

# Sweden's Security in the 21st Century

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FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN SWEDEN



REGERINGSKANSLIET



# Foreword

This is the last of a series of reports on defence themes published in Swedish by the Defence Commission. It is the first to be translated to English. These reports express the views of the authors. Their purpose has been to stimulate public debate on matters which otherwise, unfortunately, are often the province of specialists. The public must take an interest in defence if we are to take the right decisions about Sweden's



defence in the 21st century. I therefore invite my readers to read the reports in this series, the preparation of which coincided with the Defence Commission's periodic review of defence policy in 1999. I hope that a reading of these reports will give new impulses and provoke thoughts about our future defence and the world to which it must be adapted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Björn von Sydow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Björn von Sydow  
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# Sweden's Security in the 21st Century

## Introduction

Owing to a fortunate mix of politics, defence and geography, Sweden has been at peace for close on 200 years now. Few countries in Europe have been spared war for such a long period. Just over 50 years ago, during World War II, our western neighbours, Norway and Denmark, were occupied by Germany, and in the east Finland fought for its survival against the Soviet Union. The Baltic states and Poland were crushed by Germany and the Soviet Union, and terrible persecutions ensued.

By and large, the situation in Europe has developed favourably in the last ten years. The risk of a major war between states has diminished. The exception to this rule is of course the Balkans, where hundreds of thousands of people, mostly civilians, have been killed or displaced by war. Kosovo is the most recent trouble spot, where the population has been driven out of their homes on a scale that we have not seen since the end of World War II.

Sweden's armed forces have made a significant contribution in the Balkans by protecting the civilian population, ensuring that humanitarian aid reaches its destination and helping to prevent conflicts spreading to new populations and countries. It would be contrary to our principles to remain passive in the face of the catastrophes in the Balkans.

Great changes for the better have taken place, and are still in progress, on the other side of the Baltic Sea. Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have become free. Russia, with its almost 150 million inhabitants, is struggling to capitalize on its great potential and to find its legitimate place in Europe. Cooperation between Russia and the West has developed in the 1990s and is a condition for stability on our continent. It is also important to us in Sweden. Even in the most favourable circumstances we must recognize that it will take many years for the process of transformation in Russia and for the situation in the East to stabilize. Events in Russia are of course the Russians' own business, but obviously internal convulsions in such a large country would also make an impact on Russia's neighbours. The existence of 25,000 nuclear

warheads on Russia's territory gives an idea of the scale of the problem. On the other hand, Russia's armed forces today are much smaller than those of the former Soviet Union.

Sweden's military non-alignment contributes to stability in a part of Europe where great changes are in progress in our immediate vicinity. Sweden is not threatened today, and there is much we can do to help the countries of Eastern Europe which have chosen a new path. Our policy of non-alignment is matched by solidarity and an active security policy. Our defence is being used to build bridges to Russia, to help the Baltic states build up a total defence, and to prevent the spread of conflicts in the Balkans. We are taking our share of the responsibility for building a new security framework in Europe, not least through Nordic cooperation, and at the same time we are ensuring that we have freedom for manoeuvre.

In this report I wish to present my thoughts on how the world around us affects the design of our new total defence, as well as the guiding principles underlying its reorganization.

### **The world around us**

Ten years have passed this autumn since the fall of the Berlin wall. I remember the Government's scientific adviser, Professor Bertil Bohlin, calling me from Berlin and describing how he had sat on the wall the night before. And in August 1989 I attended the Solbacka course for "coming men and women". It was led by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Bengt Gustafsson, and Chief of Defence Staff Torsten Engberg. It was an interesting course with a number of new departures in the scenarios we took part in.

Some time later, the two generals were on their way to the Government to present a report on developments. We met outside the Prime Minister's office, and I remember how we recalled that the events of the autumn of 1989 surpassed any of the security scenarios that we had discussed at the Solbacka course. It took some time for me to realize that Soviet communism was collapsing. I respected Solidarity in Poland and their backers in Sweden, but I was sure, even when Gorbachev was in power, that the Soviets would put down any serious attempt to break free. Nor was I an early supporter of Swedish membership of the EU. For example, I remember noting as late as 1988 that the unemployment rates in all the EFTA countries were lower than those in the EU. I also

remember, as head of planning in the Prime Minister's Office, arranging the first meeting between the EU's (or EC's as it then was) Research Committee and the EFTA states' research bodies in Stockholm in the autumn of 1990.

I also remember reading in the English version of the Moscow News about Gorbachev's efforts to restructure his country and our conclusion in the delegation representing the Stockholm county party district at the Social Democratic party congress in 1990 that eventual membership of the EU was now a distinct possibility. In brief: up to the end of the 1980s I did not envisage a peaceful end to the cold war or the need for Sweden to join the EU. Nevertheless, I am glad that all these good things came about, since they are likely to herald a brighter future both for Sweden and for other countries. After all, the cold war was based on a balance of terror that prevailed along a borderline between democracy and dictatorship that started at Lübeck southwest of Skåne and cut deep into West Germany.

Any reflections about security policy in our time should take this fact as their starting-point, it seems to me. Things are better now. This does not mean that there are not any problems or risks, or that there will be none in the future. As I write this during the Easter holiday of 1999 we are witnessing the disaster in Kosovo. This is not the first time that such things have happened in Europe's wars, which suggests that it is high time to learn from the lessons of history.

### **The international disorder**

There is a great difference between the order prevailing in a single state, such as a Nordic country, and the international order. In the Nordic countries we find conditions so much more predictable and easier to influence than in an international context.

