

# Our Gloomy Security Environment

The military as a Security Provider

by *Tommy Jeppsson*

There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know.<sup>1</sup>

Donald Rumsfeld

THE ILLUSTRATIVE words of the Former US Secretary of Defense is a masterful reminder of the unpredictability of security in our time and consequently a clear indicator of complexities involved when it comes to the development of military capabilities. The ongoing wars in Afghanistan as well as in Iraq have clearly shown that it is possible to circumvent military strength. Weaker non-state actors are able to successfully challenge the strongest military power on the globe as well as its western allies. But not only weaker non-state actors think about warfare in new ways. A decade ago, two Chinese colonels wrote a thought-provoking book which gave the framework of how China, by fighting in a smart way and using every available tool, could challenge the US.<sup>2</sup> The book, which was originally published in 1999 by China's People's Liberation Army, represents warfighting theories of the utmost importance to be discussed as they bring additional dimensions to warfare as well as challenges after approximately 500 years of western dominance when it

comes to conceptual thinking of warfare and warfighting.

There is an ongoing debate that points in the direction that also states might adapt to warfighting strategies, concepts and methods similar to those used by non-state actors. The ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq offer western militaries real-life experience concerning strategies and tactics, which certainly creates a blurred distinction between what is characterized as regular and non-regular warfare and between what is defined as conventional and unconventional.

Also, there seems to be an urgent need for looking closer into a deteriorating domestic security situation in many bigger cities in North America and Europe. Here we can clearly see an amalgamation between concepts favoured by actors using violence in order to reach political objectives as well as by violent criminal gangs in order to make a profit. A key subject is therefore to what extent this development will reflect traditional roles between the security providers of the state.

How western militaries should cope with changes that take place rapidly in order to become proactive instead of reactive against adversaries, be they state or non-state actors, using traditional as well as non-traditional concepts, tools and methods is the core question in order to restore effective-

ness and by so doing also credibility to military organizations. The subject is huge. Consequently, the ambition of this article is to focus on a few factors estimated to be of significant importance for the development of the military. The perspective is European with some comments made on Northern European/Scandinavian issues.

The discussion concerning in what main direction the military may navigate will cover three subjects. The first is about present and future threats and their consequences, where the core message is that in many ways the future is already here. This part of the chapter also looks into some consequences of these rather blurred or foggy threats that could be identified as consequences of globalization and connects them to national security. The second subject discusses so-called hybrid wars, the role of technology as well as resources. Both have a certain impact on the militaries' ability to handle a number of those "futuristic" challenges already facing us today. Special attention is given to the human factor versus technology as well as the need to transform militaries to become more adaptive and learning-oriented. The third subject concerns the question about what kind of military we might need in the future. Partly, this is done in the framework of a categorization of threats that could be foreseen to have a deep impact on the military, partly it is done from the perspective of increased interconnectedness between the local, state, regional and global levels.

The word 'future' is central to the content of this chapter. Due to the fact that the word itself has no defined end there is a need to be precise in order to have the discussion and arguments based on a timeframe that is reasonably possible to forecast. A period of ten years has been viewed to be sufficient.

## Future threats and their consequences are already with us

Here, three lines of argument are examined that seem to form the basis from which present perceptions about threats derive. These three overarching views have received a lot of attention by scholars as well as by those responsible for shaping the security tools of nations. They seem to have in common a conviction that in our time a safe nation, European or non-European, Nordic or non-Nordic, is unthinkable to imagine if the surrounding environment is unsafe. Here it is argued that the ongoing socio-political trend towards more and more multicultural societies will have a significant impact on our future security environment, and, consequently, has to be touched upon.

The first line of argument is identical with Sir Rupert Smith's views, expressed in his book *The Utility of Force*<sup>3</sup> where he sees war amongst the people more than war between nations as the future challenge for western armed forces. This seems also to be the view of most European governments at present, where the militaries on our continent, since the early 90's, have been transformed or still are in the process of becoming so, towards expeditionary concepts. These forces are frequently used in order to create a safe environment in stabilization operations outside one's own territory in which societal reconstruction in countries close to becoming failed states, or in countries that are already failed ones, can take place. The EU Battle Group, the Nordic Battle Group, as well as other capabilities with which extended range is reached, are designed for out-of-area operations in an environment characterized by war amongst the people.<sup>4</sup>

Contrasting from the views of Sir Rupert

is the second line of argument communicated by Colin S. Gray<sup>5</sup> 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 increasing stress on water sources as well as rising competition for energy. At the same time, the number of people living on the globe is increasing. Gray is supported by Robert Kagan<sup>6</sup> who states that, also in the future, our world will be characterized by conflicts driven by nationalism and historical rivalry. Gray's and Kagan's views raise the question if there has been too great a disarmament by most European states, including Denmark, Norway and Sweden, when it comes to the ability for fielding extended military capabilities if needed. The focus for most nations is at present stabilization operations, which at least to some extent reflects the tendency to extrapolate the present situation into the future. It could be argued that by a narrow focus on the present security situation, the obvious consequence is that even more emphasis is put into ongoing operations with the risk that long-term strategic perspectives are lost. In addition, it is argued here that for a world like the one characterized by Gray and Kagan, a useful military instrument needs warfighting capabilities far above the level that Denmark, Norway and Sweden, as well as most European countries, possess today.

