex problems and opportunities

Security of supply issues present a particular problem. Since security of supply encompasses supply in a variety of commodity and product areas, which are also part of various complex interacting and interdependent supply chains, it is not clear how a governmental responsibility for supply, in cooperation with the various actors in the business community, should be designed. Consideration could be given to a form in which supply in the broad sense is held together by a government agency, as was partly the case during the Cold War when the ÖCB had such a role. Consideration could also be given to a form in which the various sectoral authorities are each given responsibility for overall supply issues within their own sector, and thereby also take responsibility for contractual forms, costs, etc. within the various areas.

An important part of the preparation activities from a NATO perspective is to ensure security of supply within the country and between our NATO neighbors. In particular, issues of host country support and support to our neighbors with various supplies may require extensive planning and important investments in infrastructure (roads, railways, airfields, ports, bridges, energy, means of transport, fuel, etc.). Such targeted activities in peacetime require both financial muscle and a great deal of clarity in management activities already in peacetime, where various infrastructure initiatives must be prioritized with regard to wartime needs.

The various important supply resources of industry were organized in the older total defense in so-called war-essential companies (K-companies), and an extensive storage of supplies (fuel, food, medical resources, etc.) took place in different parts of the country. Civilian commanders in particular had a major responsibility for regional stockpiling of this kind. The so-called K-companies signed agreements with the state through ÖCB and the agreements ensured the companies continued operations, among other things by exempting their personnel from military service as long as they worked in these companies, as well as assuming that the companies had priority when it came to supplying important inputs for production. This also made it possible to create a wartime form of enterprise that included the building and construction industry (Byggnads och repa-

rationsberedskapen, BRB) and motor repair activities (MRT).

In many respects, these forms of linking the necessary business resources to total defense probably worked well for their time. The models themselves may need to be reviewed in various respects, but the essential is of course to identify the resources that important companies have and can supply in the event of heightened preparedness and to ensure that the agreements needed for continued supply or conversion of production can be concluded already in peacetime.

The studies that have specifically analysed issues of security of supply and the public sector's responsibility for this have put forward proposals that would in various respects stabilize the vulnerability that we currently have in large parts of our supply. However, the perspectives on supply also have a different meaning now than when our focus was more or less complete self-sufficiency within the framework of the doctrine of non-alignment with the aim of being neutral. We are members of both NATO and the EU and both organizations should not be able to leave a member without essential support should serious shortages arise in any commodity area.

It is nevertheless important to "stress test" various supply chains in different contexts in order to identify various risks or shortcomings in time and space that may arise in the event of various complications in the outside world or in the event of actual ongoing wars in our vicinity or if we ourselves are attacked by various companies.

A particularly important part of these companies is, of course, the munitions industry, which is of crucial importance for the military defense capability and is also so for other NATO states that incorporate Swedish munitions in their defense forces.

Infrastructure needs in our total defense seen from a NATO perspective

During the Cold War, hostile action against the long and sometimes vulnerable transportation routes between northern Sweden and central Sweden required extensive preparations to repair destroyed bridges and preparations to build temporary bridges and repair roads. There was planning to utilize the Building and Repair Preparedness (BRB), which was a form of wartime cooperation between various contractors in the construction industry.

This way of preparing for transportation within the country that took place in the past must now be resumed and, moreover, be done with the NATO perspective in mind. This means not least that, in addition to a north-south transport perspective, we must now also focus significantly on west-east transport routes. This refers to transportation from Norway via Sweden to Finland and the Baltic States, but also to sea and air transport across the North Sea to western Sweden. Such important transports may involve military troops as well as military equipment and other important supplies and may come from the USA/Canada and the UK, but also from other Western European states. Such transports need to utilize a wide range of ports, airfields, railways and roads that must be of such a standard that they can be used continuously for these, often heavy, transports.

Not least, our ports on the West Coast are of particular importance in this perspective. Analysis of these transport conditions now needs to be carried out, and it is likely that important infrastructure measures will need to be taken in the near future to ensure that the important ports and routes are of a standard that can meet the needs.

In this area, however, it is important to know that NATO support can be expected to some extent, with some costs for pre-stocking of military equipment, strengthening of road, rail and bridge capacity, increased and more protected capacity in ports and airfields, etc. However, these operations can only be expected to take place in areas where NATO considers these operations to be important for military strategic, operational or tactical reasons. One such area that can be expected to include very important transportation is Gotland.

Preparations for the repair and rehabilitation of these transport routes and nodes, in particular important bridges over rivers and other wide waterways, important ports and airfields, must be made in peacetime, when it must be assumed that they may be exposed to combat.

It is important to note that cables supplying various forms of communication lie at the bottom of the sea and are often owned by private companies. As the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline shows, these connections are often vulnerable. This is particularly true for connections between the mainland and Gotland, but also to Finland, the Baltic States and Poland. The need to increasingly monitor the extensive shipping, not least in the Baltic Sea, and to be able to intervene in case of suspicion of possible preparations for sabotage must be considered.

Nuclear deterrence and Swedish policy regarding nuclear weapons

With Sweden's entry into NATO, Swedish security policy and national total defense will be placed within the framework of the basic elements of NATO deterrence.

