

United or Divided We Stand? Perspectives on the EU's Challenges

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External shocks and threat perceptions

Nordic security 1991-2014

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Abstract

Events in Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 challenge the post-Cold War geopolitical situation in Europe. This has also strongly affected the Nordic region, and the Nordic governments are rethinking their own security strategy. For the first time since World War II, a state that shares borders with Finland and Norway has seized a part of a neighbouring country by military means. Crimea 2014 falls within a succession of external shocks that have influenced Nordic security policy thinking. The aim of the paper is to take a step back in order to analyse this aspect from a historical perspective, starting with the end of the Cold War, via 9/11, and until today. On basis of key official documents on defence, this paper investigates how changes in the security environment have influenced the conditions for Nordic security regarding i) each country's security strategy, and ii) their approach to Nordic defence cooperation.

Introduction

The Ukraine crisis and Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 challenge the post-Cold War geopolitical situation in Europe. This has also strongly affected the Nordic region. For the first time since World War II (WWII), a state that shares borders with Finland and Norway has seized a part of a neighbouring country by military means. Consequently, the Nordic governments are rethinking their own security strategy. The immediate response of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden was to condemn Russian actions. A non-response would have signalled a tacit acceptance of Russia's violation of international law. Moreover, in 2015, the Nordic defence ministers stated in a joint feature article that they sought to strengthen Nordic defence cooperation. They confirmed that the situation was no longer "business as usual" and stated that the Nordic countries had to adjust themselves to a new normal condition. (Søreide, Wammen, Haglund, Sveinsson, & Hultqvist, 2015).

In general, disturbances in the international or regional order will involve the rise and the decline of neighbouring powers and provoke new considerations of security policies. Following strategic upheaval, this is likely to lead to a review of strategic plans and the relevance of past principles for new environments. Changes in the security environment such as the end of Cold War, 9/11, and events in Ukraine fall into this category of incentives for security policy changes. Then again, perceptions of threats are imaginary in the sense that an attack has not occurred, and indeed may not occur. However, as Sten Rynning points out: “threat perceptions deal with communal well-being and the ability of the community to command support and resources in a worst-case scenario. Hence, at issue are the politics of relative power and political incentives that often are intended to prevent adverse change” (Rynning, 2002, p. 7).

The Nordic states are all committed to maintain their contribution to international security and international law. They also share similarities when it comes to culture, climate, religion, stable politics, historical heritage, and a strong sense of Nordic community. Nonetheless, despite the many similarities and geographical proximity, the countries have differed in their security and defence policy and outlook. Furthermore, two of them are EU members (Finland, Sweden), one is only a member of NATO (Norway), and one is a member of both NATO and EU (Denmark). The different alignments have made Nordic defence cooperation challenging – a cooperation that has always been somewhat informal and diffuse in nature.

The paper is a qualitative case study of the four Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden¹. While the Nordic countries share many similarities, they differ in terms of geopolitical positions, affiliation to the European security system, and with variations in their security and defence policies. Hence, from a security and defence policy perspective the Nordic countries are an interesting testing ground for analysis. The aim of the paper is to analyse how external shocks in the security environment have influenced Nordic security from a historical perspective, starting with the end of the Cold War, via 9/11, and until today. What have been the decisive threat perceptions, and how have they impacted Nordic defence policy thinking? On basis of key official political documents on defence, as well as military reports, previous research and newspaper articles, this paper investigates how changes in the security environment have influenced the conditions for Nordic security regarding i) each country’s security strategy, and ii) their approach to Nordic defence cooperation. In theoretical terms, the paper revolves around the issue of small states in the international system. The basic

¹ Although Iceland is a Nordic country, it is not included in the paper. Despite the Icelandic NATO membership, the country is less interesting for the purposes of this paper due to the lack of armed forces.

assumption, drawn from structural realism, is that smaller states to a greater extent are affected by changes in the international system, as well as international organisations, as they are dependent on greater powers (Waltz, 2000).