Gray's and Kagans views that climate change may represent a real threat to international stability is emphasized by Hew Strachan who adds the inter-state dimension. Challenges associated with this megatrend such as the shortage of water, arable land, and energy will most probably effect the wealth of nations as well as individuals, will have have a certain impact on health as well as it will lead to migration

on a scale never witnessed before.<sup>7</sup> Strachan argues that national frontiers, in an environment characterized by the competition of shrinking resources and curbing population figures, will increase in importance. Climate change in itself does not lead to war but there is a need to realize that the potential for disputes that might originate from it can trigger interstate wars.<sup>8</sup> When it comes to the question of energy resources such as oil and gas, there seems to be a need to acknowledge the need for, not only Denmark and Norway but also for Sweden and Finland, to realize and involve the military dimension when dealing with territorial claims to resources exposed by the melting Arctic ice cap, but also when it comes to the increased importance of the Baltic Sea as an energy supply route.

An analysis made by Vincent Desportes<sup>9</sup> concerning the evolution in contemporary warfare is partly in line with that of John A. Nagl<sup>10</sup> and David Kilcullen<sup>11</sup> who, like Sir Rupert Smith, believe in an increase in interstate wars. However, Desportes goes further by not only emphasizing the need to defend our interests and stabilize the situation in trouble spots or what he calls the "external circles", but also argues for the need to, if necessary, defend while withdrawing to the "intermediate circles" before putting up a firm defence of the "innermost circles", which is about defending Europe and the home country. However, he is very clear that the aim of defence is to ensure that security is first established at what is characterized as "the front line", that a proactive concept is critical and that those "front lines" are geographically often to be found far beyond European national borders.<sup>12</sup> It is argued here that Desportes's views represent a third line of argument. Based on Desportes's argumentation, the intermediate circle from an EU-European/Europe-

an-NATO states geo-strategic perspective the security hotspots are in North Africa, the Balkans, the South Caucasus and the Middle East. The innermost circle is about EU- European/European-NATO states. One increasingly related security dimension concerning this is closely interlinked with the demographic development. Niall Ferguson argues that in order to keep the ratio of working to non-working population, Europe would need to take in 1.4 million people on a yearly basis until 2050.<sup>13</sup>

These figures basically tell us that nativity is too low, and more far-sightedly it raises questions about to what extent the new Europeans will remain committed to western core values. Ferguson reminds us that up to the early 1990's the frontier between the West and the East could be identified in the neighbourhood of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In our time and as a result of immigration, that frontier seems to run through every European city,<sup>14</sup> which can easily be observed in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo and, to a lesser extent, in Helsinki as well as in many other cities in the Nordic countries where the integration of the new citizens from an overall point of view seems to leave room for improvement with tensions sometimes leading to violence as a result.

A characteristic made by the Times is that the future is to be seen in Los Angeles. The city has become a confederacy of thirteen major ethnic groups, occupying eighteen definable urban zones. Some are characterized as city states speaking other languages than English, where at the same time some parts of the town are fortified and protected by private armed groups. An interesting observation made by the magazine is that every citizen in Los Angeles can claim to be a member of a minority group, which means that the city represents the very model for a migrant city where people in different parts

of the city have little in common. The illustrative statement made by The Times is that the Third World has arrived in the First.<sup>15</sup> Although not that alarming yet, the tendencies of a deteriorating social environment are, for instance, visible in the Swedish city of Malmö, where tensions in the suburb of Rosengård from time to time lead to substantial violence.

What we are basically witnessing is a breakdown of the social contract between the state and its citizens, which is fuelled by the inability to integrate individuals as well as groups of people. At the same time, we can easily observe a growing fragmentation between groups of people as well as between individuals as a result of increased individualism. This feeds the rivalry between ethno-political minorities and develops micro-nationalism. Populations have become both the actors and the issue, and the state being characterized by order has been replaced by instability where tension and rivalry among ethnic groups are signs of destabilization. In parallel, we face a mass of fragmentation and growing individualism.<sup>16</sup> Seen from this perspective, Desportes's view of defending the "innermost circles", certainly has broad aspects and raises the need for a societal defence concept involving almost all authorities of the state.

In sum, all three lines of argument have indeed substantial relevance. The one represented by Sir Rupert Smith is about realities we face today and most signs point to a continuation, even an increase in threats originating from areas outside European soil. Neither can consequences from megatrends like climate change, deforestation, desertification, lack of arable land and an increasing stress on water sources as well as rising competition for energy, highlighted by Colin S. Gray, be dismissed as less probable because we are already starting to

be hit by the effects from a deteriorating environment as well as scarce natural resources. Vincent Desportes's threat perspective based on what he defines as the "external, intermediate and innermost circles" represents an intellectual framework from which security aspects emanating from the present and most certainly also from the future geo-strategic landscape could be analysed.