It means that deterrence ultimately rests on the element of nuclear weapons. It would be going too far here to discuss how this deterrence works in the relationship between the major powers. This discussion will be deepened in another part of the SV-A-R project.

In Sweden, we have not been used to discussing nuclear weapons since the late 1950s and early 1960s, when for a long time a strong opinion advocated the acquisition of Swedish (tactical) nuclear weapons mainly in order not to put the Swedish conventional defense in a worse military position than an advancing Soviet invasion force would have had with access to such weapons.[6] Since the increasingly faltering option of being able to manufacture Swedish nuclear weapons was gradually abandoned politically in the 1970s, Swedish debate came to focus largely on trying to help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Through a special ambassador for disarmament in Geneva, Sweden played a major role in these efforts at the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conferences to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to more states than the original ones.

As recently emphasized by the government, and also by the Social Democratic opposition, there is nothing in NATO membership that places any particular restrictions on Sweden continuing to seek to contribute to general disarmament, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to seek to build up CBMs (confidence building measures) with the aim of reducing tensions between different powers and seeking to reduce the stationing of military units in a way that leads to countermeasures. Unfortunately, it can only be said that what has been achieved in these areas over decades of difficult negotiations has been largely destroyed by Russia's unilateral withdrawal from several of the conventions that have sought to curb armaments, particularly in Europe, as well as nuclear arms limitations. As long as the Putin regime in Russia seeks to re-establish the Soviet empire, including

by military means, progress in these areas is likely to be almost non-existent.

When it comes to nuclear weapons, it is important to hold on to some fundamental perspectives. These weapons are, at least for the time being, primarily political and not military means to force an opponent to surrender. Putin's constant threats to use nuclear weapons must therefore be interpreted primarily as an attempt to use threats that are perceived as alarming to persuade Western leaders to give in or give up, particularly with regard to support for Ukraine. Since Putin knows that public opinion in the West is sensitive to nuclear threats, this 'weapons talk' should be interpreted as just that, namely unpleasant threats with the stated political purpose of seeking to create resistance in Western public opinion to help Ukraine.

In this discussion, it is thus of some importance to return to the question of who is threatening with nuclear weapons. Russia and Putin alone are responsible for these threats and thus for the effects they have both on him and on the rest of the world, not least if he feels compelled to violate the ethics of no-first-use, i.e. not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The West and NATO do not threaten Russia repeatedly with nuclear weapons as Putin does. For example, when Russia stationed the so-called Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad, which have ranges far into southern Sweden as far as Gothenburg, it was also clear that these missiles can be armed with nuclear warheads and can thus in a short time cause very great destruction in our country.

Now that the discussion has come up that Sweden should legislate against allowing nuclear weapons on Swedish soil, the question arises whether this serves any meaningful purpose at all. Neither the USA, the UK nor France can be expected to want to have their nuclear weapons clearly stationed on Swedish soil for purely security and control reasons. We cannot be expected to know that ships or aircraft may occasionally be on Swedish soil with or without such weapons for equally obvious and important security reasons. It is in fact a fundamental element of the "game conditions" of the nuclear doctrines never to let the opponent know where these weapons are, as such knowledge can jeopardize the ability to strike back and thus the entire deterrence policy.

Thus, whether there are nuclear weapons on Swedish soil, it is highly likely that neither the United States nor Russia would perceive such Swedish legislation, with a Swedish "prohibition law", as something they could or need to consider at all. It should also be added that such a law could put Sweden in a very awkward position in the event of a serious NATO conflict with Russia, which could call into question our solidarity with the alliance, especially if other countries take a different position, as it has recently been shown that Poland might do in discussions with the United States.

It is very difficult to predict with any certainty what might happen in the event of various security and military developments. The very formulation of such an envisaged law therefore presents almost insurmountable legal problems. The issue should therefore be handled with the least possible political or legal constraints in advance and give the government and, in the event of heightened alert, the parliamentary war delegation, the necessary political space to maneuver in these situations so that the best interests of the alliance, the country and the people can be the guiding principle.

Whatever the risk of nuclear attack (and quite apart from the impact of a prohibition law on that risk), it is in any case clear that the experience of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza shows that indiscriminate attacks on

civilian targets can be expected to take place to a significant extent with fully conventional weapons if a state of war prevails. The effects on people, buildings, infrastructure, etc. must therefore be expected to be extensive, unless reasonable protective measures are taken in peacetime.

The likelihood of nuclear weapons being used must be considered small, not least because of the unpredictable and disastrous consequences of deploying such weapons. However, since the risk of such use cannot be regarded as entirely negligible, e.g. due to human error, or technical deficiencies in some system, etc. The term "reasonable degree" of protection means that it is not actually physically possible to achieve a reasonable degree of protection in the event of a large-scale nuclear attack, because the effects of these weapons are so widely destructive.