The paper proceeds as follows: the next section looks at the evolving Nordic defence cooperation. Then each of the Nordic countries' security and defence policy after the Cold War are analysed in light of the changing security environment from 1991 to 2014. The last section zooms out and addresses changes and continuities in the development of Nordic countries' security strategies, and the significance of the current changes in the security environment. The main argument of the paper is that although all four states seem to refocus to the perceived Russian threat in their vicinity, we are not seeing an emerging Nordic security community, but rather a move towards the west and the framework of NATO.

Nordic security: separately and together

During the Cold War, defence cooperation between the Nordic countries was highly constrained. Negotiations on a Scandinavian defence union in 1948–9 failed to bridge national interests, and Nordic governments opted for different security policy alignments. Denmark and Norway joined NATO in 1949 as founding members, while Finland and Sweden remained unaligned. Also contributing to this was the reluctance of the United States to supply weapons – taking away the credibility of the defence union. Moreover, the Soviet threat was seen as too massive for the small Nordic states (Forsberg, 2013, p. 1166). A Nordic Council was established in 1952, but was hampered by an informal ban on discussions of foreign policy and was restricted to non-security related cooperation. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their different security policy alignments, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden cooperated informally on military matters such as intelligence and air operations. Furthermore, despite its official neutrality policy, Sweden secretly cooperated with NATO during the Cold War in preparing for a potential Soviet attack (Agrell, 2015, pp. 128-150).

With the end of the East-West confrontation, Finland and Sweden regained more freedom of manoeuvre in their foreign policy. The two countries joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994, and became EU members in 1995. Moreover, the prohibition against foreign-policy coordination in the Nordic Council was lifted in 1991, making it possible to strengthen Nordic cooperation in the security and defence field. Cooperation was intensified and new institutions were established, including for defence procurement and coordinating

military peace support operations (Saxi, 2011). However, intra-Nordic defence cooperation was still very informal, and several planned procurement projects were abandoned.

During the 2000s, there was a new drive for enhancing Nordic defence cooperation. In 2000, the Nordic countries set up a Nordic Brigade as a joint peacekeeping force. In addition, in 2004, Sweden, Norway and Finland, together with Estonia and Ireland, established a Nordic Battlegroup (NBG) in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). As Framework nation for the NBG, Sweden assumed responsibility for leadership of the Battlegroup (Andersson, 2006, pp. 37-42). In this decade, Nordic crisis management cooperation was prominent, especially between Finland, Norway and Sweden (Forsberg, 2013). They participated together in both The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and EUFOR in Chad. Denmark, differing from its Nordic neighbours, was one of the Allies in USA's *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan from 2001, as well as being a part in the 2003 Iraq intervention.

In 2008, the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence presented a report containing 140 areas of possible future Nordic defence cooperation (Swedish Armed Forces, 2008). Enhanced Nordic defence cooperation was also followed up on the political level. Tasked by the Nordic Foreign Ministers, former Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg presented a report in February 2009 with a number of proposals for a strengthened Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy (Stoltenberg, 2009). The Stoltenberg Report included 13 proposals, of which two of its more controversial proposals were a declaration of solidarity and a joint Nordic operation for air surveillance of Icelandic airspace. These were adopted, however in a somewhat watered-down form (Forsberg, 2013).

The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) organisation was set up in November 2009, facilitating cooperation in the fields of support structures, procurement, development, and planning. While all decision-making is based on consensus, each country has the possibility to opt out of any activity or project. The creation of NORDEFECO was mainly based on economic considerations (Saxi, 2011). Like other European countries in the post-Cold War era, the Nordic countries have faced shrinking budgets, rising costs of defence equipment, and demands that they take part in international military operations. The armed forces of all four countries have undergone major defence reforms, although at different times and at different speed.