### Tomorrow's military is needed today

An ongoing debate indicating that also states may adapt warfighting strategies, concepts and methods similar to those used by non-state actors is the reason why this part of the article brings up thoughts by Frank G. Hoffman concerning so called hybrid wars. Here it is argued that his theories, at least to some extent, seem to be inspired by the thinking of Quiao Liang and Wang Xiang-sui.<sup>17</sup> Another main subject of this part of the article is the role of military technology where views by Vincent Desportes represent a counterweight to present western, US-inspired emphasis on the technological aspects of war. These are more in line with one key factor concerning the ability of European nations to develop military capabilities. This key factor is about affordability. Consequently, the third subject highlighted is the resource factor.

Frank G. Hoffman raises thought-provoking warnings against the tendency to look at future threats either as insurgencies or conventional wars. He argues that this way of thinking oversimplifies the framework in which defence planning as well as allocation of resources for defence purposes takes place. Instead, we should start thinking about actors as capable of fielding all possible tools for war, and, in addition, may be willing to field them simultaneously.

These multimodal threats have been defined as hybrid threats, which means that an adversary combines a broad variety of capabilities in order to receive asymmetric advantages.<sup>18</sup>

Hybrid threats incorporate a broad variety of warfighting concepts to choose between including conventional capabilities, irregular tactical and technical methods such as terrorist actions using indiscriminate violence, as well as acts and techniques associated with criminal activities. Hybrid concepts can be used by states as well as by nonstate actors. Hoffman talks about multimodal activities that can be conducted by separate units or by one unit. He argues that they generally, from an operational or tactical point of view, are directed and coordinated within the battle space in order to achieve synergistic effects in the physical as well as the psychological dimensions of the actual war and these effects are viewed as being able to influence every level of war.<sup>19</sup>

When it comes to hybrid warfighting concepts, the distinction between states, non-state actors as well as criminal gangs is very much blurred. Who is who in this kind of warfare where one essential aim is obviously to hide one's activities? It is a kind of warfare where access to modern weapons and command systems mixes with tactics/methods that may frequently change from conventional methods to ambushes, the use of improvised explosive devices and assassinations. It might include states using high-tech capabilities such as anti-satellite weapons as well as allied non-state actors using terrorism and cyber-warfare directed against financial markets.<sup>20</sup> In essence, the adversary is expected to use the broadest possible variety of tools and methods, based on the situation at hand and directed towards defined vulnerabilities inside western nations. Military capabilities, irregular forms of warfare,

like terrorist attacks as well as pure criminal acts, can be used simultaneously, which opens up for a blurred spectrum of actors where states, non-state and criminal actors may cooperate in the framework of a partnership relation that may shift rather constantly depending on how actors analyse the situation. This means states and/or non-state actors with different strategic cultures who select tactics and technologies in innovative ways in order to fulfil their aims.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, it is not about whether we should prepare for stabilization operations or defending the home country from a traditional military attack. It is about preparing for both as well as what is in between, and to this should be added acting against an aggressor with no limitations whatsoever when it comes to ruthlessness. This approach might lead to a broader risk awareness and consequently the development of scenarios that take into account not only trends that dominate for the time being but also involve “thinking about the unthinkable”.

A decade ago, Quiao Liang and Wang Tsuantsui opened up for a way of waging war that has seen no conceptual comparison in the West.<sup>22</sup> In addition, it could be argued that little has been done in the western societies, and, consequently, in their armed forces to adapt to this new thinking that can be characterized as the globalized concept of total war. A so far unanswered question is if 500 years of western dominance concerning warfighting concepts is approaching its end in favour of eastern/Asian thinking? To use Sweden as an example, it is argued here that hybrid warfighting concepts have not been observed enough and analysed in documents, either from the Ministry of Defence, or from the Armed Forces Headquarters. The focus is ongoing international operations where the opponents are insurgents. The limited discussion,<sup>23</sup> when it

comes to the use of the military in the role of national/ territorial defence, seems to be based on the assumption that the adversary is a state actor using conventional military forces and operating from reasonably well-known concepts.

The thinking of Liang, Tsuantsui and Hoffman, represents a totally different line of thought about war than the technology focused US view, which to various extents has been adopted by the Europeans. Also, in our part of the world transformation has been guided by concepts using slogans like “from a threat-based approach to a capability-based approach”. One early and certainly influential architect behind these ideas was the former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Owens, whose writing expressed a new form of waging war based on a strong belief about what could be achieved through technological progress.<sup>24</sup> An observation is that, although the transformation of the militaries in most European countries has been based on an idea of leaving the threat-based approach and instead organizing the nation’s military capabilities based on a capability-based one, the transformation of the European armed forces has been too slow to adapt to circumstances.<sup>25</sup> For instance, although downscaled, these forces show very visible similarities to those of the Cold War period<sup>26</sup> and, in addition, from a conceptual point of view look at future threats either as insurgencies or conventional wars.