The effects of moderate nuclear weapons actions are multiple, but in various ways these effects must be minimized in the design of protective measures. These include shock wave effects that cause extensive destruction of buildings, structures, infrastructure facilities, etc. It applies to fires caused by thermal radiation, which can often have a violent course and spread rapidly over large areas. It also applies to radioactive radiation, which causes both initial and long-term illness and damage to people, animals and nature and can lead to the need to cordon off large areas for a long time. It also applies to the electromagnetic pulse generated by a nuclear explosion, which causes damage to and disruption of various electrical and electronic systems on which our society is increasingly dependent.

The first two effects are those which, to varying degrees, also arise in the case of conventional weapons usage and which can therefore, with various reinforcing protective measures, provide some protection even against a small-scale use of nuclear warheads.

The last two effects are specific to nuclear weapons and building up protection against them also requires specific measures. During the Cold War, great efforts were also made to find ways of increasing the protection of the civilian population against radiation caused by nuclear weapons. Shelters, protective masks, evacuation, iodine tablets, etc. were several measures included in this planning.

Population shelters were built during the Cold War and they are still in existence and can, after some refurbishment, offer substantial protection against a wide range of nuclear effects, provided that the population can get to them in time and that they are sufficient for the population of large cities, for example. Production of protective masks must now be resumed so that protective masks are available for the majority of the population in various exposed areas. Planning for evacuation must now also be resumed so that the population can be provided with shelter and subsistence in places other than the most exposed. Stockpiles of iodine tablets must be organized, and preparations made for their rapid distribution. Radiation decontamination expertise, material and human resources are also needed to minimize the radiological effects of residual radiating material. It is also likely to be necessary to increasingly build in electromagnetic pulse (EMP) protection in several of the most critical management functions and in nodes responsible for various infrastructures, such as electricity supply.

In the face of all these effects of fighting civilian targets, it is of particular importance to be able to maintain command and control, and ensure that timely, accurate and complete information reaches the population during dramatic stages of a war where credibility and confidence in the command

becomes crucial to maintain the will to defend and the spirit of resistance.

This section has only highlighted some of the most prominent needs in terms of protective measures in the civilian part of total defense, but it is necessary that clear direction-setting planning now gets under way in the various sectoral and civilian areas and that county administrative boards, regions and municipalities are given resources that gradually build up material and personnel capacity to deal with the serious effects of combating civilian targets in wartime. This requires training initiatives and exercises to be launched in the near future, with particular attention being paid to the effects of extensive combat against civilian targets on Swedish soil.

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Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. After the fall of the Soviet Union, several of these planned directions of attack against Sweden were also revealed, with details of the size of the units etc.
3. See SOU 2023:75, *Stärkt konstitutionell beredskap*.
4. On this see e.g. Chivvis, Christopher S.: *Understanding Russian "Hybrid Warfare". And What Can Be Done About It*, RAND Corporation, 2017.
5. It has been suggested that, in the near future, new sectoral areas should be created in several key areas of society (e.g. utilities, trade and shipping), which, if implemented, could have an impact on the sectoral structure but also on the activities of the civil areas.
6. One strong advocate of Swedish nuclear weapons was the then editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter,* Herbert Tingsten, and Per Ahlmark, later leader of the Liberal People's Party (Folkpartiet) and Minister of Labor. See Ahlmark, Per: *Den svenska atomvapendebatten*, Aldus/Bonnier, Stockholm 1965. A more cautious but not entirely dismissive stance was taken by the then State Secretary Karl Frithiofsson in a then well-known article in *KKrVA's Handlingar och tidskrift* 1966; "Säkerhetspolitiska perspektiv på frågan om svenska kärnvapen". The position of the Swedish Armed Forces is briefly but well described in *Militärhistorisk Tidskrift* 2023 in the article "Svenska flygvapnets doktrinutveckling 1926–1989" by Stefan Ring.

"Damn the strategies!"[1]

by Thomas Engevall

Résumé

The article describes and discusses the evolution of defense materiel strategies during the last 20 years in Sweden. While these strategies have striven to adapt to the overall and changing security situation in Europe the impact has so far been limited. A lot of energy has gone into dividing the responsibility for defense logistics between the Armed Forces and the Defense Materiel Administration (FMV) rather than to optimize the overall setup for swift and effective delivery of systems and capabilities from industry. In the current situation with Russia's war of aggression towards Ukraine and Sweden as a new NATO member, we do not have the luxury to "wait for new strategies" regarding defense materiel acquisition and defense industry. We will need to act with fortitude and decisiveness within a few strategic and operational principles that will enable us to grow our capability as quickly as possible. Suggestions for such principles are given at the end of this article.

IN AN ORGANIZATION such as the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, the headline may be provocative, but it is still something to think about. In the headline's (and my own) defense, it is a slight travesty of American Rear Admiral David G. Farragut's legendary remark "Damn the torpedoes"[2] in connection with the Battle of Mobile Bay on August 1, 1864. The 59-year-old Farragut had joined the Navy at the age of eight (!) and emerged victorious when Confederate Admiral Franklin Buchanan later ordered his flag captain[3] to fly the Confederate flag on his ship CSS *Tennessee*. The phrase "Damn the torpedoes" has ever since been an expression of the fact that, in certain situations, going full speed ahead is required in order to emerge victorious or to be successful in general.

