

Swedish Military transformation and the Nordic Battle Group – for what and towards what?

By Tommy Jeppsson

To characterize Swedish security policy during almost half a century covering the period from 1945 to 1990 can be done, at least as a starting point, by using two words: neutrality and non-alignment. A credible defence policy, a reasonably strong total defence structure, conscription and a national defence industry were cornerstones in the ability to handle a threat which was mainly characterised as military. Today, almost all European militaries have, for less than two decades, seen profound transformations in order to meet new and broader challenges that mainly originate from outside our own continent.¹

The fundamental change in the security policy environment influencing Sweden is the result of events taking place from the mid 1980's and at the beginning of

the 1990's. As a result, Sweden has given up neutrality and non-alignment and has changed to military non-alignment, while at the same time gaining membership in the EU in 1995. The latest report from the Swedish defence commission² emphasizes cooperation between the EU member states in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). As a result of participation in the Partnership for Peace programme, Swedish cooperation with NATO has intensified, which has been a booster for the transformation process of the armed forces.

Besides giving facts and figures as well as making some reflections concerning the Nordic EU Battle Group (NBG) concept, the aim with this article is to discuss perspectives that derive from two dominating views concerning the future security envi-

1 Eriksson, Arita: "The Building of a Defence Capacity in the European Union – What Internal and External Implications", (draft) to be published in Hallenberg, Jan & Karlson, Håkan (eds.): *The New Strategic Triangle: The US, the EU and Russia in an Evolving Security Environment*, Routledge, 2006 p 14.

2 Regeringskansliet, Försvarsdepartementet, *Försvar i användning*, Ds 2008:48.

ronment. I also wish to elaborate on what implications those might have, not so much concerning the NBG concept as such but the Swedish military as a whole.

The NBG has been presented as having a key role in the transformation of the Swedish armed forces. That role, when it comes to facts, figures and the concept, will be briefly and critically discussed based on ongoing trends in our security environment, which will most probably have implications for our future. In other words, the future role of the Swedish military as an instrument for national defence or territorial defence, Crisis Management (CM) or as an instrument for both is the main topic of this article.

The focus will be on Sweden, also when dealing with specific NBG issues, although the author is fully aware of the importance of troop contributions from Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Norway. The reason is that the Swedish contribution represents the main body of the NBG since Sweden has a role as framework nation. The relevance of the NBG concept for CM operations as well as national defence will be discussed.

This chapter starts with a brief look into the Swedish political process that has been guiding the military transformation. This will be followed by an overview and discussion about the European Union's strategy, a document that is often referred to as it represents the first published strategy document of the Union. Facts, figures and reflections concerning the NBG will

then follow, focusing on the concept as a tool for CM. The aim of the penultimate section is to discuss an alternative to the NBG concept in the framework of the ongoing broadened Nordic cooperation which will almost certainly have an impact on the Swedish military. This is done from the basic insight that concepts, structures and organizations are continuously undergoing change. Finally, it is frequently communicated that Swedish military capabilities have an international as well as a national role to play. Therefore, it has to be discussed how the NBG, basically designed for military CM, fits into a national context. The final part tries to sum up some of the broader perspectives earlier touched upon.

The political process – a guideline for transformation towards a CM-orientated military

This section focuses on the Swedish national perspective. It gives a short overview of the development of the security and defence policy covering the period 1999–2004. This period has seen greater and more dramatic changes regarding security and defence policy than probably ever before in the modern history of Sweden. After 1989 these changes have been closely tied to a new security environment and the development of the ESDP.

Starting slowly in the early 1990's, accelerating in the late 1990's and reaching top speed after 2000, the Swedish armed forces have undergone a dramatic reori-

entation from a threatfocused, territorial anti-invasion force towards a CM instrument to be used internationally as well as nationally. One main driving force has been the ESDP process, in which Sweden has participated very actively. One reason for the positive attitude towards the ESDP is that Sweden has shown a genuine interest in increasing the CM capabilities of the union. Another, more hidden, reason might be the Swedish resistance against a common European defence,³ which might explain the effective Swedish EU presidency in 2001, also when security issues were being discussed. One example of effectiveness mentioned is the work concerning the development of military capabilities. The most important procedural result of the Headline Goal Process, the Headline Progress Catalogue (HPC), was a Swedish reference. In this document, it is clearly stated which capabilities the EU requires, which ones are operational and what operational consequences the identified shortcomings will have.⁴

The ESDP process is estimated to have had and still has a significant influence on the restructuring of the Swedish armed forces. Firstly, Sweden committed units from all services which were reported to HPC with high costs associated to the work

needed in order to make them interoperable as well as meeting the required status of readiness. Secondly, and of significant importance, was showing political willingness as well as the ability to participate in EU operations. Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a Swedish Special Forces unit was operating in close and effective cooperation with French units, has had positive spillover effects regarding how the Swedish military is viewed internationally. Thirdly, the decision taken by the Swedish government to participate in Operation Artemis has shown an ability to take sensitive, security policyrelated, decisions at short notice as well as an increased willingness to use the military instrument as a security policy tool, which also represents something fundamentally new compared with the Cold War period.

In preparing the *Swedish Defence Review* taken in December 2004, the government stressed the importance of participating in the development of EU CM capabilities, including the ability for rapid reaction. In order to improve the defence forces for more demanding international operations, priority was given to the development of a European rapid reaction capability.⁵ The establishment of the NBG together with

3 Wedin, Lars: "Sweden in European security" in Huldt, Bo; Ries, Tomas; Mörtberg, Jan & Davidson, Elisabeth (eds.): *Strategic Yearbook 2004. The New Northern Security Agenda*. National Defence College, Stockholm 2004, p 329.

4 Ibid, p 329.

5 Proposition 2004/05:43, *Försvarsmaktens grundorganisation*. Regeringskansliet, Stockholm 2004, p. 16.

Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Norway has been viewed as a “main-focus project” within the Swedish armed forces.

Reasons why Denmark has not contributed to the NBG has, at least partly, connections with reservations made in the Amsterdam Treaty, where it is stated that Denmark is not going to participate in any activities involving EU military capabilities. Tricky consequences could be foreseen as a result of this. If the UN tasks the EU to launch an operation or if the EU takes the decision to go for an operation by itself, or if NATO goes for an operation where the USA is not participating and the European countries use the EU defence dimension, Denmark might find herself in a situation where the country is unable to participate.⁶ For the discussion taking part later in this chapter concerning an alternative to the NBG concept in the framework of the ongoing broadening Nordic cooperation, it is estimated that Denmark will change this point of view some time in the future.

The process of developing the first NBG (NBG 08) represents a practical landmark in the rapid shift of Swedish security and defence policy. In reality, military non-alignment does not exclude Sweden from cooperating with other nations in all types of CM operations, while at the same time

the formal membership of a military alliance is, from a political point of view, a non-subject. To give one example, support concerning command and control for NBG 08 was provided by the United Kingdom through its Operational Headquarters (OHQ). From the Swedish perspective, such an arrangement would have been highly doubtful a decade ago.