Desportes strongly warns against too much emphasis on technology and frankly states that this way of thinking is nothing but flawed, since war is defined by social and political factors. War as a social phenomenon depends, when it comes to its outcome, on political, economic, cultural and geostrategic factors. Consequently, technological imbalance is of less significance

when it comes to strategic success or failure. Political wisdom, sound strategy as well as operational and tactical mastery of the battlespace matters much more.<sup>27</sup> In Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, western militaries have faced the phenomenon that technological superiority has in many ways been unsuitable for the environment at hand. At the same time, the opponent has found new ways of how to circumvent high-tech capabilities and make them more or less useless.

By concentrating on techniques, processes, procedures and capabilities, we have, according to Desportes, forgotten the fundamentals about the purpose of military engagement. A belief that technical prowess suits the changes in which wars are waged has deep institutional roots, thereby bypassing the fact that the face of war has undergone dramatic changes. A real ability to understand the sometimes radical new threats falls outside traditional perceptions of what militaries are expected to do. Wars fought in our times demonstrates that it is not a matter of weaponry but an infinitely more complex and uncertain political, social and human process. This underlines the importance of strategic analysis, not driven by technological creativity. This is the same as stating that we need to take control of the excesses of the digital culture.<sup>28</sup>

One reason why technology tends to lose relevance is because the opponent has managed to take the fight into heterogeneous and complex environments, like urban ones and among the population, where modern technology loses its advantages. When and where technology shows superiority its fate is to be bypassed because this superiority is rarely decisive, works only once in the same theatre,<sup>29</sup> and, consequently, is doomed to be of rather short endurance. The logical

follow-up question to this is about how an opponent will act if he chooses to take the fight to us and decides to strike one or several Nordic countries in order to make us rethink about our commitments in Afghanistan? Still, the opponent's main advantage will be to strike in an environment where our advantages are limited and where decisive effects towards the international community are to be expected as a result from the 24/7 presence of the media. The opponent will most probably use the same tactical concepts as he does on his "homefront" and choose densely populated areas as the battleground in order to maximize casualties, material destruction and chaos, which is the same as maximizing the media effects through which the strategic effect is gained.

Contrary to present development trends in Denmark, Norway and Sweden as well as in most European countries, Desportes emphasizes that numbers still count, arguing that experience from one and a half decades of missions have taught us that technology can only partly replace numbers. With France as the basis for his arguments he states that defence of the homeland depends on our ability to achieve stability in hotspots surrounding us. The task of stabilizing can only be solved by clear and lasting presence on the ground. This is about control and in order to have control numbers is an essential criterion for success, which means that quantity has become an important quality. Desportes strongly opposes the US emphasis on technology, which neither suits defence budgets of medium-sized and small nations, nor guarantees operational success in mission areas. Nor is it in line with the essence of warfare, which is a human activity and not a technological one. Success does not come from technology itself, but from ideas that

use it to its advantage.<sup>30</sup> Soldiers operating in a crisis rely far more on their abilities than on their equipment.<sup>31</sup> From the small nation's perspective, we have to remind ourselves of the still valid statement that it is more preferable to equip the man than to man the equipment.

Basically, we have to change our thinking because the opponent will simply not present the types of targets suited to be hit by our way of operating. Experience and history has convincingly taught us that arms in reality seldom satisfy the needs. This calls for less sophisticated equipment that can be designed and produced more rapidly and replaced more frequently. Another alternative is to design our equipment in a way that allows for successive improvements.<sup>32</sup> Already we see a tendency to have an acquisition policy that allows us to buy certain types of materiel when they are needed and related to a specific situation or threat.<sup>33</sup> In other words a more flexible situationally orientated acquisition policy may be on its way, replacing or complementing more costly long-term projects based on long complicated bureaucratic processes. Desportes questions why we are designing weapons systems for operational use in 25-30 years. As a result of the law of action and reaction, the opponent will most probably have in place the countermeasures that make these systems irrelevant.<sup>34</sup>

However, we should not expect a continuation of a situation where states will technologically normally have an upper hand. On the contrary, the ongoing tendency is non-state opponents being better equipped due to the fact that advanced technology is generally more achievable as a result of globalization and is easy to handle with little time needed for training. In addition, some civilian technology is both cheap and useful for military purposes. Non-state actors are

using carefully chosen niche capabilities in order to gain advantages over the adversary, which US and British forces have painfully been witnessing in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the summer of 2006, the Israeli forces were hard hit by the Hezbollah who made successful use of the latest technology when it comes to the ability of penetrating armour as well as using missiles designed for striking naval vessels at sea from land-based positions. But this does not change the overall situation for the foreseeable future. When it comes to a third-rate opponent, be it a state or a non-state actor, technological inaccuracy, generally, will force him into non-traditional methods with the result that less sophisticated means will be required to fight him successfully. This is the same as stating that future fighting will be primitive in the eyes of the technologically superior party. As we saw in the Kosovo Campaign in 1999 and as we have seen in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the outcome depends more on sound strategy and the moral factor than on Effects-based Approaches to Operations or similar concepts, mirroring nothing but a rather unreflecting adoption of a US influenced "engineering-based approach to warfare".