Strategies, investigations and changes since 2010

In Sweden, we love strategies and studies, not least in the field of materiel. A long list can be made of various studies/strategies that have been drawn up over the years with great effort, but which have never actually been implemented for one reason or another. Rather, they have formed the basis for yet another study or strategy and so time has rolled on. The most long-lived is the joint materiel supply strategy that the Armed Forces, the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration (FMV) and the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) signed in 2007 through the Swedish Prime Minister and the two directors general of FMV and FOI.

The content of the 2007 strategy was subsequently outlined in the 2008 report of the National Defense Commission, *Defense in Use*. The clearest content of these documents was that they unambiguously pointed out that the proportion of development within the framework of materiel procurement should be reduced and that a large proportion of the required materiel should be purchased "off the shelf" and be fully developed. The reasons behind this guidance were to reduce the time and financial risks of

various projects. However, it has been quite possible to interpret this control as more or less hostile to technology, and that it is easiest for "someone else" to be responsible for development and risk-taking than us. The exceptions that have existed relate mostly to the combat aviation and underwater areas. Clear signs of the strategy's impact have been the much-reduced appropriations for research and development, both directly to FOI and to the defense companies via FMV in the form of the development of demonstrators and more object-bound research.

In the early 2010s, a "game of ping-pong" took place between the Armed Forces and FMV in terms of responsibility for the implementation of the total logistics operations, including maintenance, workshops, sustainment and related procurement. In the first step, about 1 500 employees were transferred from the Armed Forces to FMV in three steps, and in 2019, in principle, everything and more was returned to the Armed Forces. The reasons for the first step were economic rationality, and the reason for the return was the question of the availability of the necessary logistics resources in an increasingly deteriorating security policy context.

The first step was in some way a logical continuation of the strategic directions proposed in the 2011 report *Research and development and defense logistics—in the reformed defense* (SOU 2011:36). Under the name "Transformation of Defense Logistics", the change was investigated and implemented in three stages between January 1, 2013 and January 1, 2015. However, the focus on peace rationality was severely damaged by Russia's annexation of Crimea and the low-intensity war that began in eastern Ukraine, just before all stages of the changes were completed. In 2015, a large part of the engineering organization and the Swedish Armed Forces' competence in logistics was thus located in another authority. At the time, FMV often described itself as a "civilian authority" and there was no wartime organization or wartime employees.

It soon became clear that this did not meet the requirements of the business, and the following year (2016) the report *Logistics for higher defense readiness* (SOU 2016:88) was submitted to the government in December. The result was that a return of about 1 900 employees to the Armed Forces took place on January 1, 2019.

On the positive side, FMV has since built up a clear wartime organization, placed its employees in wartime positions and in many other ways increased its ability to operate in higher readiness and war. A great help in this work were all the measures that FMV had to take during the pandemic when many questions were raised. However, the DG of FMV still lacks the ability to fully keep pace with the ÖB when it comes to increases in preparedness, the utilization of personnel, and the fact that FMV is not a preparedness authority, etc. The latter has also been noted by the current Defense Commission in its report published on April 26 this year.

This "game of ping-pong", which has been going on for 10 years, has drained a lot of energy from the two agencies, which are still, five years after the last major adjustment, struggling with issues of responsibility and working practices. The situation is now beginning to stabilize and both authorities have organized themselves as far as practically possible for effective cooperation, but the operational processes are not as efficient as one might wish.

Consequences and orders

This partly introverted approach has also affected the defense industry. The message that emerges from discussions with industry representatives in the form of SOFF (Security and Defense Companies) and SME-D (Small

and Medium Enterprises in Defense) is that dialogue with the authorities and subsequent actions in the form of procurement and contracting must be faster. The same applies when the dialog is conducted directly with both large and small companies.

To some extent, this criticism must be considered unjustified, as the volume of orders from FMV has increased dramatically in recent years in order to meet the approved growth. In the appropriation item (1.3.1) for materiel investments, for which FMV is responsible, the increase in order volumes is striking.

2021	Orders for SEK 18.7 billion
2022	Orders for SEK 36.4 billion
2023	Orders for SEK 52.5 billion

At the end of 2023, FMV had outstanding orders from industry that had not yet been delivered totaling SEK 85.3 billion (so-called supplier order backlog).[4]

When we compare the outturn of appropriations on the same line, it amounted to:[5]

2021	SEK 17.7 billion
2022	SEK 20.0 billion
2023	SEK 25.6 billion

A comparison of orders placed and appropriations received shows that orders are increasing at a faster rate than deliveries. This is not surprising given the delivery times for advanced defense equipment. However, in order to achieve a balance over time, the industry needs to further increase its production capacity.

There is another comparison that is relevant to make when studying the relationship between the Armed Forces and FMV. It is the difference between all the orders placed by the Armed Forces with FMV, the so-called "customer order backlog" and the orders that have been passed on to industry, according to the previously called supplier order backlog. This can be seen as a backlog from the time the Armed Forces place an order with FMV before contracts are signed between FMV and industry.