Generally speaking, **size** and **power** play a much bigger part in international politics than in the Nordic countries. A country with a large population, great wealth and a large surface area is likely to have great power status. And it is perhaps even truer that states that are small in terms of population, wealth and territory are considered minor states. In fact, states are rated in much the same way as individuals, unless we choose to question this order of things. Often, the citizens of a state embrace a national idea, espousing a mission and tasks and attitudes for their country. These ideas have an impact on neighbouring countries too.

Consequently, the values espoused by a great power are everybody's concern. To conclude from this that large and powerful states are more warlike than others is going too far, even if large states tend to be involved in crises and war more often than others. Whatever the causes, large states usually have large armed forces. With these, and with their predominant values, they tend to dominate the international order. With a few exceptions, small states are seldom particularly influential, regardless of their wealth, armed forces or other assets.

Be that as it may, today's international system consists of many more states of all sizes than was the case in 1914 or 1945. This is the result of decolonization, the division of large empires and the fragmentation of state structures. While the United States is the world's only superpower today, increasingly powerful regional great powers are emerging. I am thinking of China, India, Brazil, South Africa and several others.

Another factor determining the international order is the system of governance practised in different countries. There is a sharp dividing line between democracies and dictatorships. It is important to note that dictatorships tend to go to war more often than democracies, although there are exceptions. However, democracies are subject to more self-imposed restrictions which prevent their governments from getting involved in war. The leaders of dictatorships are subject to fewer restrictions. By and large, therefore, the spread of democracy is a significant factor for peace. It is also the best guarantee for the dignity and freedom of the individual. Democracy has been on the advance ever since the 1980s. But even in a world where democracy is by no means universal we must try to avoid war, and therefore it is necessary to establish a system of international law that is accepted not only by democratic states, but also by undemocratic ones. However, when a dictatorship is also a great power, democracies and small states cannot rely on it to respect law and agreements.

Democracies face risks that they must be able to address with military methods. Another factor in the international disorder is the impact of **technological development**. Do all technological advances also have military applications? If so, does that mean that there will always be a need for defence-oriented research and applications? Perhaps democracies and sometimes even dictatorships can agree not to use certain weapons, e.g. nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. This was possible even during the cold war, although it was later revealed that the Soviet Union had large arsenals of biological and chemical weapons despite all its denials. Now that the cold war is over, efforts to prevent

the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons – have entered a new phase.

The risks of proliferation are largest outside Europe, in the Middle East, South Asia and North Korea. In the wake of the Gulf War UNSCOM succeeded in limiting Iraq's stocks of weapons of mass destruction, but they have not been destroyed completely and, following the United Kingdom's and US attacks in December 1998, UNSCOM is no longer operating in Iraq. India and Pakistan have recently carried out nuclear tests and have thus taken an important step on the road to becoming nuclear powers. They will only need another year or so of development, unless they decide to change tack and sign the relevant disarmament treaties.

Following an agreement between the US and North Korea in 1994, North Korea undertook to relinquish its ambition to develop a nuclear weapon programme. North Korea's launching of a rocket over Japan raised doubts about its intentions and willingness to comply with the 1994 agreement. The fragility of the system of mutual deterrence and arms control treaties that was built up so laboriously by the Soviet Union and the US may be questioned and challenged by countries which find this to be in their interests. The world community's ability to control and check this development will be an important security issue in the future. At present, the only feasible alternative seems to be for democratic states to put more pressure on authoritarian states to refrain from certain weapon technologies and to back this up by signing appropriate agreements. Unfortunately, this will not solve the problem once and for all.

The international disorder may be said to be a consequence of the fact that human beings do not trust each other sufficiently to agree on rules at the international level that they can adopt, sometimes with great difficulty, at the national level.

We must strive for a system that imposes better order in the international community so that it resembles the internal situation in a well-ordered state. Size and power are not always the most important factors. We must put a premium on democracy. Democracies will seek to establish an international order that will promote the democratization of today's dictatorships. It is the prevailing international disorder and the military potential of technological progress that make it necessary for Sweden to have armed forces and a total defence.

## Parallel strands

International politics is not easy to understand and even less easy to engage in. This is because of the absence of the hard and fast rules that govern individual states. In my opinion, today's European and global security policy can be analysed in terms of two parallel strands.

One strand has to do with the alternatives **détente** and **deterrence**. Pursuing a policy of détente means trying to eliminate the causes of conflicts, while a policy of deterrence aims to deter potential aggressors from starting conflicts. To put it simply, a policy of détente is pursued by means of diplomacy and a policy of deterrence by a country's defence. In real life both kinds of policies are pursued side by side. Diplomacy does not preclude deterrence and defence does not preclude measures that promote détente.

The second strand in present-day Europe consists of two parallel trends: towards **national sovereignty** and **collective security**. It may be said that one of the main features of the history of Europe during the 20th century is the development of nation-states. The elements that distinguish one nation from another are language, religious beliefs and history etc. The federal Yugoslav dictatorship has been replaced by states established on national principles, with conflicts between population groups as to the criteria on which the state should be founded. Similar tendencies have appeared in western Europe. I am thinking of the regional differences in Spain and the United Kingdom, two of Europe's oldest nation-states.

A parallel trend is the striving towards collective security. European states take membership of the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe for granted. Practically all democratic European states are or wish to be members of the EU or NATO. Spain and Portugal led the way when they became democracies. Even countries that are not, or do not want to be, members of the EU or NATO desire close, institutionalized cooperation with those organizations.