A few words about network-centricity and digitization are motivated here. Obviously, a war of destruction/a symmetric war waged between opponents possessing military forces of a high standard can be organized in a network-centric way, while a war whose aim is to influence the people cannot. This renders the speed of a network-centric approach irrelevant. It is not about winning the battle for time when the opponent's aim is to do exactly the opposite by maximizing the length of the conflict. Looking at the subject from another view, information superiority cannot compensate for the lack of discipline, morale or inadequate training of the soldier.



At the same time, a refusal to digitize is a non-option, because it contributes to support decision-making as well as information needed to provide the support needed. In order to enhance flexibility and adaptability at the tactical and operational levels, basically hierarchical by definition, and by so doing being able to suit the circumstances, digitization will be beneficial because success will be critically dependent on constant adaptation, which will have profound consequences for training and for the way in which command is performed.<sup>35</sup> However, there are risks associated with digitization which are certainly not new and include the danger of more information than lower echelons can handle, which might be irrelevant for troops operating under demanding and stressful conditions. In addition, there exists an ever-present temptation to micromanage subordinated levels. This leads to the need for reinventing a mission-type command style.

Concerning the resource factor, we face a situation where the development of military capabilities takes place in an environment characterized by increasing uncertainty and fewer resources. Scarce resources is the reality when it comes to bigger nations and is especially critical concerning small ones. In western medium and small states, like the Nordic ones, the main competitor to defence budgets are the increasing demands on the social and welfare sectors. When people do not see any threats they are able to visualize and when security has a rather low profile on the political agenda there is a certain risk of further reductions in defence spending.

Every European nation today is struggling with the problem of maintaining a broad variety of capabilities because of rising costs and budgetary constraints. Capabilities suited for operations on one's own

territory as well as abroad are needed and these capabilities also have to be able to perform a wide range of other tasks because of a security environment that opens up for an infinitely variable array of possible scenarios and adversaries.<sup>36</sup> At the national and the practical level, closer cooperation and integration between the armed forces and, for instance, the police and Coast Guard needs closer attention, as well as the practical dimensions of the very much emphasized comprehensive approach. What this is about could be found in the Danish total defence model.<sup>37</sup> Cooperation and integration within the framework of EU/NATO also seems to need closer attention. Karl Eikenberry reminds us of the fact that the EU, although very clearly emphasizing civil-military cooperation in the framework of a comprehensive approach, has still not managed to establish an integrated civil-military command structure either at the strategic or at the operational level.<sup>38</sup>

From a Nordic perspective, the Stoltenberg Report identifies 13 areas in order to enhance cooperation at the regional level between countries characterized by cultural as well as socio-economic similarities.<sup>39</sup> Of significant importance for the future, bridging the cooperation from the overarching to the national level, are the Lisbon Treaty and the future of NATO's Article V. These two driving forces may be an opportunity to expand the cooperation closer to its full potential. It seems quite easy to argue that if we want to get the biggest long-term impact on our security policy situation, this is not achieved through tactical and technical arrangements that are reactive in essence. An aim for strategic influence through well-defined common Nordic projects could, on the other hand, serve as proactive measures in order to favour, for example, rational burden-sharing. Howev-

er, we are quite far away from that strategic impact.<sup>40</sup>

To sum up, two things concerning future wars seem to be of a rather high degree of certainty. First, the unpredictability of the circumstances under which they will start, and, secondly, that they will differ from the conflicts we face today. In other words, a high risk of strategic surprises with the consequence that the ability to adapt is a success criterion for the military. It is impossible to estimate the occurrence of future military engagements. Consequently, western nations will be in a situation where it is necessary to be prepared to fight a reactive war, where it could be argued that in the case of the Nordic countries this is more probable than not. Desportes emphasizes that in such a reactive war, the command levels, independent of which, will constantly have to respond with very little time for preparation.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, intention-based approaches to command obviously need a renaissance, encouraging commanders to take initiatives needed in an environment where the fog of war is a constant.

### Views of a new military

This part of the article starts with a categorizing of the threats that are foreseen as having a substantial impact on the military in the future. This is followed by a discussion based on geo-strategy, which emphasizes the close interconnection between security at the local level, inside state borders, at the regional level when it comes to cooperation, like the ongoing ones inside the EU, as well as its implications for the global level.

These overarching aspects form the basis from which the development of the military is discussed.

Concerning threats, the following three categories are obviously able to challenge

the functioning of the state, either separately or in combination. The first, and by the media the most observed and most discussed category of threats, are those originating from non-state actors using unconventional methods like terrorism and information warfare in order to reach political objectives. Circumventing capabilities used by the military and law enforcement authorities, terror attacks targeting energy supply routes, banking and IT systems as well as the spreading of deadly epidemics are methods that are cost-effective for actors possessing limited resources in order to deliver a knockout on societies built around functional chains characterized by interconnection and interdependency.