Difference between customer order backlog and supplier order backlog (KOS-LOS)[6]

2021	SEK 34.0 billion
2022	SEK 53.1 billion
2023	SEK 60.9 billion

Thus, as of 2024-01-01, there were orders at FMV from the Armed Forces of approximately SEK 60 billion in some phase of the procurement process and which will generate additional contracts to the Swedish and international defense industry.

So why does the question keep coming up that things are moving too slowly? The most obvious reason is, of course, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. When there is a clear risk of the conflict spreading to the rest of Europe and, in the worst case, leading to a major war between NATO and Russia, time is of the essence. Another reason is that most companies want to see long-term conditions and ready-made contracts in order to dare to make the necessary investments in both production equipment and personnel required to increase capacity. Fine words and strategies do not help, it is contracts and long-term assurances that are required. It is also possible to see a clear degree of concern for the security of Sweden and Western Europe. Companies want to help to strengthen defense and there is a "total defense" mindset among many, but perhaps not quite all, which also comes into play. For the smaller companies, which often have a subcontracting role to one or

more of the larger companies, it may also take time before the subcontracts become a reality.

Dialogue between the actors is of particular importance to ensure the conditions are as clear as possible to everyone. The main forums are currently run by FMV and SOFF, sometimes but not always seconded by the Armed Forces and SME-D. Every year, in the period November/December, the so-called Defense Company Days are arranged in the form of a two-day event with lectures and informal discussions at the strategic level. More concrete dialogues take place at "in-depth days" conducted in April/May by the defense branch (joint Armed Forces/FMV) where interested companies can participate and get a clearer picture of the situation. In addition, SOFF/SME-D organizes an extensive program of events with different focuses in a number of specialized areas during the year. However, the participation of the authorities in these activities is not granted but takes place on a case-by-case basis.

With the current state of Swedish defense and defense industry, it should be strongly considered to increase efforts for an in-depth dialogue on how and at what pace future procurements will be made by the authorities. The larger companies also have a clear responsibility for subcontracting and for clarifying as far as possible what the expectations are for the smaller companies. Most of these have few or no resources to work strategically on these issues, but often try to use strategic advisors (such as retired officers) to gain a greater insight into how procurement processes and discussions work.

Similarly, companies need to better understand the difference in responsibilities and decision-making between FMV and the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces are responsible for maintenance and upkeep under the appropriation item 1.1.3 and equipment investments of a minor nature under the appropriation item 1.3.2, while FMV is responsible for major equipment investments under the appropriation item 1.3.1.

In total, SEK 72.4 billion will be found in these three appropriation items in 2024. It was SEK 28.9 billion in 2021. The funds are distributed according to (the 2021 value in brackets):[7]

1.1.3	SEK 22.6 (15.2) billion (allocated by the Armed Forces)
1.3.2	SEK 10.0 (3.0) billion (allocated by the Armed Forces)
1.3.1	SEK 39.8 (10.7) billion (allocated by FMV)

Although the amounts are described in current prices, it is basically a doubling in three years and is de facto attributable to increased deliveries of materials and services from Swedish and international industry.

While there is no room for complacency—the future will demand even more—there is also reason to feel a certain pride in what has been achieved, regardless of where in the supply chain the different actors operate.

Current status of studies and strategies

Innovation

The latest document adopted is the Government's document *Strategic Direction for Defense Innovation* published on January 8, 2024. The introduction to the document states that "Defense innovation is a strategic capability that is necessary, among other things, to be able to deal with military and defense-related problems faster and better than the opponent over time. A strong Swedish defense innovation capability constitutes a strategic competitive advantage for

the benefit of defense and security in peace, crisis and war."

Innovation is easy to say but hard to do. This is especially true in an organization that has been slowly shrinking for a long time and where the share of "free money" has been gradually decreasing. At the same time, there have been high demands "not to make mistakes" and even more so "not to make cardinal errors", i.e. to go over budget.

The way to succeed is to let go and create an environment that allows the inherent power that exists within and outside the Defense sector to come into its own. In her inaugural speech "Shifting culture and leadership to foster innovation in defense" on September 13, 2023, KKrVA member Rebecca Ihrfors gave nine clear recommendations on what needs to be done. These were in slightly adjusted form:[8]

1. Respect everyone and all skills—requirements should be at framework level with clear objectives.
2. Engage end-users—bring end-users (often units and branches of the armed forces) closer to the products and use their skills, knowledge and experience when developing new solutions.
3. Dare to innovate—challenge with high standards and tough targets.
4. Satisfy the customer but respect the expertise—ask the customers, but let those who know the technology and what is possible drive the train.
5. Deliver and adjust—deliver quickly and adjust with the support of end users.
6. Allocate working time to innovation based on employees' own ideas (compare to allocating 3 hours per week to physical exercise).
7. Take advantage of what is available—dual-use or buy off the shelf and don't invent what is available, see separate paragraph below.
8. Don't make a mistake a bad thing—clarity is needed on the permission to shut down projects that are not going as planned.
9. Do things that matter and have a clear operational/tactical impact in the defense of Sweden and the Alliance.