Also, the timeframe of establishing the NBG gives interesting signals. NBG 08 was operational from the first of January 2008, which clearly showed a political willingness to get practical results within the shortest possible timeframe. This is the output of the fact that the ability to participate in international missions in the short-term and mid-term timeframe has been the most important single factor that has influenced day-to-day work in the armed forces during the last few years.⁷

The political process, as well as work done in the Swedish Armed Forces HQ before and after the parliamentary decision regarding the defence white paper of 2004, seems to have confirmed the tendency to emphasize the EU's military dimension. This is also seen in countries that have traditionally shown reluctance to use their military instrument. EU requirements seem to have been the most important single factor when it comes to the implementa-

6 *Nordisk Sikkerhet – Militaerbalansen 2003-2004*. Den Norske Atlanterhavskomiteé, Oslo 2004, p. 66-27.

7 Op cit, footnote 5, p. 16.

tion phase of restructuring the Swedish military. In fact, this is the same as having a focus on the establishment of the NBG.⁸ The ESDP seems to have been looked upon as the overarching “way ahead” for the restructuring process. Half a year before the Swedish Defence Review in December 2004 was produced, the NBG concept was implemented and the Headline Goal 2010 was developed.⁹ The result has been that the EU has affected both Swedish security policy as well as further development of the armed forces. It could be argued that the process inside the union concerning development of CM capabilities has also served the purpose of change at the national level.

A far-reaching and important question concerning the future is whether the influence of the EU upon its member states, including Sweden could be estimated to increase or decrease as a consequence of results in the ESDP process. So far some positive results have been achieved. For Sweden as a small state the development of security policy hardware like the NBG is a way of showing political willingness to support the ESDP process and at the same time a way of gaining influence over its further development.¹⁰

From practical military aspects the

process of establishing the NBG 08 has deepened the interaction and cooperation between the Nordic countries. The work with the NBG concept between Finland, Norway and Sweden has served as a booster for cooperation in a wider area of defence related issues. It is also interesting that cooperation has included the United Kingdom. Bearing in mind the specific role this country has had as being responsible for the OHQ, a most probable output for Sweden is estimated to be deepened cooperation not only with Norway, Finland and the United Kingdom, but also with other EU and NATO countries. As a result of the readiness period for NBG 08, cooperation has reached more practical and detailed levels. This ongoing practical work will most probably enhance cooperation between the Nordic countries as well as have consequences inside the EU, both politically and militarily, with great integrative effects.

The European security strategy – a tool for encouraging change

One reason for publishing the European security strategy in December 2003 was a need to define and make the security policy aims of the union clear. Bearing in mind how fast the ESDP was developing during

8 ”Beslut om reformens mål och strategi”, Försvarsmakten, Högkvarteret, STRA UTVS, HKV beteckning 23 100:78621, Stockholm, 2004.

9 Op cit, footnote 1, p. 16.

10 See Op cit, footnote 2.

these years, the need for a roadmap ahead, giving a signal that the EU wished to be an independent security political actor, was needed. There existed an obvious need among the EU member states to enhance a common security policy understanding as well as a common culture for Crisis Management.¹¹

The strategy clearly states that the EU needs to be a more active international player, more unified and more able to take action. The document stresses the importance of developing a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and, if necessary, robust interventions. Also, the importance of operations that combine military and civilian capacities as a consequence of a broad capability list at the EU's disposal is underlined.¹²

The EU strategy communicates the necessity of developing capabilities in cooperation between the member states more systematically as well as a need for more flexible and mobile forces in order to be able to handle new threats. The strategy gives a clear signal that the EU capabilities and those from member states need better

coordination.¹³ This message has to be viewed in a broader security context. One result of the European integration is that the borders of the union are getting closer to "security hotspots", where almost automatically a secure environment on the other side of the Mediterranean and in North Africa is of paramount importance as is a peaceful Balkan region.¹⁴

However, questions have been raised if the document represents a meaningful, coherent strategy that goes beyond the borders of the EU nations. Within the EU member states there is a very clear preference for soft power, while at the same time there are certain questions to be answered when it comes to the role to be played by the military.¹⁵ This limitation becomes more obvious when one recognizes a constantly repeated experience that in insecure and dangerous environments it is often only the military that can achieve a "civilian effect", particularly if there are time limitations involved.¹⁶ Yet another aspect is that although the strategy clearly communicates the view that European security is going beyond national bounda-

11 Tofte, Sunniva: "European Securitypolitical Strategy. A secure Europe in a better world". *DNAK* 3-2004.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid

14 Ibid

15 Eikenberry, Karl: "Europe and Conflict Resolution: Isolated or Engaged?". *Perspectives on International Security*, Adelphi Paper 400-401, p. 63.

16 Richards, David: "European Armies: The Challenge". *Perspectives on International Security*, Adelphi paper 400-401, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 2008 p. 55.

Defence against invasion	Actively used security policy tool
Preventive approach	Oriented towards involvement
Defence against massive military invasion	Continuously ongoing CM operations
National perspective	Multinational perspective
Stored material/ mobilization system	Frequently used military capabilities
Opponent well defined	Blurred picture of opponent (-s)
Quantitybased organization	Quality based organization
Focus: Plans, administration, training of conscripts	Focus: Ongoing crisis management operations
Fixed structures	Modular structures
Operational environment defined	Variation of operational environment

ries it is not clearly addressing regional priorities.¹⁷

Arguments for the EU to become a more active actor indirectly reflects a need for better coordination of existing resources as well as better cooperation when new capabilities are acquired. Increased defence budgets may be an aim, but it is a highly doubtful wish as long as there is no perception of a major security threat to the member states of the union. Synergy effects as a result of good cooperation are probably a faster way of getting results. The tri-lateral cooperation between Finland, Norway and Sweden has, during the last few years, identified a great number of possibilities now under way of probably being materialized.

To sum up the transformation process that has been and is taking place in Swe-

den, the above table compares the main characteristics between a defence system against invasion versus a military designed for an active security policy role.¹⁸

When listed factors are compared, two entirely different military systems appear. Sweden has disbanded a military which is characterized in the left section of the table and is moving rapidly towards the direction described in the right-hand section. One obvious question when comparing factors presented in the table is if the Swedish transformation has focused too much on qualities presented in the right-hand section of the table and neglected the rationale behind the left one. This question will be followed up later in this chapter.

However, from an overall point of view, some less favourable tendencies can be observed that tend to hamper a

¹⁷ Op cit, footnote 15 p 63-64.