The second category are those internal threats to western societies with roots in an inability to fully assimilate immigrants of different ethnic backgrounds. These people tend to live their own lives in communities that can be characterized as enclaves and not fully integrated into the society. Here people speak their language of origin and practise their own norms and laws. The tendency is that these diasporas have closer connections/loyalty to places/regions/states they originally come from than to their new homeland. These groups face a higher rate of unemployment, which in connection with social isolation from their new homeland, raises the risk of a violence-culture where people living outside the area/“enclave” and authorities like the police are looked upon as enemies.

The third category is the use of military force which is sometimes referred to as traditional or conventional. Traditional/conventional or not, it represents a deadly repressive instrument and the use of this instrument is a possibility as long as power ambitions among states as well as non-state actors are realities. Examining the develop-

ment of military capabilities and defence budgets gives a clear indication that in order to exercise control, the military instrument is central for state authority.<sup>42</sup> Effects that might be the result of climate change, such as shortage of water, arable land, and energy, will most probably threaten the wealth of nations as well as individuals. Such a development might lead to situations when nations are fighting state-versus-state wars for their very existence and survival. Existential wars have a tendency of being fought with every available tool and could from that point of view be regarded as total or major ones in their character. By examining these three categories or stereotypes of challenges against state security, the limits when it comes to combinations between the categories are closely connected to those brains planning and executing an attack and are, consequently, endless.

Each one of these categories involves the fact that conflicts take place in an information-intensive environment where the outcome has more to do with skilfully launched media campaigns at the strategic level than with effects related to the use of military violence. Also, every action taken at the tactical as well as operational levels are exposed to scrutiny with often immediate and not foreseen effects on strategy.

From a geo-strategic point of view, the need for early interventions in order to eliminate the origins of violence, reduce the tension and instability that leads to crises and take control of the process of conventional or nuclear proliferation are emphasized by Desportes. These thoughts can be seen as fairly similar to arguments behind the US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the interplay with policy, diplomacy, reconstruction and security provided by the military puts the human aspects

very much in the forefront. Most critical is also a realistic view of the time needed for success. Desportes warns against falling back to strategies favoured during the past where defence could be constructed at the borders, waiting for the enemy to materialize. Violence today could be characterized as a cancer which will spread if it is not caught in time with the healthy cells being under threat from the outset, no matter how far they are from the malignant ones. The new forms of violence in combination with the effects of globalization and the porosity of borders, makes any strategic concept founded on a "waiting game" a dangerous course. What is required is the active construction of a stable environment outside national territory.<sup>43</sup>

In line with the arguments of defending the "external, intermediate and innermost circles", Desportes emphasizes the need to prepare for three types of intervention. The first is about the short conventional confrontation, in which technology plays an essential role in reducing the opponent's strength. Although advanced technology is indispensable in this state-versus-state confrontation, it has to be affordable since, in a time of budgetary constraints, technology competes financially with numbers. Again, a warning for relying on technology would not be out of place. The expansion of the battlespace means that numbers of soldiers remain important and land forces are certainly a key element in future conflicts. Technology is of significant importance although reality, not least when it comes to economy, tells us that we must ensure that we get the right level of it, not too much but not too little.<sup>44</sup>

The second, most common and most drawn out type of intervention from the perspective of time, involves war amidst the populations. The rationale behind this

is that this type of intervention, “the war for ideas”, seems to be by far the most common one, since the population will be in the focus with the consequence that the major part and the most fierce combat will take place in urban environments, which is the rationale for emphasizing the role of land forces with significant numbers. This also means that the ultimate aim of future wars is “control” because if control is not established on the ground, among the people, an intervention will hardly be of any gain but will involve extended problems for the intervening actor. Throughout history, there has been only one way of exercising control and that is to be present in sufficient numbers and in the actual environment in which crises take place, which is on the ground.<sup>45</sup>

The third type is intervention on behalf of our own people in order to create a secure environment. Whether or not this is about intervention by definition could be discussed. Certainly, it is about homeland defence, which represents the core rationale behind the existence of armed forces. National protection when it comes to people, values and infrastructure is the ultimate aim on which everything else as regards security is founded.<sup>46</sup> Here Desportes, more than most present scholars and military theoreticians trying to forecast future wars, emphasizes the national dimension from which the ability to act inside or outside national borders depends regarding, for example, legitimacy and resources. A re-evaluation in European countries about the role of national security seems slowly to be on its way. To some extent this is in line with Colin S. Gray’s predictions of future state-versus-state wars.

This leads to the question concerning the development of military capabilities. For small nations like Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, the possibility of devel-

oping and maintaining military capabilities representing the latest technological innovations is simply not realistic. Since the beginning of World War II, the cost of a main battle tank has increased over three hundred-fold, a ratio that can be multiplied by ten for a fighter aircraft.<sup>47</sup> The simple solution to be drawn from this is the need for the adoption of a policy emphasizing a “good enough” approach when it comes to the level of technology. In other words, this is about an acceptance of a “high-low mix”, a reality most nations have faced historically, are still facing and few signs seems to indicate a change in that fact for the future. Even though technological development certainly makes the change of equipment a never-ending process, increasing costs associated with that process makes perfect technological harmonization nothing but an illusion.