And then an additional point that Ihrfors did not address in her speech but which should also be mentioned in this context

10. Let innovation be free from regulations that make it impossible.

An interesting reflection can be made from the ongoing war in Ukraine. With great innovation and flexible working methods, the Ukrainian armed forces have developed drone warfare to a level that we are nowhere near. Had our current regulations for the use of drones in controlled airspace and accreditation rules for IT operations, decisions on use (BOA), etc. been applied, Ukraine would probably have already lost the war. They would simply never have produced any systems in time that were allowed to be used.

Of course, not all regulations can be thrown out of the window, but innovation should not be too hampered by compliance with one or the other. It is better to ensure that the innovation emerges and then deal with how to adapt or adjust it afterwards.

It is not all doom and gloom, and there are also good initiatives underway in both the Armed Forces and FMV. The Military Innovation Program (MIP), which FMV is implementing on behalf of the Swedish Armed Forces, aims to identify civilian-driven technology with military potential at the prototype maturity level. The goal is to lift ideas for technological innovation to a higher level of maturity and to identify how

adaptations can be made to get military applications, and enable the results to benefit the Armed Forces.

FMV's so-called "Tech Days", which are carried out within the framework of the MIP, are examples of how the activities are carried out. At a Tech Day, small/medium-sized companies are invited to present a proposal on a specific issue/topic for 20 minutes. Ten proposals are presented and before the end of the day, up to three of these are selected and the winning companies each receive an order to be delivered within six months. In May 2024, the theme was "Artificial Intelligence of Things".

Since 2021, the Air Force has awarded the "Air Force Innovation Award", which has been highly appreciated within and outside the armed forces and which encourages employees regardless of personnel category to contribute to increased operational and tactical capabilities.

Supply of equipment

In December 2020, the Government appointed an inquiry with the stated aim of developing a materiel supply strategy for military defense. Gunnar Holmgren was appointed as the responsible investigator, having previously served as Director General of FMV in 2005–2012 and of the Swedish Agency for Government Employers in 2019–2022. The inquiry, which was presented in May 2022, was entitled *Materiel Supply Strategy—For our common security* (SOU 2022:24).

The stated purpose of the proposed strategy was to "support policy making and strategic decisions by relevant government agencies".

The commission was also tasked with "clarifying the conditions for materiel supply, analyzing the defense market and developing the state's relationship with defense companies".

The report provides a fairly comprehensive picture of the materiel supply area and also summarizes all the fluctuations that have occurred in the materiel supply area during the 2000s.

The proposed strategy is summarized in 14 points, which are also supported by additional proposals to support the implementation of the strategy and to strengthen the conditions for material supply.

Compared to the 2007 strategy which was summarized in three points as follows:

- Procuring fully developed equipment in the first place.
- If pre-procurement development is required—carry out development in cooperation with other nations.
- Only if points 1 and 2 are impossible—develop and procure on your own, the proposed 2022 strategy risks being unworkable, as it is so comprehensive that it can support many different views on what needs to be done and how it should be done .

One of the strengths of the report is that it states much more clearly than before the great importance of the Swedish defense industry in supplying the Armed Forces with systems and materiel. The report also points to a number of measures that need to be taken to strengthen the industry's role and ability to operate at higher levels of conflict and war. Examples include the state identifying war-critical companies whose production of materiel or services is of great importance to military defense, making it possible to place personnel in these companies on compulsory military service, as well as measures to strengthen domestic competence in critical areas, etc.

The investigation was in its final stages when Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The consequences of Swedish

NATO membership were not included in the investigation's terms of reference and there was no time to supplement this before submission. The Swedish NATO application was submitted on May 18, 2022, the day before the report was published on the government's website.

The report's proposals have therefore largely been put on hold, and there is currently no clear position from the government or parliament on the proposals.

The letters of appropriation to the Swedish Armed Forces and FMV for the current year (2024) do not show many traces of the proposals in the report. Both authorities have the task of streamlining working methods and processes to facilitate growth, and the Armed Forces also has the task of simplifying regulations and processes within the authority's own mandate, but that is all.

The Defense Commission

The report of the Swedish Defense Commission, Ds 2024:6, which was submitted to the government on April 26, is very recent. The report contains a 24-page chapter on materiel supply.

The Defence Commission picks up on much of the reasoning and proposals put forward in the 2022 report. Given the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the resulting sharp deterioration in the security situation, many of the proposals are further strengthened, while the NATO dimension is also addressed.

Key messages include the need for a further increase in the pace of deliveries of defense materiel with increased production capacity among all actors. There is also a strong focus on maintaining or increasing the required availability and function, which leads to an increased need for spare parts, ammunition, etc.

The Defence Commission is also clear in its prioritization of wartime needs and rapid deliveries in the period up to 2030. Part of this prioritization is that security of supply needs to increase over time and that supply solutions are secured. One conclusion of this, even if it is not written outright, is that it is the overall logistics capability in support of all branches of defence and combat forces that needs to be strengthened—as always when there is a live situation and wartime.

The Defense Commission builds on its previous reports, which are also fully in line with the materiel supply proposal, that war-critical companies need to be identified and, as K-companies, made part of the overall materiel supply solution before and during war.