¹⁸ The table is originally presented by Sverre Diesen at a presentation at the Swedish National Defence College in the autumn of 2001.

process towards a higher degree of military efficiency inside the EU. In the 1999 Helsinki headline goals, 64 capability objectives were identified as critical and had to be met. In 2006, seven years later, only twelve of those were successfully implemented.¹⁹ There are critical shortcomings, for instance when it comes to force protection, such as field ballistic protection from improvised explosive devices and rocket-propelled grenades. Intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) as well as inter-theatre and intra-theatre airlifts are other areas of concern. Helicopters are a key resource and the identified lack of those being deployable is especially critical. All the EU nations possess 1,437 helicopters out of which 551 are classed as NATO deployable. Only 44 are identified as meeting the operational requirements of Afghanistan in the 2006 NATO Defence Planning Questionnaire.²⁰

When it comes to command and control there exists a collective inability to communicate effectively within and between headquarters, which does not only refer to equipment incompatibility. National security regimes are significant hindrances to operational command. Sharing information

between nations instead of protecting it nationally seems to be an obvious success criteria. However, the reality is that nations generally favour the latter approach. The result is the development of nation-specific systems and the use of different command and control systems in a coalition context.²¹ This is communicated as lessons learned from NBG 08, identifying Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance Task Forces (ISTAR TF) as critical assets. Without collectively owned sensors or sensors possessed by member nations, collecting information according to the priorities decided upon, the intelligence branch will be totally reliant on what other nations are willing to provide.²²

The NBG as a CM tool: facts, figures and reflections

The Swedish transformation is from an overall point of view in line with the European security strategy which emphasizes the need to transform the armed forces inside the union towards more flexibility and to give them tools they can use to meet threats identified as new threats.²³ The NBG has significantly showed willingness to reach a higher ability to participate in international CM operations. At the same

19 Op cit, footnote 15, p 65.

20 Op cit, footnote 16, p 59.

21 Ibid.

22 Nordic Battle Group Force Headquarters Sweden, *Lessons learned 2008*, 30 June 2008, p. 12 .

23 *Ett säkert Europa i en bättre värld. En europeisk säkerhetsstrategi*. Europeiska Unionens institut för säkerhetsstudier, Paris 2003, p. 20.

time, this greater ability is developed in order to meet requirements both from the EU and the UN.²⁴

The transformation of the Swedish defence forces has clearly shown an ambition to focus on operational requirements, also in the near future. Priority was given to international commitments and the ability of rapid reaction, which was expected to increase both qualitative and quantitative aspects.²⁵ Seen from the perspective that the NBG was expected to be operational from January 2008, this ambition fits in rather well. The Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence 2004 emphasized the need for high personal as well as material quality.²⁶

The Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence 2004 also stressed the importance of Swedish units having high and equal quality to units from countries that Sweden cooperates with. The importance of flexibility and mobility when talking about rapid reaction forces means that they are expected to be able to shift between levels of conflict, tasks and geographical environment as well as being interoperable with a broad spectrum of partner countries and civilian actors.²⁷

There have been questions concerning

registered units in HPC, mainly those from the Navy and Air Force. Doubts have concentrated on why one should have units from both these two services in the HPC. It has been argued that these units are expensive and not asked for in missions. It is worth observing that when this text is written (in October 2009), EU operations have been limited in numbers, with the consequence that it might be too early to conclude which resources are needed as well as those which are not. In addition, it is of interest that Sweden shows the ambition to participate with capabilities from the three services.²⁸ Sweden is participating with two corvettes and a logistics support ship in the EU-led force to secure Somalian waters from piracy. This has underlined the necessity of not having a too narrow approach towards the subject of what could be expected to be the appropriate capabilities for CM.

Missions for the NBG were covered by the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on 17 May 2004 and includes the following

- Joint disarmament operations
- Humanitarian and rescue tasks
- Peacekeeping tasks and tasks of

24 *Sveriges försvarspolitik 2005-2007*, Report 2004/05: FöU4, p. 48.

25 *Ibid*, p 48.

26 *Ibid*, p 48.

27 *Ibid*, p 48.

28 Wedin, Lars: "Tre år i EU:s militära stab", *KKrVAHT*, 5. häftet 2004, p. 144.

combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking

- Support for third countries in combating terrorism and security sector reform.²⁹

Five to ten days after the decision has been taken, units from the NBG are expected to be operational in a minor CM operation (up to 120 days) or have the role as advance party in a more complex one.

Combating terrorism is a task of specific interest. CM today involves a blurred environment where activities supporting nation building simultaneously takes place with fighting. Actors using terrorism as a tool have convincingly shown their ability of fighting western militaries. The NBG 08 was not tested (no BG has been so far) in an operation. Still, the different views between the Nordic capitals as well as inside the union regarding the use of military force against terrorist groups have to be sorted out in order to create the same set of rules.

Identified tasks as well as possible future mission areas make it highly probable that the NBG, if sent into an operation, will face actors operating from asymmetrical concepts. The norm will be that these actors do what is unexpected. Non-traditional concepts of attacking, which are totally different from the rules, tools or methods used by the party being attacked,

can be expected. The innovative use of tactics and technology in combination with the ambition to hit as many critical vulnerabilities as possible with the aim of breaking the will of the opponent can also be expected. These methods are tactical in essence. Combined with psychological tools, results will be reached at the strategic level, because the will of the entire nation to continue as a part of an ongoing operation can be hampered. There is a general tendency that asymmetric threats that might influence an EU operation are reasonably well defined when it comes to actors as well as their tools and methods. One can therefore easily argue that this has to be considered when composing and training modern military forces.

When it comes to command and control at the operational level, one or several BGs are commanded by Force Headquarters (FHQ), which, together, constitutes the rapid reaction capability. One EU OHQ (combined and joint) shall, if needed, be able to command the military part of the EU-led CM operation where this specific HQ gets political guidance from the EU. A FHQ is an instrument for command and control at the operational level and is the highest military level of the Union in a CM operation. A FHQ for the NBG has the capacity to lead one or more BGs as well as supporting elements. It can also consist

²⁹ Council of the European Union. Press release 2582, Council Meeting. General Affairs and External Relations. Brussels, 17 May 2004.

of HQ-units and a staff from participating nations.³⁰ The command and control link at the militarystrategic level for NBG 08 has been the OHQ in Northwood in the United Kingdom. It is one of four certified OHQs assigned to be at the disposal of the EU, which seems to have been a natural choice since there is no such headquarters available either in Sweden or in Finland. Also, the Norwegian OHQ in Stavanger is not an alternative as long as Norway is not a member of the EU. From the intelligence perspective, Northwood is a valuable choice because it represents one of the terminating points of both the EU's as well as NATO's intelligence databases.³¹

The core unit and manoeuvre element in the NBG 08 was a reinforced battalion characterized by the possibility of an all-arms representation. In addition, operational and strategic enablers were pre-identified. These consisted of air and naval forces together with logistic and other special functions, such as strategic

as well as tactical air transport, close air support (CAS), airport of departure units, strategic sealift and traffic control units. The NBG 08 numbered 2,850 all ranks. Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) are included in these figures. NBG 11 will field a smaller amount of personnel, about 2,000.³²

From an overall point of view, the ability to achieve high quality related to the material aspects has been met. When it comes to capabilities, the most serious limitation for NBG 08 has been the lack of helicopters for medical evacuation.