Concerning the subject of which military capabilities that will be critical as the result of the threat scenario being discussed, two factors are of the utmost influence. First, economy will, as long as public opinion and the politicians do not see any immediate threat, most certainly be a limiting factor especially for small welfare states where increasing costs connected to an aging population are the main competitors for resources to spend on security and defence. As a result, prolonged/flattened or decreased budgets seem to be the logical answer for the foreseeable future. While costs for materiel and personnel are increasing without compensation and while inflation continues, room for investments decreases. In sum, it is a situation where present ambitions will generate increased costs. With flattened defence budgets the options are lower ambitions and/or substantial structural changes.

Second, following the development of western militaries since the Cold War ended

in 1989, it could be concluded that however downscaled in numbers and with improved strategic mobility, the structures and capabilities, also in small nations like the Nordic ones, are basically the same. In other words, a number of capabilities have reached or are in the process of reaching the level where numbers are becoming too small to be cost-effective or are simply too expensive to maintain. Flattened or decreasing defence budgets together with a present broad variety of capabilities lead to the conclusion that small and medium-sized nations will not be able to uphold a balanced defence structure leading to capabilities being disbanded. Balance will be something that to a greater extent has to be met in cooperation with other nations ending up in a situation where traditional national defence structures have to be re-evaluated.

Economic realities lead to a situation where, in order to maintain the necessary volume, a technological high-low mix has to be accepted. Equipment for fully operational use needs to be maintained and solutions should be found where state-of-the-art equipment is mixed with less modern systems in order to optimize effects. This leads to the simple logic that the view should be implemented throughout the organization that “we fight with what we have, not with what we want”. In other words, theory and doctrine should lead the technological development, not the other way round. Here it is argued that dominance of the whole war-fighting spectrum for small states is nothing but an illusion. State-of-the-art technology may be effective against an opponent that could be characterized as symmetric but has, in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia proved to be less effective against opponents, state and non-state ones, operating from a concept that offers few if any identifiable targets and who simply refuse to fight

according to the western way of fighting. The capabilities presented below are argued to be the foundation of defence organizations for countries like Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. However, depending on political, geo-strategic and economic differences, each and every country needs complementary capabilities not discussed here.

First, effective intelligence at every level has repeatedly shown its significant importance. It has to be intellectually free to analyse ongoing development concerning security policy, strategic, operational, tactical and technical matters, based on factual observations and with an expanded international network. Consequently, inputs concerning what to think have to be resisted. Openness and the ability to see and communicate analysis based on facts is crucial.<sup>48</sup> In a complicated security environment with state, non-state and cooperating state and non-state actors human intelligence needs a higher priority where the logical view is that technology supports a human being, not the other way round.

Second, a robust and thoroughly professional command and control apparatus forms the basis of effective leadership. The current western trend towards bigger and bigger command and control functions has a clear tendency to emphasize processes and procedures, which creates a type of “battlefield bureaucracy” more reactive than proactive and therefore unfit and not adaptive enough to take and hold the strategic, operational and tactical initiative.<sup>49</sup> Also a homeland defence structure with integrated civil-military command and control suited for tasks inside one’s own territory as well as being capable of reinforcing other Nordic/EU/NATO countries, or internationally, when/if needed, is the platform for maintaining a functioning society, which, in turn, is fundamental for military

operations inside or/and outside one's own territory.

Third, a set of capabilities that are suited to the operational environment in one's own country as well as internationally are affordable and therefore able to maintain forces, highly trained and at a level of high readiness over time. Among these are elite infantry units for battling an opponent in the cities, armoured units capable of seizing and holding ground, special forces which, together with the police and customs services, can meet the threat from nonstate violent actors, ground-based air defence in order to meet an increased threat from missiles operated by both states and non-state actors, and submarines with a multiple-role capability.

Fourth, capabilities for meeting the increased NBC threat from systems operated by state or non-state actors.

### **A future of unknown unknowns**

Because war is a human activity, it is under constant change. Consequently, one of the key qualities possessed by the military is to be able to handle the unexpected. Although changes could be looked upon as a constant, it is the speed with which they occur that represents the real challenge for armed forces. An overarching challenge is that although states, so far, are the most resourceful actors the trend is pointing towards more equality when it comes to effects received from violent non-state actors. Another overarching challenge has to do with the ability of the media to transform ideas and information interconnectedness between individuals. The military consequence in such an environment is that success or defeat at the tactical level, which was earlier a local occurrence, will most probably continue to gain strategic results. Thinking in terms of levels such as

the global, the regional and the local therefore loses its relevance.