There are some important linkages between the trend towards détente or deterrence on the one hand and towards national sovereignty or collective security on the other. National sovereignty combined with a policy of deterrence has a dismal record in Europe. The past and present history of the Balkans is a case in point. In my opinion, champions of détente must be prepared to commit themselves to greater collective security in Europe.

The main trend in Europe after the cold war has been towards more

détente through a process of democratization, less deterrence by means of disarmament and more collective security through the efforts of international organizations and agreements, in particular in the field of disarmament. Democratization is also conducive to national sovereignty.

The decline of deterrence is attributable to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Present-day Russia has decided on a military reform. If it is implemented, Russia's defence will have a defensive profile very different from that of the Soviet era. However, the question is whether the country will be able to maintain the quality of this different kind of defence in the next ten years. In any case, Russia may well possess serviceable nuclear weapons for many years to come.

The NATO countries have also reduced their arsenals in quantitative terms. But NATO's present forces are up-to-date and of better quality, both in absolute terms and in comparison with Russia's, and are likely to be so in future too. The result of this disarmament process, i.e. a lower level of mutual deterrence in Europe, has certainly benefited everybody, including Sweden.

The big question in the light of the Balkan crisis is whether national sovereignty should be based on ethnically homogeneous societies? The purpose of the wars in the former Yugoslavia has been to establish non-federal states, i.e. states populated and governed by a single national group. This issue is complicated by the fact that the populations involved have little faith in democracy. The same is true of developments in Belarus and the Caucasus. The main question is whether these countries have sufficient faith in and commitment to democracy, disarmament and Europe. If not, there is a risk that we will see less détente and more deterrence; more nationalism and less collective security.

### **International use of force and international law**

International law is intimately linked to respect for the United Nations Charter and thus to the Security Council's privilege of approving or rejecting the international use of force. The emergence of a system of international law which imposes respect for national boundaries has been very successful in controlling international wars and colonial-type attacks. Despite its shortcomings, the UN will continue to be the linchpin of the collective security system, which has brought an increased measure of international security.

There are many good reasons for maintaining this state of affairs:

Sweden, a small, militarily non-aligned country is very much dependent on the protection afforded by international law, which emphasizes collective security and respect for the integrity of sovereign states. Internal conflicts that could turn into external conflicts exist in our immediate vicinity. The UN may be the linchpin of the collective security system, but it is not in itself a security system. The system of collective security comprises a number of other institutions, regimes and processes. The postwar collective security system, including the relevant international law, represents a great improvement on the previous situation. But it cannot be regarded as the final stage of the world community's collective security system. To start with, the UN itself must be reformed, for example the composition of the Security Council and its members' right of veto. The need to reform the UN has been pointed out, inter alia, by the Carlsson Commission.

International law goes far beyond the UN Charter. It was established in response to the wars of aggression waged by the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan and Italy against other states. But the appalling persecutions of population groups conducted by Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union also gave rise to international conventions and international law protecting the freedoms and rights of individuals and prohibiting the use of force, for example genocide, within states. The most effective guarantee of individual freedoms and rights is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Court of Justice. In the last few decades the international system and the international law associated with it have undergone several significant changes as a result of a new attitude to the jurisdiction of the world community with regard to abuses within states, individual rights in relation to the state and the connection between internal and external conflicts. The first significant changes had to do with attitudes to violations of human rights, but subsequently there have also been changes in our attitudes to the right of sovereign states to engage in the wholesale expulsion, ethnic cleansing and killing of their citizens and the responsibility of the world community in such cases. The question of Pinochet's legal responsibility is a case in point.

Politically, the situation has also changed after the cold war. During the cold war there was a risk that interventions in internal conflicts would escalate into conflicts between the two pact systems. One consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact is that it is now considered legitimate to intervene in states in which large-scale abuses have occurred, which was not the case during the cold war.

The question of the world community's right to mount humanitarian interventions is one of the most difficult problems facing us today: the imperfect collective system that was based on relations between states must not be replaced by the law of the jungle. Any right to humanitarian intervention must be very limited. Even if such a right can be established, military force must be used extremely restrictively.

### **Northern Europe**

Developments in northern Europe have been more favourable than in southeastern Europe. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, East Germany and the Warsaw Pact heralded democracy and national sovereignty and have led to détente and collective security now that the fervent wish of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join NATO has been fulfilled. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have regained their sovereignty. They wish to join NATO too, but the Alliance has not declared itself willing to furnish the mutual security guarantees that go with membership. In the last analysis, these guarantees are provided by the US and are ultimately based on nuclear weapons. Membership of the EU is on the agendas of Poland and the Baltic states. Russia's progress towards democracy is the most important single factor when it comes to Europe's future.

A democratic Russia, as well as a democratic Belarus and Ukraine, would probably spell the end of deterrence as a significant feature of European security policy, and the element of détente might well be strengthened. Obviously, this would depend on the development of Russian domestic policy. A substantial constituency favours a nationalist communist position, despite media pluralism. A key factor for favourable development in northern Europe is perhaps a satisfactory solution of national sovereignty issues. In my opinion, the Baltic states enjoy complete sovereignty in relation to Russia. This is conditional upon their guaranteeing their Russian-speaking minorities citizenship. The same obviously applies to minorities in Russia. Another key factor is of course that Russia and NATO continue to cooperate both during and after the war in Kosovo. This is important for northern Europe too.