A first draft of preliminary costs up to 2008 is shown in the table below.³⁴

These figures could be compared with the reported costs of SEK 1.2 billion for 2008, which flared a debate in the aftermath of the arrival of the final bill. The reason for increased costs is that the unit had to be raised from the bottom up, where particularly the recruitment of personnel was expensive. The situation for NBG

2005	2006	2007	2008
SEK 101 mill ³⁵	SEK 302 mill	SEK 842 mill	SEK 1.050 bill

30 Interview with Colonel Berndt Grundevik, 27 February 2005.

31 Interview with Commander Tor Egil Walther, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 1 March 2005.

32 Interview with Chief of Staff: Swedish Army, Major General Berndt Grundevik 23 March 2008.

33 Ibid.

34 *Utveckling av bidrag till EU:s snabbinsatsförmåga (Nordic Battle Group) – beskrivning av verksamhet samt därtill knutna kostnader.* Försvarsmakten, Hökvarteret, HKV 23 383: 63848, Stockholm 2005.

35 Swedish crowns.

11 will be different where a new system of recruitment will be established with soldiers already on contract.³⁶

If the concept of the Nordic BG is to be fully implemented, strategic transport capabilities both in the air and at sea are the most critical assets. This is a problem for all EU members except for France and the United Kingdom. Existing railway network and road systems used in combination make it possible to reach probable conflict areas on the European continent. The full use of this combination is possible in the western parts, and here it is essential to stress the importance of heavy road transport units as a most critical resource. Although not an urgent issue at present, future operations in the eastern parts of Europe, however, will be heavily dependent on the railroads.³⁷ The possibility to reach landlocked areas will depend on an airlift capacity if the rapid deployment of units and their logistics is going to be realized. If airport and port facilities are available in an area of tension or conflict, the combination of air-lift and sea-lift makes a rapid reaction possible. Entry forces use airlift assets and heavier units and the main bulk of supply uses sealift assets, where the latter is the most economical alternative.

Adequate strategic airlift and sealift capabilities are Sweden's responsibility

as framework nation. Especially, Strategic Airlift has been identified as an area of short supply in all European countries and is an area that from a Swedish perspective has required special attention due to the role as framework nation. It is an area where it is critical that the European nations co-operate in order to develop functioning solutions. Sweden has actively been searching for common solutions and a future-oriented co-operation, the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), is established. SAC is an air transport asset consisting of three C-17 aircraft that are commonly owned and operated by twelve nations. Sweden is the second largest stakeholder in the common pool and will also contribute substantially to the manning of the main operating base located in Hungary.³⁸

SAC is an example of how European capabilities can be strengthened through a pragmatic interplay between the EU and NATO. This interplay is of special significance for the two EU nations Sweden and Finland.³⁹ Strategic airlift is a most critical tool because of EU requirements that Rapid Reaction Forces shall be operational in a conflict zone only days after decisions have been made and bearing in mind that a number of the most probable conflict areas are landlocked.

Sealift for the NBG is expected to be

36 Interview with Lieutenant General Anders Lindström made by Sven-Åke Haglund 22 December 2008.

37 Interview with Dr Alpo Juntunen, National Defence College of Finland, 3 March 2005.

38 Swedish Supreme Commanders newsletter 7 July 2008.

39 Ibid.

provided by Swedish-Norwegian cooperation using contracted ships, and, for logistic purposes, by membership in the Sealift Co-ordination Centre (SCC) located in Eindhoven.⁴⁰ At the same time, proposals have been heard favouring the acquisition of a Swedish amphibious transport ship with a multi-role capacity. The main task would be transportation of units and supplies. Additional roles could be as a command and control facility, as a hospital-ship as well as a base for rescue operations. Using existing know-how such a ship could be operational in three to five years after a decision has been taken with a cost of approximately 200 million euros.⁴¹ Such a ship would ensure sustainability for the NBG during operations, while Sweden at the same time could offer a most wanted resource to other nations, which increases the role of Sweden as a EU member and co-operation partner.⁴² Concerning national sealift capabilities, small nations have obviously found these of considerable value. In the case of Denmark, two command and support ships, *Absalon* and *Esbern Snare*, were launched in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

High logistical demands have to be met. A most probable conflict scenario characterized by simultaneously ongoing,

high-intensity/low-intensity operations at both the operational and tactical levels, imply that very different demands have to be met at the same time. High-intensity operations will need a robust military logistic organization which easily can adapt to combat-arms units that are frequently task-organized. At the same time, low-intensity operations might be sustained by using civilian contractors, coordinated by an integrated civil-military logistic staff element.

Readiness is closely linked to training standards. One overarching ambition with the NBG concept is that the units must be able to engage in warfighting without complementary training. From a Swedish perspective, that view represents a great change as soldiers have to be regulars or on contract. In addition, the mental impact on the organization as a whole might be quite substantial. In practice, this means that a new armed forces culture with a code and ethos focusing on the military's role as the Swedish number one repressive instrument will develop more professionalism because the organization as a whole will have mission experience. The tendency from the 1970's up to the 1990's, where military personnel were looked upon as just another group of public servants, seems to have no

40 "Särskild redovisning av strategiska transporter i BU 06", p 8, 12, 19 and 21.

41 Granholm, Niklas: "Omvärldsbild och självbild – förändrade förutsättningar för marinens strukturella utveckling". *Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet* (2:2003), p 155-157.

42 Ibid, p 156.

future in an organization which is used as an active security policy tool.

It is also important for the establishment of the NBG that the structure of the Swedish officers' corps will undergo great changes. The consequence of a newly taken decision that approximately 60% will belong to a group of specialist officers means that in practice NCO's are back, which could be expected to have a positive effect on training standards from the bottom up in the organization. Also, if one adapted the Danish way of reducing the number of officers serving in staff and administrative positions and increasing the numbers serving with the units, this could be expected to raise the total quality of the organization.

The ongoing process in Sweden, where conscription will be replaced by regulars and soldiers on contract, has not been accepted by everyone. Counterproposals stress that there is no sign that conscription could be disbanded if the quality aspects are taken seriously. The reason is that conscription allows for testing a good portion of the population, which helps in the search for quality. In other words, conscription for these people is a prerequisite for recruiting the right quality of the right numbers to fill the ranks manned by professionals and soldiers on contract.

Not the final military CM solution

One motivated question might be if and how the development of NBG 08, as well as the development and possible

future use of NBG 11, will effect further transformation of the armed forces as a CM instrument. Firstly, one has to bear in mind that for the foreseeable future the Swedish armed forces will most probably reflect a small organization, where the finalized work with NBG 08 as well as the ongoing work to establish NBG 11 will have consequences for almost the entire organization. Secondly, and as a result of a relatively limited volume as well as the fact that units are frequently used in missions, an environment will be shaped where transformation is an ongoing process. It is driven by mission-related experience, where it might not be too unrealistic to predict substantial changes in the now adopted concept. Thirdly, the formalized studies and development system, developed from the late 1960's, has definitely lost its significance in favour of a much more dynamic process, where recently gained experience and lessons learned have to be implemented rapidly.

There seems to exist views that the EU BG's will be able to execute autonomous operations. These views have to be connected with some of the main characteristics of future operations initiated and executed by the EU:

- A rapid initial response to the actual crisis that will generally serve the purpose of demonstrating political will as well as military ability and at the same time secure the arrival of follow-on forces.
- Next, the creation of a secure en-

vironment might involve military operations at low intensity up to high intensity – simultaneously.