The characteristics of a non-state actor, like for instance al-Qaida, is a decentralized and networked group of individuals who basically share the same ideology based on religion and who are geographically spread all over the globe. Here it is argued that what al-Qaida and its associated affiliates, whether states or non-state allies, are basically involved in is waging a war aimed at overthrowing secular governments and replacing them with a state based on what is stated in the Koran as well as challenging western influence, western values and a preferred lifestyle among its different nationalities. The core rationale for terrorist attacks as well as information campaigns launched by al-Qaida is a very logical political act based on the long-term aim to establish the theocratic state, be it a caliphate or not.

Consequently, acts of terror could not be looked upon as cases for the law enforcement authorities only, because they are launched in the framework of a war. In addition, simple logic and rationality motivates the smoothest possible cooperation between every state authority needed to effectively strike back and protect people as well as infrastructure. In the framework of a homeland defence command structure, capabilities needed to handle a specific situation should be transferred independently of whether they originate from the military, the police, the rescue services or some other authority. Ongoing tendencies reflecting enhanced competition between especially the police and the military represent dysfunctional actions aimed at weakening societal responses to strikes against its vital functions. An obvious conclusion is the need for higher acceptance of pragmatism when it comes to the question about who is doing what or what the stakes are between, for in-

stance, the military and the law enforcing authorities.

These arguments are reinforced by Michael Evans who raises “the possibility of continuous sporadic armed conflict”. The characteristics of these are engagements blurred together in time and space, waged on several levels by a large array of national and sub-national forces, which means that war is likely to transcend neat divisions into distinct categories”.<sup>50</sup> This is another way of describing the hybrid war to which a robust Homeland Defence Concept, like the one established in Denmark with the ability to respond to threats directed against the home country as well as provide assets in order to reinforce similar organizations in other EU, NATO and/or partner countries, seems to be the logical answer.

Adding to the challenges are hybrid concepts that will make the distinction between states, non-state actors as well as criminal gangs very much blurred, especially when we might find them cooperating with each other. In addition, the domestic situation in most European states is characterized by a situation where traditional forms of socialization exist alongside alternative ones. This creates irritation with increased social confrontation and violation that no longer responds to the regulatory mechanisms of the state, which is gradually declining in importance, with the result being increased and unregulated outbreaks of violence. The security providers of the state system are losing ground to the constant growth of non-state actors, whose interests are difficult to analyse. The weakening of state power opens up uncontrolled areas to be exploited by a multiplicity of violent non-state actors, with the obvious risk of increased violence of long duration caused by social breakdown.<sup>51</sup>

Hew Strachan reminds us that, even in an era when especially the Europeans are

viewed as extremely reluctant to engage in anything where they might end up using their militaries in an armed conflict, the United Kingdom fought the Falklands War in 1982, participated in the first and second Gulf Wars in 1991 and 2003, respectively, also fought as a member state of NATO against Serbia in 1999, not to mention its heavy involvement both in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>52</sup> It should be added that when this chapter is being written in early 2010, all four Nordic countries are militarily engaged in Afghanistan and at the moment they seem to be politically prepared to be so for an extended amount of time. However, people’s views concerning the commitment amongst Danes, Finns, Norwegians and Swedes may change relatively quickly depending, among other things, on the amount of casualties they will face.

Concerning the issue of intrastate violence and based on the commonly accepted idealistic assumption that democracies do not go to war against each other, Strachan observes that the decline of intra-state wars since 1945 has more to do with the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council than the spreading of democracy.<sup>53</sup> Implicitly that tells us that even though wars between democracies might be avoided as long as possible, wars between states are far from being historical anachronisms. The wars between Iraq and Iran during the 1980’s, the first and second Gulf Wars and the war between the NATO states and Serbia in 1999 as well as Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008, provides clear evidence that states are ready to use force when big enough interests are at stake and costs are estimated to be lower compared to what could be achieved. This view is based on the assumption that also for the foreseeable future states are influential actors, and from that aspect we ourselves have to remem-

ber the simple reality that politics is not the same as theories concerning international relations. Politics is basically guided by human ambitions and decisions and therefore faces a considerable impact from factors connected to human greatness but unfortunately also to shortcomings.

In sum, when thinking about/predicting/analysing conflicts in our time and for the future there seems to be an urgent need for thinking “outside the box”. Ivan Arreguin-Tofts argues that the outcome of conflicts in the future will not so much be a function of the stronger automatically having an “upper hand” when fighting a weaker actor. On the contrary, the actor that uses the strategically most useful tools in battle, independent of whether they are symmetric, asymmetric or a combination of the two, will prevail. He shows that since 1800 the outcome of conflict favours actors willing to make conceptual jumps in thinking. The willingness to successfully adapt, refine, reorganize and transform in orches-

tration with how a specific conflict evolves over time are certainly success factors that are not only connected to the military but to the overall ability to use every available tool in the campaign.<sup>54</sup>

As the concluding statement it is argued here that the military are free to choose almost whatever structure they desire because what will count at the end of the day is the adaptability to engage an opponent using a broad variety of concepts and tools – in other words, an emphasis on sound strategy, a developed and broadened operational art as well as tactical skills. Emphasizing thinking and training seems to get a better payoff than prioritizing structures, procedures and processes.

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## Notes

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