It also points out the importance of the Armed Forces being able to absorb new technology quickly and efficiently in order to be able to integrate it into the war effort. In an earlier chapter, the following areas are specifically identified:

- artificial intelligence
- quantum technology
- unmanned aerial vehicles and autonomous systems
- space-based systems
- new materials and advanced manufacturing technologies
- biotechnology and human augmentation
- energy and propulsion
- electromagnetic weapons
- hypersonic weapons

As regards the issues of responsibility between the Defense Authorities, not least that between the Armed Forces and FMV, the preparation builds on the current arrangement but considers that processes and methods need to be streamlined.

Surprisingly little is written about the Swedish Defence Research Agency, which in a document that pushes so hard for de-

velopment and innovation is a clear shortcoming and probably does not give FOI the traction it needs to fully come into its own.

In the relationship with NATO and the EU, the Defense Commission offers no direct advice or proposals other than that Sweden should be an active partner in the various initiatives and collaborations that exist.

In relation to defense companies, the Defense Commission points out their importance and "that it is in Sweden's interest to maintain a strong domestic defense industrial base. Defense companies contribute with critical competence, production capacity and innovation power".

As a result, the Defense Commission proposes that the state should develop a defense industrial strategy that can provide guidance on a range of issues.

All in all, this leads to the interpretation that the defense commission proposes that the state, in addition to the strategic direction for defense innovation that has existed since January 2024, should develop (and reasonably also establish):

- a strategy for equipment supply based on the equipment supply study
- a defense industrial strategy under subsequent directives

The European Commission's "European Defense Industry Strategy, EDIS"

On March 5 this year, the European Commission presented a European defense industry strategy. With its five overarching objectives and three very clear indicators of what is sought, it is considerably sharper than the earlier Swedish proposals and could serve as a model for the strategy called for by the Defense Commission.

The Commission sets the following overall objectives/activities:

- Strengthening the European defense industrial and technological base through increased joint investment and expanded use of existing tools such as the Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).
- Ensure the availability of defense equipment through a more adaptable and competent defense industrial base that can also handle tomorrow's requirements.
- Ensure that the EU's common budget as well as nations' individual budgets contribute to the transformation of the European defense industry.
- Building a coherent culture of preparedness in the EU.
- Teaming up with NATO and other like-minded partners and working more closely with Ukraine.
- Developing closer ties with Ukraine by creating cooperation between the EU and Ukrainian defense industries.

It is also clear from the indicators that a strategic objective is to increase European/EU autonomy and capability to jointly produce advanced systems in the field of armaments. It is not clearly stated, but the main objective is to reduce dependence on US defense systems and components from Asia.

The indicators are:

- at least 40% of defense equipment to be purchased jointly [at least two member states in cooperation] between EU countries by 2030
- the economic value of the defense equipment trade procured jointly [at least two member states in cooperation] within the

EU amounts to at least 35% of the value of total EU defense spending.
- at least 50% of the value of all defense equipment in the EU is procured within the EU by 2030 and at least 60% by 2035.

In this context, it is worth recalling that the UK and Norway are not part of the EU.

A Swedish defense industry strategy

A "straightforward" translation of the EDIS indicators for Sweden is very problematic. It is perhaps mainly the first two points that would not benefit Swedish interests. This is mainly due to the combination of the fact that we have a strong Swedish defense industry and that our security of supply is dependent on the US for advanced weapons (Patriot, Excalibur, etc.) and vital components for the aerospace industry (aircraft engines, missiles and bombs), etc. We also have strong ties with the UK and Norway, which are not members of the EU, and all three are important export markets for the Swedish defence industry.

Nurturing the transatlantic link and not creating direct or indirect trade barriers with our NATO allies can be considered in Sweden's interest. A Swedish defense industry strategy must therefore take this into account and reason from an alliance perspective rather than from an EU perspective.

However, the level of clarity provided by EDIS is desirable.

A Swedish defense industry strategy must also deal with the dominant companies in Sweden, such as the Saab Group, BAE Hägglunds and BAE Bofors, as well as the plethora of smaller and medium-sized companies such as Mildef, Exensor, Ö-borgen, MW Group, etc. Guidelines and policies that suit the larger companies do not automatically suit the others.

Skills and capacities

An expansion of defense procurement that indirectly has the slogan "more—faster—safer" requires access to expertise and production resources in the form of personnel and facilities.

Competence issues

Regardless of the size of the companies, from the big "dragons" by Swedish standards such as Saab, BAE Hägglunds and BAE Bofors, to the smaller companies such as Mildef, Exensor, Ö-borgen, MW Group and others, competence is required. Looking at the core of the need for skills, the Armed Forces with FMV and FOI must have such expertise that they:

- understand what is needed in future conflict environments,
- can translate this understanding into relevant requirements,
- can evaluate existing and future market solutions against these requirements,
- before and when ordering, understand what is available, what is available but also what is not available,
- can use what is procured as efficiently as possible.

In the case of the defense industry, it must have such competence that it:

- can come up with their own ideas that challenge government proposals for solutions and requirements,
- understand and can translate customer requirements into technical solutions that can be produced efficiently,
- has its own, (or access to an) efficient production apparatus,

- is able to deliver products on time and in full to customers and deliver a financially sound result to its owners.