- Lastly, it is about sustaining a secure environment, which is a prerequisite for post-conflict peacebuilding. This process generally has a long duration and requires a lot of work in order to create confidence among the population, which is personal intensive. Or in other words, “Boots-on-the-ground” is just another expression of the fact that numbers still count, also in CM. This fact will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Talking about those operations who might involve a substantial amount of violence, autonomous operations are manpower-intensive and we have to bear in mind that the core element of the NBG is a battalion. In order to meet operational demands that are closely connected with rapid reaction ability, high tactical and operational as well as strategic mobility have to be met. Rapid reaction units at brigade and division levels are designed for a quick reaction to upcoming crises, which in practice is the same as being operational in the respective “hotspot” within days. Rapid reaction units also have the capacity to calm down the situation through their own resources, or if that is not possible, to serve as an advance party by securing incoming

reinforcements. For instance, the 82nd Airborne Division from the USA, the UK Air assault Brigade and the 11th Mobile Brigade from the Netherlands meet the criteria mentioned above.

Increased Nordic cooperation might be far deeper in the future as has been signalled by former Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Thorvald Stoltenberg.⁴³ Nordic operations in the future will most probably give room for further development. The Nordic Brigade, which was earlier established within the framework of the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), might serve as a framework when discussing future Nordic military CM tools. Characteristics discussed earlier in this section of future CM operations indicates the need for the following capacities: one capability tailored for rapid response in order to secure the arrival of follow-on forces while at the same time signalling political will and military ability. Another capability is to be able to create a safe environment by being capable of being involved in operations covering the spectrum from low intensity to high intensity combat simultaneously. A third capability is designed to sustain a secure environment, which is a prerequisite for peacebuilding, a process that generally extends over a long period of time. In other words, what might be needed are forces that are fast, strong and sustainable enough

43 Stoltenberg, Thorvald: *Nordic co-operation on foreign and security policy – a proposal presented to the Nordic foreign ministers during a special Nordic Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 9 February 2009.*

for establishing military presence, creating a safe enough environment and securing as well as supporting the nation-building process.

A military solution from identified tasks is a brigade-sized unit with the following main components:

- One airmobile battalion as the main tool for rapid response with high tactical, operational as well as strategic mobility. This unit is trained to fulfil combat tasks, but has less protection and firepower compared to a mechanized battalion or an infantry battalion. The airmobile battalion is relatively modest to support logistically. The C-130 system in service in Denmark, Norway and Sweden could be used for airlifts. With a light equipment alternative, including three days of supply (DOS), one squadron can be lifted by three C-130's. The Swedish Army has one such unit in its inventory and one squadron has been operational since 2007 with soldiers on contract. To achieve the same status for the rest of the battalion, it will be necessary to recruit additional soldiers on contract with an estimated timeframe of two years after a decision has been made.
- One mechanized battalion with a tank squadron as the main follow-up force and provider of fighting power is needed in order to create a safe environment. A broad variety of combat tasks could be solved with limitations mainly connected with operational and strategic mobility. Sealift/ railway/ land transportations are at present main possibilities.⁴⁴ The C 130-system cannot be used and a heavy air transport aircraft such as the now available C-17 is required, at least for parts of this battalion. The provider of this mechanized battalion could be Denmark, where the Danish International Brigade includes such a unit. The Danish International Brigade, which, in addition, has two mechanized infantry battalions, an artillery battalion together with other CS and CSS elements forms a suitable structure from which augmented capacities for the mechanized battalion can be drawn. The brigade is reported to be a part of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and consists of approximately 4,500 all ranks, where 20% are regulars and 80% conscripts with a contract that makes it possible to call them up for service during a period of three years.⁴⁵

44 To give an impression of the logistical demands: when Sweden provided a reinforced CV 90 company to the United Nations Liberia mission, 200 containers were required for getting the company to the mission area.

45 Op cit, footnote 6, p 63

- One infantry battalion needed both for more demanding operations in order to secure a safe environment as well as providing “boots on the ground”, which will be an essential part for securing the peace-building process. The Norwegian Telemark Battalion might fit into this role. However, the pure infantry component is limited and may need reinforcements, especially when entering a peace-building phase. The combat capability of the Telemark Battalion lies somewhere between a mechanized and an airmobile battalion. Numbering 450 professionals and 80 on contract the battalion is built around one mechanized infantry company with CV 90s/ M 113s, one tank squadron with Leopard 2A3s and one combat engineer company as well as headquarters and supply company. Augmented are antitank, medical, mortar, forward air control/fire control units and a national support element.⁴⁶ An alternative to the Norwegian Telemark Battalion could be a Finnish unit, bearing in mind that Finland has at its disposal three rapid reaction brigades.
- One military police battalion which will have a limited role in high- intensity operations, but is a most useful tool against non- conventional opponents as well as in the peacebuilding phase. This phase will need a substantial number of

Military Police units that can carry out normal police functions, train the local police as well as take part in counter-insurgency operations. Organizing such a battalion could eventually be made on a trilateral basis between Finland, Norway and Denmark.

- CS and CSS units as well as strategic enablers discussed earlier in this chapter.

Being capable of dealing with an opponent using asymmetric concepts generates a need to adopt intelligence-driven operations. In such an environment the need for technical intelligence components are reduced in favour of human intelligence (HUMINT) combined with a deep cultural knowledge. This has to be reflected in an intelligence structure at all levels that is capable of using both military and non-military sources and is capable for smooth coordination with local and regional authorities and agencies as well as commercial organizations of the country where mission takes place. Here, the need for Special Forces units from all Nordic countries seems to be obvious.

One important area, when future structures are discussed, is the development of network-based capabilities. Of paramount importance is interoperability with forces from EU and NATO countries. From a more practical aspect Swedish forces are more interoperable than most new and in some

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 18.

cases old NATO countries. The creation of network-based capabilities is most critical in order to enhance efficiency. For example, a battalion commander on the ground must have the ability to call for fire support, either from artillery, close air support or naval gunfire. What tool or which tools he or she decides to use depends on the tactical situation. However, the communications have to be knitted together between the Army, naval and Air Force units and the intelligence picture has to be the same.

Due to the fact that conflicts become more and more internationalized, expeditionary thinking and structuring is in focus. A structure exemplified by a Nordic brigade should be looked upon as a capability box from which the actual force structure is composed, depending on the character of the actual conflict. The challenge then will be the creation of operational flexibility and organizational stability, which are factors that simply cannot be united in an environment characterized by multi-dimensionality and tasked organized forces. The key to success in such an environment is well trained personnel that are able to tackle a wide spectrum of missions with a broad variety of military capacities. Perhaps flatter structures can help to solve the problem, taking into consideration that land force structures with a pyramid organization from section to Army Corps represent a concept originating from Na-

oleon I. Task organization in reality is a first step to developing modular network-structures that are replacing pyramid ones created during the industrial era.