The EU plays an increasingly important role in the trend towards détente rather than deterrence in northern Europe. The result of EU membership for the Baltic states and Poland would be to enhance détente, but it would also involve an element of deterrence in relation to

Russia, since hostilities between EU Member States and Russia would have an enormous impact. The importance of the EU in northern Europe is not confined to membership. It is also extremely important that the EU and Russia should develop their mutual relations within the EU framework. This can be promoted by the Finnish and Swedish presidencies in 1999 and 2001.

In my view, the trend in northern Europe is towards growing détente and collective security. This is due to the solid foundation of national sovereignty that was laid when Jeltsin accepted the Baltic states' declarations of independence in 1991.

Sweden's security policy has also contributed to this state of affairs. Swedes in general are glad that the cold war and the balance of terror are over, notwithstanding the wars in former Yugoslavia. In northern Europe, the security situation in Sweden and other states, including Russia, has improved. Everywhere, in Russia too, democratic governance has replaced the communist system of coercion. Sweden supports the sovereignty and democracy of the Baltic countries. Our cooperation with Russia is based on the same principles.

Sweden's principle of non-participation in alliances goes back to the 19th century. It has been modified in response to changing conditions, in particular the relations between the great powers. The right of neutrality safeguarded by the Hague Conventions was one of the factors – Sweden's defence structure was obviously another – that made it possible for Sweden to avoid involvement in the two world wars.

Sweden's commitment to the League of Nations and later to the United Nations was motivated by a wish for collective security, as well as by neutrality, and over the years there have been shifts of emphasis between these two. Sweden's support for collective security structures in Europe and its non-participation in alliances, while reserving the right to shape future national security policy, have enjoyed broad support in our country. They are a key factor for democracy. There are many indications that the Nordic region has been a safer place as a result of Sweden's combination of a policy of détente with a policy of deterrence.

These two policies have been even more mutually supportive in the period following the events of 1989-1991 thanks to closer Nordic cooperation on defence matters, i.e. cooperation between Sweden and each of the Nordic countries, albeit with varying emphases. Denmark and Norway are NATO members, while Finland and Sweden are not, but we still broadly agree when it comes to the mix of détente and deterrence and of national sovereignty and collective security. Talks between the

Nordic defence ministers are always very rewarding. Indeed, we often invite guests, like the Russian Minister of Defence, to take part in these talks.

### **The European dimension**

Collective security is also being consolidated by enhanced cooperation between the Member States of the European Union. Naturally, this applies to all dimensions of EU membership, but the development of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) is of particular relevance. The Amsterdam Treaty, which will enter into force this year, signals a deepening of cooperation and has paved the way for concrete collaboration in the field of crisis management. As a matter of interest, Sweden and Finland initiated the proposal to incorporate the 'Petersburg operations' into the Treaty: "humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking". The EU is empowered to assign such missions that have defence implications to the Western European Union (WEU). I am glad that Sweden has agreed to lead the very first operation of this kind, namely an advisory mission in connection with mine clearance operations in Croatia. In my view, it is possible for Sweden to engage in extensive cooperation on the CFSP while maintaining our principle of non-participation in alliances. According to the Amsterdam Treaty the EU is to cooperate on crisis management rather than provide mutual security guarantees. This is established by the relevant Article of the Treaty (Article 17): "The policy of the Union in accordance with this Article shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States..."

I cannot say that the EU has been very effective in this area so far. More defence and military capability is needed, not in the sense of military capacity, but analytical capacity, procurement expertise, effective decisionmaking and, not least, openness and commitment. Last winter the UK and France presented a joint declaration on the CFSP in St. Malo. One element of this initiative that has not received much attention is a joint declaration on concrete cooperation between the two countries in peace-promoting operations. In the light of the catastrophes in Bosnia and Kosovo, not least, it is absolutely essential for Europe to upgrade its cooperation arrangements and routines, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Europe's cooperation with NATO has been enhanced in

the course of the wars in ex-Yugoslavia and international missions such as the one that has been in progress in Bosnia for several years.

Europe's cooperation with Russia is very important. There are many obstacles to be overcome, but I feel we are now moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, Russia's lack of funds is a major obstacle to détente in this context, as in others. All the Nordic countries have the same attitude and have encountered the same problems.

All in all, my view is that security developments in northern Europe are on the right track and that the security situation in Sweden, as in its neighbours, has improved substantially in the last ten years. Anything we do – and we should be able to do a great deal – should, in my view, essentially be related to cooperation between the Nordic countries. I think we should deepen this cooperation. Together, there is a great deal we can do in many areas, in cooperation with many other countries and many institutions.

### **The Nordic countries**

One of the areas that offers scope for closer cooperation between the Nordic countries is crisis management. Peace-promoting operations are at the core of Nordic cooperation on defence. Nordcaps (the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support) facilitates cooperation, coordination and efficient use of Nordic resources. Nordcaps should be used as a tool for improving the Nordic countries' capacity for adopting joint positions on decisions concerning peace-promoting operations and participation in such operations.

The Nordic-Polish brigade in Bosnia and the previous Nordic battalion in Macedonia are examples of successful Nordic cooperation. The long-term objective should be to be able to send a joint Nordic peace-promoting brigade whenever the need arises. In order to improve the Nordic countries' capacity for cooperation on peace-promoting operations, various joint exercises are carried out. These take place within the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in which NATO's Member States and its partners participate.