Addressing the underlying factors for increased Nordic defence cooperation, the most cited argument is the financial aspect. The emphasis here has been more on cost-efficiency rather than saving. The geographical proximity naturally also plays a role. In addition, Tuomas

Forsberg (2013) also notes the role of shared culture, values and identity. He also points out that in terms of changes in the security environment, increased Nordic cooperation in the last decade is largely not threat-driven, where the end of the Cold War created the political space for increased cooperation (Forsberg, 2013, p. 1175). However, two other geostrategic changes have also been significant. Firstly, USA reducing its military presence in Europe, and secondly Russia rebuilding its military capabilities and working to reassert its status as a great power. Although the Russia factor seldom has been referred to in declared motives for enhanced Nordic cooperation, this seems to have changed after 2014.

Following the events in Ukraine, the scope and intensity of the dialogue between the Nordic countries increased due to the changing security situation in Europe. The Nordic defence ministers have voiced intentions for deeper cooperation between the countries as the strategic importance of the Nordic region has grown – particularly on information-sharing, joint military training, and coordinating activities overall (Søreide et al., 2015). However, it is emphasised that Nordic cooperation is to take place within the framework of NATO and the EU, with the emphasis on maintaining the transatlantic link. This is also underlined at a Nordic-Baltic Defence Minister meeting in Stockholm November 2015, stating,

In view of the strategic environment, the Nordic and Baltic countries continue to expand their security cooperation. The stability in the Nordic and Baltic regions can only be secured in a wider European and trans-Atlantic context, but the countries in the region also play an important role in underpinning and strengthening the overall security architecture” (“Nordic-Baltic Defence Ministers Statement,” 2015).

Hence, that security cooperation takes place in a European and trans-Atlantic context is crucial to the small states, but also with the belief that intra-regional security cooperation can contribute to European security. Under the Danish NORDEFECO Chairmanship 2016, the aim is to enhance and deepen Nordic defence cooperation through non-bureaucratic avenues, by allowing all Nordic countries “easier access to territory with military aircraft, warships and military vehicles through specific procedures” (NORDEFECO, 2016, p. 34).

Denmark: global and regional

In the Cold War era, defence issues were not particularly important in Danish politics. For most of the period, defence policy was not even a central theme in the formulation of national security policy (Clemmesen, 1995). Accordingly, the Danish Armed Forces kept its role as a stand-by mobilised army, and tailored for one specific task: invasion defence of Denmark. The broader

security policy task was also clear; namely to handle the risk of war with the appropriate mix of deterrence and reassurance (Petersen, 2004, pp. 441-443). The Soviet Union was the main threat, and NATO membership became the cornerstone of Danish security and defence policy. Copenhagen set up a symbolic defence, with the minimum level of forces that was sufficient to trigger the solidarity of allies (Olesen & Villaume, 2005).

In the wake of the Cold War, an international focus became more prominent in Danish security and defence policy. During the 1990s, Denmark adopted an active foreign policy in the new security environment – giving the Danish Armed Forces a role as an important security policy tool. With the 1992 Defence Agreement², the Danish Armed Forces took the first steps in the adjustment of missions and structures to the collapse of the direct invasion threat against Denmark. The 1995 Defence Agreement included cutting resources to territorial defence in order to strengthen the capability to operate abroad (Danish MoD, 1995).

As a part of the 1995 Defence Agreement, the Government appointed a Defence Commission³. The report given formulated the Commission's expectations to the future in scenarios (Defence Commission of 1997, 1998). The most likely scenario painted was a global, cooperating order with USA in the leading role. The military threats were believed to spring out of state terrorism and 'failed states'⁴. The threat evaluation of the Commission encouraged a shift from tasks related to territorial defence, to international tasks. Based on the evaluations of the Defence Commission, the political parties agreed to the need of a major reform of the Danish Defence. The 1999 Defence Agreement departs from the previous one with minimal attention to territorial defence, and outlined an increase of the capacity for international missions and tasks (Danish MoD, 2000).