National defence versus Crisis Management

When stating that the NBG is an engine for the transformation of Swedish defence, the logical follow-up question is - transformation towards what? To be able to come up with a reasonably good answer to that question, a starting point could be to look into the military consequences of the ongoing discussion concerning our future security environment. From an overarching point of view, mainly two lines of argumentation could be found. The basis for these two lines of argumentation is the conviction that it is unthinkable to imagine a safe Sweden in our time, or any other safe nation for that matter, if the surrounding environment is unsafe. This view is also very clearly communicated in the EU security strategy from 2003.

The first line of argumentation is almost identical with Sir Rupert Smith's views expressed in his book *The Utility of Force*⁴⁷ where he sees war amongst people as more than a war between nations as the future challenge for western armed forces. This also seems to be the view of most European governments where militaries on the continent, since the early 90's, are being

47 Smith, Rupert: *The Utility of Force, The Art of War in the Modern World*, Allen Lane, Penguin books, London 2005.

transformed or in the process of becoming so. They are frequently used in order to create a safe environment in CM or overseas missions. The focus is on societal reconstruction in countries that have already failed or are in the process of becoming failed states. The EU's BG concept is without doubt designed for out-of-area operations in an environment characterized by war amongst the people.⁴⁸

A rather different view from Sir Rupert is expressed by Colin S. Gray,⁴⁹ who argues that wars between nations are still probable, not least as a result of the added effects that can be foreseen from climate change, deforestation, desertification, lack of arable land and an increased stress on water sources as well as added competition regarding energy. At the same time, the number of people living on the globe is increasing. Gray is supported by Robert Kagan⁵⁰ who states that our world will also in the future be characterized by conflicts driven by nationalism and historical rivalry. Gray's and Kagan's views raise the question if there has been too much disarmament by most European states, including Sweden after the Cold War, when it comes to the ability of raising substantial military capabilities if needed. This question is based on the assumption that the focus for most nations has been and still

is the current situation which is closely linked to the tendency to extrapolate the present situation into the future. This has the additional consequence that even more emphasis is put into ongoing operations with the obvious risk that long-term strategic perspectives are lost. For a world like the one mentioned above and characterized by Gray and Kagan, a useful military instrument needs war-fighting capabilities above the level provided by the EU BG/NBG concept.

The post Cold War era has seen an increasing trend in western states to commit civilian and military resources for CM operations, while at the same time less and less emphasis and resources have been allocated to secure national/territorial aspects of defence using the basic argument that there are no or very limited threats directed against western states. In this chapter, it is argued that the development of the NBG is founded on such a rationale.

More high-tech capabilities have been identified as critical needs in today's military operations. The ongoing force transformation in most western countries favours advanced military capabilities rather than less advanced systems. At the same time, deployable high-tech out-of-area capabilities are so expensive that hardly any European state can independently maintain

48 Haaland Matlary, Janne: *European Union Security Dynamics in the New national Interest*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009, p. 125-130.

49 Gray, Colin S: *Another Bloody Century, Future Warfare*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London 2005.

50 Kagan, Robert: *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Knopf, New York 2008.

the sufficient level of military capabilities to be used in a traditional military confrontation resulting in increased military interdependence.⁵¹ The NBG concept clearly reflects these realities – five nations have been cooperating in order to raise the unit while at the same time adequate command and control arrangements had to be found outside the Nordic countries, i.e. in Great Britain.

The interdependence has two consequences. One is closely connected to national defence where it becomes more and more obvious that states no longer can afford to uphold the present variety of capabilities. The other has to do with military CM where the NBG concept represents a type of burden-sharing that most states favour today. Consequently, Nordic cooperation, including suggestions recently presented by the former Norwegian minister for foreign affairs,⁵² could be looked upon as including both the national and territorial dimension as well as CM aspects.

What if emphasizing military crisis management capabilities in the long run proves to be a passing trend? What if Colin Gray and Robert Kagan prove to

be correct in their forecasts that there is a high probability of intrastate wars in the future? Those western states that have invested heavily in high-tech expeditionary capabilities tailored for crisis management like the BG/NBG may have transformed their armed forces to become obsolete for an upcoming need to once again be capable of defending the territory.⁵³

Gray's estimations concerning the probability for intrastate wars in the future represent a logical argumentation based on a chain of interconnected global trends. An additional argument is that looking into the future security situations, with the time frame of 10-20 years when it comes to international relations, it is practically impossible to predict relations between dominating international actors and the level of militarized relations between states. 9/11 is a very good example of the fact that strategic surprise can occur – and if it does, the consequences may be very unexpected.⁵⁴ With relevance for small-states these uncertainties raise a question concerning the wisdom behind establishing exclusive and expensive tools suited mainly for one role, in the case of Sweden the NBG tailored for CM.

51 Raitasalo, Jyri: "(Why on Earth) Should Small States Do Expeditionary Operations?" in Eskola, Susanna (ed.): *Crises Management in Crises?* National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, Series 2: Research Reports No 40, Helsinki 2008, p.95.

52 Op cit, footnote 43

53 Op cit, footnote 51, p. 96

54 Ibid.

For centuries bigger European nations like the United Kingdom and France have developed a culture of using intervention forces for pursuing political objectives. A small state like Sweden does not have a similar national and, consequently, military culture, whereby it could be argued that the truly expeditionary concept has probably, with very few exceptions, been preserved for bigger nations. The consequence for Sweden, like many other small European nations, is the challenge of transforming capabilities and mindsets that have been focusing on defence against external threats for decades or even centuries. The use of the military only in the case of absolute necessity has been a dominating view. The military CM concept is therefore a watershed for Sweden as well as for other western small-state militaries. It could be argued that the ongoing struggle inside NATO and the EU to get enough troops deployed into crisis management operations partly reflects the strategic culture mentioned above and partly a risk awareness that tends to increase with the level of danger. The case of Afghanistan reflects this.

There is an ongoing struggle inside NATO in order to get enough troops deployed into crisis management operations. In the case of NATO's ISAF-operation, the question as to why member states do not commit enough troops for an operation

they collectively have decided to undertake and in which they wish to succeed, seems to be a motivated one to raise. It might have to do with the difference between resources and interests of bigger versus smaller nations, the latter having limited military resources and a military culture that still might be influenced by the thinking of national and territorial defence. In such an environment, where the direct link between national security and committing troops to a war in a faraway country with no obvious chances of success, is difficult to forge.⁵⁵ Partly, this expression might reflect the Finnish view, where the national and territorial dimensions are very much emphasized. This might also reflect a general risk-awareness, which is common in all western societies sharing almost the same reluctance when it comes to putting military personnel at risk because of the negative political impact of soldiers fallen or wounded in remote parts of the world.

The question could be raised concerning the usefulness of rapid reaction CM forces to be used in operational environments similar to Afghanistan, Iraq or Chad. The question of usefulness is not only a question of whether these troops can be used or not, but also includes the need for an analysis about alternative unit concepts that could be available for the same amount of resources. CM military capabilities are the most expensive type of forces presently

⁵⁵ Ibid, p 97.

existing. This is not least because they are equipped with high-tech systems and strategic airlift as well as sealift capabilities, but are in addition on constant alert in order to be able to participate in an upcoming mission.⁵⁶ The EU BG/ NBG concept fits very well into this description.