Nordic Peace is an annual Nordic exercise in the spirit of the PfP, and the first Nordic Peace exercise was staged in Norway in 1997. The Baltic states were invited to take part in the 1998 exercise, which took place in the island of Gotland, Sweden. These exercises will continue. Bilateral exercises involving the Nordic countries will also help to improve our

capacity for cooperation and coordination. Over 2,000 officers and soldiers, as well as a large number of civilian relief organizations and observers from eight countries took part in the 1998 exercise, which took place in September. The scenario which was the purpose of the exercise was reminiscent of Bosnia, with deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force. It was gratifying to hear military personnel and civilians saying how successful it had been, not only because they improved their capacity for cooperation on future crisis management operations, but also because the initial prejudices of the two groups gradually gave way to mutual respect. But I also remember the disappointment we felt that the political situation made it impossible to implement the exercise on the ground in Kosovo.

### **Defence industry cooperation**

The defence industry cooperation between EU Member States and the Nordic countries is also a necessary step towards combining détente and deterrence with lower defence expenditure. Naturally, Sweden's policy on defence equipment is designed to meet defence needs. However, foreign and security policy considerations, as well as industrial and technological interests, objectives and constraints, must also be taken into account. Formulating defence procurement policy is therefore a complex task, especially in view of the internationalization of defence procurement and the need to enter into a mutually profitable European partnership. The main thing from the point of view of defence and security policy is to have equipment of appropriate quality that is as cost-effective as possible. It must be possible to procure new equipment and develop or modify existing equipment in the light of increasing international demand and increasing tension. It must be possible to use and maintain equipment even under threat. International cooperation on defence procurement must be consistent with the principles and objectives of Sweden's foreign policy, at the same time as the equipment must meet the needs of Sweden's defence.

Sweden is contributing to a restructuring of the European defence industry, which will allow continuing transatlantic cooperation on equipment on reasonably equal terms despite the pace of technological development in the US. We are doing this within the framework of cooperation with Germany, Spain, Italy, France and the UK. We must avoid becoming completely dependent on unilateral decisions taken by

Congress. By the end of the year 1999, formal cooperation on substantive issues will be under way between the six nations. In my opinion, the Nordic countries should also work on these lines. As I see it, it is a question of ensuring that our military non-alignment is credible.

Now that the security situation allows us to reduce our defence expenditure, we will not be prepared to spend as much of taxpayers' money on being self-sufficient. At the same time, we must be capable of defending ourselves against an armed attack, since this threat remains. The solution to this dilemma is closer international cooperation on defence equipment, which will meet the need for strategic capability, create mutual dependencies and assure a forward-looking framework for research and defence procurement.

### **The development of Sweden's armed forces**

In the long term it is impossible to predict where security developments in Europe will lead us. We can hope for a development in which ever closer cooperation between democratic countries will guarantee our security and in which defence expenditure can gradually be reduced. But given the length of time needed to restore defence capability to previous levels, we must also plan for our future defence capacity and ensure that we are in a position to upgrade it to keep pace with changes in the world around us. When I became Minister of Defence in February 1997 I did in fact have some fresh experience to fall back on. In 1988-91 I was involved in the Government's defence preparations, and when I became Minister for Trade in 1996 I again became involved in studies and exercises on present-day crisis scenarios. This involved a good deal of new thinking. But I had had very little hands-on experience of Sweden's defence since I was a conscript (in the Gotland regiment and the Lifeguard dragoons, 1965-66). I was immediately impressed by our state-of-the-art defence equipment and the positive attitude of most conscripts.

As Minister of Defence I have noticed not only that our equipment is very advanced, but also that in some cases we have large quantities of it. But more and more people are wondering: is this relevant any longer? In March 1997 a large-scale study project was launched at Supreme Headquarters. Its purpose was to assess the structure of Sweden's defence in the 21st century. I am aware that the Swedish Agency for Civil Emergency Planning is also studying the need for changes in the future

civilian total defence. These have been my points of departure in gearing practical defence planning to the security situation in northern Europe. Present-day Sweden must be capable of protecting the country and its citizens against the large-scale use of force, i.e. against armed conflicts and war. Our defence must be based on defensive deterrence. Sweden's armed forces must be developed in such a way as to take into account the changes that have taken place in the international situation, in military technology and in military doctrines and experience. Three factors are especially important:

- We cannot see any potential invasion threats in the next ten years
- We could, however, be subjected to threats in the form of limited armed attacks, pressure and severe damage
- Increasing demands for participation in international security cooperation and crisis management

### **The threat of invasion**

The parliamentary Defence Committee has, following detailed studies, including studies of material submitted by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Supreme Headquarters, the Swedish Agency for Civil Emergency Planning, the Swedish National Defence College and the National Defence Research Establishment, concluded that an invasion whose purpose is to occupy Sweden, wholly or in part, does not appear to be a feasible alternative in the next ten years, provided that we maintain a basic defence capability.

This assessment is based, first, on the fact that military preparedness in neighbouring countries is very limited. This applies, in particular, to Russia, which has drastically reduced the size of its armed forces. Second, the political differences in our near abroad are not so great as to risk involving Sweden in a war. On the contrary, there is a trend towards ever closer cooperation on security, despite residual differences and conflicts of interest.