After the terrorist attacks on the USA 11 September 2001, Danish perception of threats changes. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism – issues that the 1997 Defence Commission had barely addressed – became an important part of Danish security policy. In the 2004 Defence Agreement, the focus is on international terrorism and international tasks. The mobilisation army is faced out, and it is decided to increase capabilities in two central

² Main documents in Danish defence policy are the parliamentary 'defence agreements', which are formed from discussions and preparations between the political parties. These are political agreements on the Danish Armed Forces, and are published in a five-year cycle.

³ The purpose of Danish Defence Commission is to review the development and status of the Defence, and based on this give recommendation for the preparations of Defence Agreements. The Commissions have typically been used in connection with major strategic changes, political constellations or prelegislative work (Danish MoD, 2015).

⁴ For most part, the Commission does not address the type of terror threats that al-Qaida would come to represent later.

areas: international deployable military capabilities, and the ability to meet terror acts and its impact (Danish MoD, 2004). The perception is that the challenges and risks have changed dramatically – underlining the importance of the Danish Armed Forces as a tool in an active Danish foreign and security policy. Hence, the 2004 Defence Agreement clearly expresses the shift in Danish security thinking – a shift in focus from territorial defence to expeditionary forces and international tasks.

From a Danish perspective, Russia made it clear with military means in the Russian-Georgian War in 2008, that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) area is Russian sphere of interest (Defence Commission of 2008, 2009, pp. 46-7). However, Russia is not seen as a direct threat to Danish territory. Accordingly, the 2009 Defence Agreement develops further the transformation of the Danish Armed based on perceived international demands for Danish force contributions. The level of ambition for international participation is maintained, however now with a global focus. Due to globalisation, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failed states make out the prime threats against Danish security. Moreover, for the first time, a Danish Defence Agreement mentions the EU. When the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, Denmark chose to opt-out from this cooperation. Denmark is and has been more Atlantic oriented than its Nordic neighbours, including Norway, following in the footsteps of the US and the UK. However, it is commented that the development in the EU has made it increasingly difficult for Denmark to stay out of the policy area (Rieker, 2006, p. 147). Today, politicians are more in favour of lifting the opt-out, but it is a politically difficult issue because a decision to adopt the CFSP would involve a referendum (Rynning, 2013).

The latest Danish Defence Agreement continues the active foreign and security policy. NATO remains the cornerstone in Danish security and defence policy. Moreover, the Danish Armed Forces are to continue to lift Denmark's part of the burden-sharing in the Alliance, through contributions to international efforts and develop relevant military capabilities (Danish MoD, 2012). Although the effort in Afghanistan is phased out, new areas are emerging, which require the attention of the defence forces. The central areas in this regard are cyberspace and the increased international attention and interest in the Arctic area. Related to the latter point, an Arctic Joint Service Command is established in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland (Danish MoD, 2012, p. 14). The Agreement furthermore introduces new cuts in the defence budget, involving a reduction in the defence budget of about DKK 1, 5 billion in 2014, and the cuts increasing to approximately DKK 2, 7 billion in 2017.

It is a widely shared notion in Denmark that the country enjoys an advantageous location, geographically speaking – a perception that has opened up for an active Danish foreign policy and the abolishment of territorial defence. The Danish expeditionary doctrine adopted in the 2000s, have engaged Denmark in multiple international missions since the end of the Cold War – spreading the Danish Armed Forces all around the world. In 2014 only, Danish units have been in operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, Kosovo, by the Horn of Africa, and in Syria. National tasks concern surveillance, and with no territorial defence, Denmark is fully dependent upon NATO allies. Hence, Danish security is guaranteed in a strategic perspective through NATO's Article 5 commitment of collective defence of alliance territory (Defence Command Denmark, 2015).