Concerning military CM operations of today it seems to be important to notice their timeframe of years and decades instead of weeks and months. While it is easy to agree upon the need for rapid reaction forces, the question remains unanswered as to whether the almost total focus on these capabilities is a wise way ahead. Ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq seem to provide evidence enough that sustainability of troops as well as the need for boots on the ground, in other words numbers, should still count and should be taken into consideration when conceptualizing military CM forces for the future. This approach favours larger formations of lower readiness and a lower level of technology as well as it favours a concept that troops can be deployed and sustained over long periods.⁵⁷ Such a high-low mixture of a smaller number of forces at high readiness with a hightech profile together with a larger number of forces at lower readiness and with an acceptable technological level could probably serve CM demands better as well as fitting into the national and ter-

ritorial aspects. Such a mix also ensures the availability of reserves, a tool that most nations try to preserve.

Uncertain future prospects within the international system, particularly if great-power confrontations return to the international security agenda, might be a good reason for not only emphasizing CM operations, but for seriously considering once again new aspects of national defence.

Statements that great powers are more capable of using military force in order to solve political problems and to fulfil politically defined goals as well as that they are more willing to use their military resources, might be looked upon as conventional truths. They could also be seen serving as a reminder that when it comes to the development of future military capabilities healthy realism is of the utmost importance. The statement that resources allocated to small-state militaries can be expected to allow a very smallscale development. When it comes to high-tech capabilities seem to be realistic bearing in mind the present world economic recession together with the struggle that most western governments are facing in trying to uphold the social welfare system. These aspects should be analyzed together with the effects that may be the result of the accelerated participation in international operations. At the same time, an uncertain future within the international

56 Ibid, p 98.

57 Ibid.

system that might not be favourable for small states, particularly if great power confrontations return to the international security agenda, has to be considered as a main factor when analyzing future military concepts and capabilities.

CM operations today are hardly separable from wars fought with actors using terror as their main tactical tool. This reinforces an experience gained over and over again, namely the need to be prepared for engagements of long duration, which means years and decades instead of weeks and months. Rapid reaction forces are critical tools in order to be able to respond in time to upcoming crises, for example as entry forces, securing incoming additional troops and civilian crisis management assets.

However, present intense focus on rapid reaction capabilities should be critically analyzed at least from two aspects. Firstly, if the ability to sustain extended crisis management operations is agreed upon with the view that numbers still count (in other words, the importance of having boots on the ground), a concept with the ability to sustain battalions and brigades with lower readiness and a lower level of technology should be weighted versus a continuation of focusing on military capabilities characterized by high readiness. Secondly, concerning the national dimension as presented in the latest publication from

the Swedish defence commission,⁵⁸ there seems to be a need to develop capabilities that can serve the double purpose of being suited both for military CM as well as national defence. The factor of affordability is a key issue when it comes to an analysis of the appropriate or acceptable balance between quality and quantity.

It is up to the government to decide upon the contribution Sweden is willing and able to make in CM missions. With that as a basis for planning, the military can have rather accurate contingency plans characterized by a reasonable substance when it comes to facts and figures. It gets harder when the question arises as to what capabilities and numbers are needed when it comes to the defence of the territory. One Nordic view concerning the territorial aspects is expressed by Sverre Diesen. As the former Chief of Defence of Norway, Diesen has argued that an attack on Norwegian soil would be characterized by tempo, a geographical limitation, with a duration of weeks and months compared to years and even decades when talking about CM operations, and with a very clear political objective. What rationale could be found behind Diesen's view being aware of the fact that theories about the short war have emerged earlier in history and the confrontation with reality has faded almost as fast as they were invented? It seems logical to argue that Diesen's argumentation is based

58 Op cit, footnote 2.

on an awareness of the sensitiveness of the critical infrastructure, which could be characterized as the veins of a functioning post-modern western society. An insight of transnational nonstate actors challenging the west has increased as well.

Diesen elaborates on the war in Georgia 8-12 August 2008 and concludes that as an “unsentimental great power”, Russia, uses its military instrument when circumstances make it politically suitable and militarily possible seen from an acceptable risk-assessment point of view. He argues that Russia has not lowered the threshold when it comes to the use of its military instrument against the west/ NATO. The relationship between military risk-taking and what could be gained politically in such a situation would have been totally different from that of the Georgian case, a country governed from Moscow for almost 200 years, with a substantial Russian minority and not being a member of NATO. Diesen emphasizes the fact that if we define a threat as the sum of political will and military capability, a more intense Russian activity and capacity could be identified in the far north. Although he admits to an increased Russian ability for limited operations against Norway, he finds such actions politically doubtful. He underlines that the characteristics of the Georgian war – short warning-time, high intensity and of

short duration – are similar to scenarios for which the Norwegian defence concept has been developed. The amount of force used in a conflict could be expected to be proportional to its political aim in order not to be counterproductive towards its purpose. Limited use of force in a context of a limited timeline and a geographically constrained unity are Diesen’s characteristics for a military conflict.⁵⁹

It could be argued that Diesen’s assessment is the logical consequence of Norway’s membership in the Atlantic Alliance. The use of force from the aggressor’s point of view has to be limited and politically well orchestrated in order not to involve NATO in the conflict. The risks of paying too high a price from a conflict which is fundamentally regional in character has to be avoided. Such a threshold in the case of a non-militarily allied Sweden might be lower. From the point of view of an aggressor, the EU’s solidarity clause may be viewed as less substantial than article 5 in the NATO Charter. Consequences for military hardware in a land-orientated scenario similar to the one presented by Diesen, seem more favourable to the view of having a highly mobile brigadesized concept with substantial fighting power and an all-arms representation compared to the EU/NBG concept, which, in reality, represents a reinforced battalion.

59 Diesen, Sverre: ”Status og utfordringer i Forsvaret sett i lys av Stortingets langtidsvedtak”, *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift* nr 6 2008, p. 10.

Final remarks

Three aspects will be covered in this section. I will try to dig a bit deeper as well as adding some views to those expressed earlier in this chapter.

Firstly, NBG 08 was not sent into an operation and criticism has been heard about resources invested in an expensive capability that was never put to use. In discussions, NBG 08 has also been viewed as the natural choice for use in Chad. A looming feeling of disappointment among Swedish professional militaries has been noticed. Much energy and resources have been used in order to establish the unit within shortest possible timeframe.

An understanding attitude towards these views is not hard to mobilize. At the same time, additional and more influencing aspects have to be added. The EU consists of 27 nations and it has to be emphasized that decisions such as sending an EU BG to a hotspot has to be taken in consensus. To reach such a consensus in a general atmosphere of risk-awareness and sensitivity as regards casualties is an intricate process. We have also not yet witnessed the deployment of any of the EU BG's availability. That is why it could be argued that it is of the utmost importance politically as well as militarily to succeed when such a decision is eventually taken. One criterion for success might be a "small enough" crisis that more or less "guarantee" success.