Admittedly, the political situation could change quite rapidly, in particular as a result of the political and economic turbulence in Russia. At present, Russia's official defence expenditure corresponds to about 3.5% of GDP (excluding expenditure on Ministry of the Interior troops etc.), i.e. about one-tenth of the Soviet Union's defence expenditure at its height at the end of the 1980s. To enhance military preparedness significantly, Russia would have to concentrate economic resources on

the military sector for a lengthy period and in the short term the cost would be prohibitive. Naturally, Sweden must maintain its capacity to defending itself against an armed attack whose ultimate purpose is to occupy the country. True enough, if we had no defence at all, a token military operation would be sufficient to put such an occupation in place. But that does not mean that we need the kind of military and civilian defence structure, geared to a large-scale invasion by air, sea and land with a view to occupation, that was considered necessary in the heyday of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

The extremely extensive invasion operation on which total defence planning has been based ever since the 1940s no longer seems feasible in the near future. Even if we were obliged to take a large-scale attack into account in our defence planning, such an attack would probably differ from previous invasion threats. Consequently, we must adjust our defence resources to probable scenarios or scenarios which are likely to emerge within the next ten years. In addition, of course, we will have to gradually adapt our defence capability to the changing needs of the future.

### **Limited armed attacks**

Although invasions of the kind we envisaged in the cold war era now seem improbable, we can nonetheless be subjected to threats, pressure or damage caused by military or other means. This might happen in connection with unrest in our near abroad if a country wanted to put pressure on Sweden by making threats or causing damage or engaging in limited operations, such as air strikes on our infrastructure, or in sabotage. Resources for carrying out such attacks are available. Or there is the possibility that some extremist organization, perhaps from a different part of the world, might decide to use terrorism to put pressure on Sweden in retaliation for our participation in international crisis management operations. Unconventional forms of aggression, such as the manipulation of information systems or deployment of weapons of mass destruction, might be tried. The wars in the Balkans have taught us that the borderline between violent extremist organizations and the official structures of a collapsing state can be blurred. Sweden's defence against limited armed attacks is geared to events that may be improbable, but are nevertheless possible. Such scenarios must be taken into account in the planning process. Therefore, we must be able to combine the various

elements of our defence so that it can **always** deal with long-distance weapons, weapons of mass destruction, information warfare and other deliberate violations of our air, sea and land territory.

Today's level of preparedness would be sufficient in such a situation and last year we started adapting our defence accordingly. The trend towards limited armed attacks and non-conventional threats raises many questions. It may well be necessary to undertake rather large changes in our crisis command and management systems. With today's systems, it is not always clear who is responsible for what or how our defence against different kinds of limited attacks should be coordinated. In its last report the Defence Committee mentions the problem posed by the current legislation, which essentially assumes the existence of well-defined situations (peace, risk of a crisis and war) that may not be so easy to distinguish in the future.

### **The civilian population**

Our experience of the wars of the last few decades indicates that, increasingly, the victims are the civilian population. This is largely due to the fact that the conflicts during this period have tended to escalate into civil wars between ethnic and religious groups. These internal conflicts have, moreover, been aggravated by the intervention of neighbouring countries and the deployment of regular troops. The images of refugees pouring out of Kosovo provide a horrific illustration of the extent to which attacks on civilians have now become an integral part of warfare.

In planning Sweden's new defence structure we cannot neglect the risk that a future aggressor might target our population or our vulnerable infrastructure as a means of achieving his objectives. Our country might be blackmailed in order to achieve political objectives. We must be capable of opposing such threats and protecting the population. In such a situation a concerted effort by any democratic means necessary would be required from the community as a whole. We must be able to put up strong resistance. Our tradition of a total defence in which practically all men have done their national service has laid a solid foundation for the future. We have always considered it necessary to combine civilian and military efforts in defending the country. In reorganizing our military defence we must also adapt the capability of our civilian defence so that it can protect a modern high-technology society against threats and risks that range from severe strains in peacetime to limited armed attacks,

rather than protect Sweden against invasion. Like our military defence, our civilian defence must adapt to the growing threats that may emerge in a new international situation in which we might once again have to face large-scale armed attacks.

We must, for example, abandon the policy of large-scale stockpiling that was appropriate during the cold war and adopt a creative approach to coordinating our resources in order to improve our crisis management capability. We now recognize the vulnerability of information technology if an aggressor were to decide to attack vital infrastructure in order to weaken our defence capability. But we must also consider whether the potential threats and risks contain any new features directed at the civilian population, features that may be different from those we took into account in planning during the cold war. Where are our weaknesses? And how can we reduce our vulnerability and thus enhance our power to resist? What will happen when much fewer people have learnt the rudiments of warfare during their national service? What can we do to involve women? These are only some of the questions that should be considered in the continuing process of adjustment.

### **International cooperation on security**

Distances and borders are not as important as before. The main task of Sweden's defence is to protect our country and its population, but it may be necessary to do this by taking action in some other part of the world – in the Balkans or in central Africa. Even local conflicts a long way away from our neighbouring region may affect us. Sweden cannot be an island, isolated from conflicts in the rest of the world. Today, the media bring us instant information about violations of fundamental human rights all over the world.

Large-scale genocide and ethnic cleansing are a challenge to the world community, and Sweden must be prepared to play its part in defusing armed conflicts wherever possible. Sweden's participation in international operations is motivated by a combination of security considerations, principles and self-interest. In the last analysis, it is the world community, founded on international agreements and international law, that is at stake. Peace-promoting operations should be sanctioned by the Security Council, although they may be implemented in cooperation with regional organizations such as NATO. Inability to use the security instruments that are available will undermine people's faith in them and in their usefulness both in today's and tomorrow's

conflicts, some of which may directly affect Swedish interests. But we also act out of self-interest. A lasting impression from my first meeting with officers and soldiers in 1997 was the pride they took in their international experiences.