This competence is not something that is simply produced the day it is needed. It must be achieved and then nurtured. It needs to be developed. It needs stability. The only way to do this is to ensure as quickly as possible that enough engineers, officers, shop-floor workers, lawyers, economists, salesmen and all those required are actually engaged in this activity on a daily basis.

Recruitment has so far exceeded expectations, although many are struggling to find enough skilled people quickly enough. But it is possible to accelerate; FMV, for example, has gone from around 1 650 employees in 2019 to 2 450 employees in 2023.[9] This is an increase of 48% in three years. FMV is not alone, similar increases are also visible in the supply chain. Getting the newly hired personnel into production quickly requires a major effort to be made at the same time as deliveries increase. This is in itself a positive problem to tackle and it also provides good opportunities to develop the internal cultures of government agencies and companies to create the right type of attitude to be able to solve given tasks. Not least, such an attitude means that cooperation between authorities and companies is desirable even if tough demands are made on capability and delivery.

Production resources

That personnel are a critical production resource is obvious and has already been discussed in the text. But there is also a great need, not least in industry, to expand production facilities with associated premises, production lines, opportunities for testing, full-scale trials and unit introduction of future systems.

All of this requires major investment decisions by companies that must be recouped over time. Two examples of issues that have been debated externally are additional production lines in ammunition production and what needs to be done to ensure that the existing production line for fighter aircraft does not have to be decommissioned when Gripen E is completed in a few years' time.

In the case of ammunition, there has so far been a somewhat cautious attitude from the industry. The reason seems to be that the increased production need is not entirely certain, despite the ongoing war and security situation, and that it will remain at high levels over time in order for additional production lines to be financially viable. Voices have been raised that the state should co-finance such solutions as a way of sharing the financial risks between the industry and the state. In the security policy situation we now find ourselves in, such proposals seem well worth trying.

In the second case, the industry has submitted a proposal to continue production of Gripen E and simply increase the number of Gripen E aircraft in the Swedish Air Force. The Chief of the Swedish Air Force and the head of FMV's Aeronautics and Space business area have rejected the proposal, referring to the ongoing work on the roadmap program for combat aircraft, which aims to determine what will come after Gripen E. Will it be a completely new Swedish-developed combat aircraft, a plane developed in international cooperation, or will it be a ready-made aircraft system purchased from abroad (such as the American F-35). The work on the roadmap program will continue until around 2030.

The issue of fighter aircraft development will certainly come back into debate and discussion before 2030 and will largely be about Swedish industrial know-how. As

such, the issue will be bigger than just the aircraft, the air force and Saab. Like the issue of submarine development, it also has major industrial and security policy significance and, like other major Swedish companies (Volvo, SSAB, Scania, ABB, Ericsson, etc.), contributes to Sweden's self-image as an advanced industrial nation.

Policies also need to remove, or at least significantly reduce, a number of regulatory barriers to making the necessary investments. These include a number of regulations linked to construction permitting, environmental impact, rules for the use of unmanned systems in airspace and at sea, etc.

And finally—what to do with the strategies?

The most important thing we need to do is not wait for the strategies! By the time there is an equipment supply strategy and/or a defense industry strategy, at least one—but more likely several—years will have passed.

In that sense—"Damn the strategies!". Moses was given ten commandments by God to regulate the whole of human existence. Five commandments should be enough to regulate the supply of materials. The basis is already available in existing material and could, for example, consist of the following 5 main proposals:

In the coming years, prioritize measures in the field of equipment that will lead to a rapid and clear increase in the operational capability of war units.

Invite the Swedish defense companies and have real discussions on what problems need to be solved. Participants from FM (incl. unit level), FMV and FOI) and listen to what the industry has to offer in terms of ideas.

Increase the proportion of tests and trials with promising technology areas in close collaboration between units, FMV, FOI and industry.

Clarify the vital role of the defense industry for defense capabilities, but also clarify the responsibilities and conditions that come with this (industry exists for defense—not the other way around).

Cut and slash laws, regulations and policies that make development slower than it needs to be.

The author is a Rear Admiral and a member of the KÖMS and RSAWS, where he is Chairman of Division IV.

Notes

1. The article is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. The torpedoes of the past are more like what we would call mines today.
3. Flag Captain is the designation of a seagoing Admiral's Chief of Staff and not a military rank. The term was last used in Sweden for the Chief of Staff of the Coastal Fleet.
4. *FMV annual reports* 2021, 2022 and 2023.
5. Each year's appropriation directions from the Government to FMV.
6. *FMV annual reports* 2021, 2022 and 2023.
7. Government appropriation directions to the Armed Forces for 2024, version dated 2024-04-26, Government appropriation directions to FMV for 2024, version dated 2024-03-21.
8. Ihrfors, Rebecca: "Shifting culture and leadership to promote innovation in defense", *KKrVAHT*, No. 4 2023, pp. 34-43.
9. Average over each year. Source *FMV annual Reports* 2019 and 2023.

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