David Richards states that the EU battle

group concept is a promising one with limitations mainly identified among strategic enablers where the capability shortfalls are significant. Richards emphasizes that the core quality is the ability to fight. He also stresses the need for modern equipment, while at the same time he seems to look at the battle group structure as tailored for small-scale operations.⁶⁰ These views from a high-level commander with significant experience from international missions represents in sum what is stressed earlier in this chapter regarding the qualities and the limitations of the concept, respectively.

Elaborating on Richard's views, it seems possible to argue that the EU BG concept is an instrument for small and short wars, in other words a CM tool. However, the main focus for militaries in our time is missions in conflicts that can be characterized as small to mediumscale wars of long duration. In these wars there has been an obvious need to re-evaluate traditional criteria for success, because success in small to mediumscale wars of long duration with an opponent using unconventional methods are less dependent on, for instance, mobility and firepower. Because these wars tend to be long ones, confidence-building towards the civilian population and the additional force protection that might be embedded as a result, is more important. Destabilizing actors like warlords, terrorist organizations and a guerrilla could, as a result of successful confidence-building,

60 Op cit, footnote 16, p. 61.

be denied political support among the population with severe implications for recruitment and intelligence. Use of force in those wars generally creates sensitive political situations. As a result, violence cannot be used without a keen analysis of the probable consequences.

Some of the criteria for success in wars described above are different from those used in intra-state wars. In small to medium-scale wars of long duration with an opponent using unconventional methods, the use of force should be avoided as long as possible. When this is unavoidable, the counterpart should ideally be aware of what kind of behaviour will end up with repressive actions.

In a situation where two regular forces are combating each other, surprise is a central factor in order to achieve success. In crisis management operations, the importance of surprise might be subordinated to other factors such as legitimacy and predictability. These factors communicate political signals that will strengthen the peacebuilding process and therefore be of increasing importance. Likewise, the importance of tempo is reduced. Obviously, tempo is needed in critical situations when, for instance, the use of force is necessary to prevent a massacre. But more farsighted factors such as patience and confidence are the platforms from which peace can be built. Unity of command is another criterion for success that ought to be viewed

together with the factor of coordination, which reflects the normal behaviour between coalition partners and covers the whole chain of command. In a coalition, continuous inputs in the chain of command from the different capitals are a reality with implications in civil-military relations at every level. For instance, the use of available forces is politically guided and often limited. This guidance can be foreseen as continuing even tomorrow.

Secondly, realistic ambitions are critical. Even though there seem to be good arguments for more substantial CM tools than represented by the EU BG, such as, for instance, the concept of a Nordic brigade discussed in this chapter, the issue of the downsizing of NATO's response Force (NRF) has something to tell us. A few years ago ambitions with the NRF were to establish a high-readiness expeditionary force of some 25,000 soldiers, numbers that have now been reduced to less than 10,000 troops. The reasons for this are difficulties in assembling the rotating force-packages by the member states. Why do we have such a situation when member states of the alliance have collectively decided to establish such a high-readiness force concept? It seems again that part of the answer lies in weariness among NATO members to commit resources and put soldiers at risk in a high-risk operational environment like Afghanistan.⁶¹ The same kind of explanations are in line with Janne Haaland

61 Op cit, footnote 51, p. 97.

Matlary's laconic statement that the battle group is the realistic type of unit that the EU could field today. A larger intervention force would be desirable, but has proved to be unrealistic. The Helsinki Headline Goal presented in 1999 up to 15 brigades with a total of 50,000 – 60,000 troops, but this grandiose idea was nothing more or less than a paper tiger.⁶²

Thirdly, it is estimated to be of the utmost importance to take advantage of the unique competence of the EU in order to meet crises with a broad variety of tools. Interagency operations build the ability through the chain of command to choose the adequate tool (-s). This means that military staffs at all levels have to be prepared to include liaisons from civilian agencies, commercial organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in order to ensure effective coordination. But it also means that the force needs special civil affairs units. It also needs to be suited, when needed, to operate not only as a joint force but as an interagency force prepared for civil-military cooperation down to the lowest possibly level in hostile environments representing different cultures.

The EU stresses its advantages when it comes to delivering the comprehensive approach. However, there are doubts about how the EU has developed and taken advantage of its obvious strengths in this

area. Karl Eikenberry questions how much progress has been achieved in developing the truly expeditionary, non-military capabilities essential to delivering the comprehensive approach in expeditionary environments. He also raises the question that if Europe has an advantage in the comprehensive approach, why does the EU not put more energy into receiving more synergies as a result of closer civil – military cooperation and integration? More specifically, why does the EU lack an integrated command and control structure that would allow a truly comprehensive approach?⁶³

These doubts seem to deal not only with the higher political and military levels but with the whole civil-military chain of command, also at the operational and tactical levels. At the same time, the context that forms the basis of Eikenberry's argumentation seems to be CM. From a conceptual point of view, these thoughts of deepened civil-military integration seem to fit very well into Homeland Defence structures. Also, they fit into scenarios in line with Gray's and Kagan's views where there exists a high probability for a security environment characterized by intra state wars, where nations alone or in the framework of an alliance or coalition might have to fight for their survival with every available tool they have at their disposal.

Looking into the NBG concept as a tool

62 Op cit, footnote 48, p. 129.

63 Op cit, footnote 15, p. 66.

for CM, it has an organic civil-military element that serves the purpose of being the commanders' tool of establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with a wide range of civilian actors. By doing so it serves the aim of delivering a comprehensive approach in a given situation. The same tool could of course be used for exactly the same purpose in any unit used for a purely national task, independent on the level of the conflict at hand. If one believes in the thesis that military effectiveness starts with the development inside each and every single tactical unit, the concept of having a Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) unit as a part of the NBG may serve as a model for transforming the CIMIC concept to levels above that of a battalion. By doing so, it will contribute to an overall strengthening of the EU comprehensive approach as well as for national/territorial purposes.

In this article it has been argued that the present development of the military in most EU countries, including Sweden, is very much linked to CM needs. In other words, the development is linked to the current situation. This, in turn, is closely connected to the tendency to extrapolate the present situation into the future with the additional consequence that even more emphasis is put into ongoing operations with the obvious risk that long-time strategic perspectives are ignored. The concept and

forming of the EU Battle Groups is linked to ambitions inside the union for becoming a more competent international actor in the field of CM. The EU BG is a tool suited for a present and future environment very much in line with arguments communicated by Sir Rupert Smith. Consequently, national/territorial tasks have not been taken into consideration when launching the BG nor the NBG concept. From a CM point of view it seems to be a unit suitable for small wars with a capability of being deployed for limited periods and then being replaced. The question is with what? It also seems obvious that if predictions made by Colin S. Gray and Robert Kagan will become realities, concepts suited for both international CM missions and territorial defence will be needed simultaneously. In such a situation, militaries have to field concepts that suit both roles and fit in with the economic recourses at hand. As has been stressed earlier in this article, factors of sustainability and volume still count, whether we are talking about CM or territorial defence.

The author is a Lieutenant Colonel serving at the National Defence University in Finland at the Department for Strategic and Defence Studies. He is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences and is the Editor of its *Proceedings and Journal*.