Working day after day, indeed month after month, in warlike conditions gives new insights and enhances capacities. These are an invaluable asset for our defence. And when Sweden's armed forces no longer need to base their planning on actual war, international experience is a way of keeping the military profession on its toes. Now that Sweden does not face any immediate threats, we can use more of our defence for international operations, in which military tasks often go hand in hand with humanitarian ones. In my view, globalization should set its stamp on our defence. In view of the limited threat of attack today, the immediate and important tasks of our military resources are to participate in international peace-promoting and humanitarian operations. In the long run, our total defence should be capable of large-scale participation in international operations. However, we must set priorities so as to make the most effective contribution in relation to costs. At present, this means prioritizing operations involving ground forces, air transport and mine clearance.

We are increasingly being called upon to participate in multinational security-promoting operations in other countries the purpose of which is to reduce the risk of conflicts and war and to manage the crises that nevertheless arise. By taking part in the management of regional conflicts, as we have done during the 1990s in the Balkans, we are also laying the foundation for our own national security. The same applies to our participation in the peace-promoting cooperation between NATO and its PFP partners or the buildup of security structures in the Baltic states and other countries in Eastern Europe. In fact, Swedish military units have even taken part in PFP cooperation with Russia. One of my tasks is to achieve closer cooperation with Russia on peace-promoting operations and I hope that these will be expanded, both within the PFP and outside.

### **Sweden's reorganized defence**

How should we organize our defence resources in order to meet our priorities? What we need is an organization that is much smaller than today's, but that is versatile and can be used for many different kinds of

operations. Most of its units and systems should be capable of defending our country against threats, territorial violations and attacks of various kinds, as well as being prepared for participation in international operations. We must maintain high standards of quality in terms of personnel and equipment in order to be effective, to undertake a wide range of tasks in varying and sometimes difficult conditions and to minimize risks. There must be smooth cooperation between military and civilian stakeholders in both peace and war, both at the national level and in connection with international operations. While ensuring that we are capable of the kind of flexible operations that may be necessary in the present global situation, we must also prepare to adapt our defence capability to any needs that might arise in the future.

For this purpose we must focus in particular on intelligence services and research, up-to-date knowledge and competences, coherent adjustment plans, international cooperation on defence procurement and general preparedness for change. We must phase out some operational units, equipment systems and peacetime units, but **not** in a spirit of self-criticism. Our present defence was designed to deal with a different situation. Sweden's armed neutrality – an ambitious national system that required us as far as possible to defend our country by ourselves – was a response to the cold war. Our broad defence industry base is one of the most obvious examples of this.

We should now analyse **potential** global scenarios. Then we should decide, on the basis of innovative and logical thinking, which elements of our current defence to retain and further develop. And we should make new plans as regards personnel and equipment for the future. In the future we will need a structure that is sufficiently flexible to take into account any potential developments, including developments that may not seem very probable today.

### **A new planning model**

A question that has always been difficult to answer in the context of defence planning is how many brigades, naval units, squadrons etc. are necessary for the defence to meet its commitments. The chain of cause and effect is simply too long and complex to make it possible to find a satisfactory answer.

More than a year ago, Parliament adopted a new management and monitoring system for the Armed Forces. This decision emphasized the

importance of matching operational capability, i.e. military actions involving the different services, with the Armed Forces' main tasks and wartime organization. The planning model that was designed in accordance with this decision subsequently played an important part in the deliberations on defence policy between the Social Democrats and the opposition parties during the early winter of 1999. This model also laid the foundation for the proposals concerning the future structure of the Armed Forces that were presented in May 1999. In brief, the purpose of the model is to achieve a better match between the tasks laid down by the Government and Parliament and the organization of operational units. Consequently, planning is closely linked to a number of potential target scenarios. One scenario describes the tasks which the Armed Forces will probably be required to perform in about ten years' time given a certain scenario. By adopting an integrated approach it should be possible to trace the operational ideas from elaboration of the scenario to the need for military defence units. The result will then form the basis for decisions concerning operational units. We hope that this will make it simpler in the future to determine how to gear our operational capability to the new demands.

The future organization should be sufficiently flexible to allow for quite large variations without the need of major organizational changes. Where such changes must be made, they should be made in response to the new operational needs. I think this is an important innovation for several reasons: it will make it possible for parliamentarians to relate our overall defence policy objectives to the structures and resources of our total defence and to make alterations where necessary. There should be a more transparent link between expenditure and specific structures and resources. A new planning model will also help us to rid ourselves of the legacy of the cold war, to increase flexibility and to put in place a defence that is appropriate to the challenges, risks and threats of the future. This would indeed be a triumph of innovative and logical thinking.

### **The new wartime organization**

In order to meet the demands imposed by various potential future scenarios, there will be a division of responsibilities between combat capability, competences and adjustment. **Combat units** will be expressed in terms of operational units and their total size will be geared to meeting the need to maintain Sweden's territorial integrity, participate in

international operations and increase our preparedness to ensure that we can, within one year, defend ourselves against limited armed attacks and support the community in the event of a severe crisis.

This organization – and this is of vital importance – must be designed in such a way that it can be expanded and adapted to new conditions within a five-year period. Defence capabilities include all the operational capabilities that are needed in order to deal with different kinds of armed attacks in the future. This may mean that a number of capabilities, in particular armed combat capabilities, which are currently divided among several sectors of the Armed Forces organization, will be coordinated on a service-wide basis. Artillery capability is a good example.

Smaller unit volumes, along with rapid technological development and the need to improve cooperation and coordination, will make new demands on both command and intelligence functions. We will need to upgrade our capacity for analysing international developments in order to ensure credible defence adjustment. The conclusions arrived at independently by the Intelligence Committee are similar to those drawn by the Defence Committee. Consequently, the volume of the command organization will be reduced, and non-military technology will be used to a larger extent than today. The relevant features of the Dominant Battlespace Awareness concept, i.e. the capacity to identify deviations from normal peacetime conditions in and around Sweden with the help of information technology, may well make it possible to improve our capability for peacetime monitoring of the security and environmental situation and to increase early warning times, as well as meeting intelligence requirements. If we are successful in meeting these needs, we should be able to make smarter use of our smaller armed forces. There will be fewer units in the future wartime organization.

To maintain our capability for defending our territorial integrity, for participation in international actions and for armed combat, we will have to increase our operational mobility as well as enhancing our early warning systems. Tomorrow's units must be organized on these lines. Some of the needs that must be met by the reorganized defence will require investment, and we must also maintain a certain volume – a critical mass – to assure the necessary levels of competence and cost-effectiveness. The need to strike a balance between quality and quantity will make it necessary to make a number of tough choices. In my view, however, quality should take precedence over quantity wherever possible. Greater prominence must be given to the need for an integrated operational approach in the design of the new wartime organization. The

future organization must not be built on today's functions, unit types and local concerns. Such considerations would undermine the possibility of establishing structures that are adapted to the rapid pace of future combat situations and also make it more difficult to make full use of the potential of new technologies.

In conjunction with the ongoing reorganization of our defence, I am convinced that technology will play a key role in modernizing our defence. It will help us to improve our early warning capability and to focus on quality rather than quantity and on platform mobility. These are some examples of the new orientation of Sweden's defence policy.

The various potential scenarios described in the Defence Committee's report highlight the need to be able to deal with threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Another threat associated with the emergence of the information society is information warfare. This kind of warfare could affect all elements of our vulnerable modern society and could occur at all conflict levels. We must be capable of dealing with this new threat.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment to the reorganized defence is now under review. I am convinced that the conscript system should continue to be the basis for recruitment to this modern, custom-built defence. It would be difficult for a country with such a small population as Sweden's to strike the right balance between quantity and quality if we had purely professional armed forces. Let us not forget the praise heaped by officers from other countries on Swedish conscripts who have taken part in international missions. All the evidence indicates that the conscript system helps to lay the foundation for the population's will to resist. Assuming this to be the case, we must really recruit more women!

In future, the needs of the Armed Forces must determine the number of people drafted for national service. Probably, about 15,000-20,000 conscripts will be needed per year. We must also consider new solutions as regards the content and length of training. The experience gained so far of a basic training period of about three months is very promising. I think we should also consider modernizing the home guard and expanding its defence tasks. It should be an important element of local defence. I am optimistic about recruitment if it is based on this short training period. The same applies to our voluntary organizations. There is doubtless scope

for rationalization and innovations in this area, although they will have to be implemented in a democratic manner.

Another consequence of the reforms is the need to change the career system for officers and reserve officers. It seems appropriate that officers' careers should include more of the features that are so typical of the careers of graduate engineers and teachers: a good basic training, continuous in-service training at university level, and changes of profession within a main career track. Similarly, the defence organization should take advantage of the skills of reserve officers aged 40-50. We should establish suitable arrangements to make this possible. The Armed Forces of tomorrow should, in my opinion, have fewer career and reserve officers than today. At the same time, the size and orientation of our defence must be such that we know for certain that it can be expanded and adapted to new developments within a five-year period. An appropriate age structure means that middle-aged personnel, irrespective of their rank, are directly responsible for conscripts and junior officers. And, as I mentioned before, we must definitely recruit more women!

### **Reduction of defence expenditure**

Parallel with the restructuring of our defence organization it would be appropriate, in view of the favourable security situation at the moment, to reduce our defence expenditure, even if we must also accept that it may take some time to adjust the armed forces to new tasks and conditions. The defence has made a substantial investment in personnel, equipment and plant, and the new rapid reaction units and international operations will also cost money and require more investment if we are to maintain high quality.

A few years into the 21st century our defence expenditure will correspond to less than 2% of GDP (depending on the rate of growth during this period). This may be compared with current expenditure in other countries, for example Norway, 2.1%, Italy, 2.0%, the Netherlands, 1.8%, and Finland, 1.7%. Among NATO countries, Greece spends the largest proportion of national income on its defence – 4.9%, while Germany only spends 1.5%.

## **Future defence needs**

Many people are likely to get the opportunity to work in the armed forces. More knowledge and more changes will be necessary. But nowadays this applies to all other areas of working life too. I am always happy to meet national servicemen and servicewomen who are thinking of becoming officers. They have an attitude and a prospective career that I can relate to. I know that there is the same go-ahead spirit in research and industry; I only hope that all the necessary changes will be implemented speedily.

In fact, quite a lot of people are in favour of the changes, and this means a lot to me as Minister of Defence. We must be capable of defending our country and protecting our citizens in a future that is difficult to predict. However, in the next few years this capability should be designed differently from before and it should be cut down to size, since the potential threat of attack no longer involves major invasions. We should look forward to the 21st century with optimism. To be able to do that, we must not ignore the problematic and improbable threat of large-scale violence inflicted upon us and our country. We must also discuss the kind of defence we need so as to make sure that we have planned for worst-case scenarios. Knowing this, we will be able to continue to build our peaceful society. We will be able to build Sweden on the basis of mutual trust, knowing that we are capable of deterring others from the use of force and of defending ourselves if force is used against us.



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