Considering the implications of the Ukraine crisis for Danish security and defence policy, it would seem that the need to defend the country's immediate neighbourhood is on the agenda. Although Danish international activism will still be global, it is argued that the Ukraine crisis has changed the conditions for the Danish foreign and security political activism adopted after the Cold War (Rasmussen et al., 2014). Unlike during the Cold War period, Denmark's strategic border has moved eastwards after NATO enlargement. Moreover, the refocus of NATO following Wales will most likely affect Denmark, considering that the country has followed the Alliance out of area into Iraq and Afghanistan.

As for Nordic defence cooperation, Denmark has been an outlier in terms of its view of Nordic security challenges – largely due to its global outlook. After 2014, however, Denmark is seeking deepened military cooperation with its neighbours. In 2015, Denmark signed an historical agreement with Sweden on increased military cooperation that enables Danish military aircraft and ships to operate in Swedish airspace and waters (Brøndum, 2014). A contributing factor to this decision was increased Russian activity in the Baltic Sea region.

Norway: home and away

During the Cold War, the role and function of the Norwegian Armed Forces were stable; the main task was territorial defence. As the Cold War ended, new debates about the purpose of the Armed Forces emerged in the new security environment (Haaland, 2008). Nevertheless, there was a long-term uncertainty of how Russia would evolve. Moreover, there were political concerns regarding allied attention to the Northern flank, which they perceived as to have a diminishing strategic relevance in NATO circles. The Norwegian Government made several

efforts to turn allied attention to the challenges in the north, but often to no avail. There was a reduction in allied forces earmarked to the defence of the Northern Flank, fewer allied exercises on Norwegian soil, and NATO's command and control system was changed (Tamnes, 1997). Consequently, the 1990's are characterised by a slow transition to the changed security environment. While most Western countries adjusted their traditional priorities, doctrines and operational concepts as the Cold War ended, Norwegian Armed Forces were still concentrated in the north with anti-invasion as their primary task.

At the turn of the millennium, fundamental reforms in the defence structure were initiated. In 1993, the Norwegian Army reached its numerical height, and was with its mobilisation force on 160 000 soldiers larger than it had ever been (Håkenstad, 2010). However, the evaluation of the 2000 whitepaper on defence was that the Norwegian Armed Forces was in a deep and long-lasting structural crisis (Norwegian MoD, 2001). This acknowledgement led to a comprehensive defence reform, by which a shift towards quantitative reductions was viewed as necessary. An improved ability to take part in international operations at a short notice became one of the main goals (Haaland, 2008). Hence, by the late 1990s, the Norwegian mobilisation army was dismantled.

In the mid-2000s, the modernisation process of the Armed Forces continues. In the 2004 whitepaper, the government portrays a new time, characterised by globalisation and unpredictability (Norwegian MoD, 2004a). Accordingly, this led to a demand for a new defence, and the Armed Forces are to be developed into a security policy tool in light of the more complex security picture with diffuse threats. Moreover, in 2004, the Norwegian MoD issued its first strategic concept paper for the Norwegian Armed Forces, which addressed the challenges of the new international climate. One element that stands out is that the strategic concept opens up for intervention in international crises, though it is underlined that such interventions need to be firmly anchored in international law and have a broad international support (Norwegian MoD, 2004b). The concept furthermore emphasises the importance of NATO, the necessity of securing the Northern areas, and the need to contribute to peace, stability and further development of the international legal system – issues that can be identified as important in Norwegian security and defence policy since the end of WWII.

Five years later, the strategic concept was revised. The new strategic concept gives particular priority to three areas: i) the High North; ii) active Norwegian participation in operations abroad, conducted within the framework of the UN; and iii) continued adaptation and

modernisation of the Norwegian Armed Forces (Norwegian MoD, 2009). Firstly, there is an increased emphasis on the High North, underlining the area's strategic importance seen from a Norwegian perspective. According to the Government, the gradual transformation of the global security policy landscape underlines the need for a sharper focus on Norwegian interests in the High North. The second area points to that the challenges in Norway's own region make it important to preserve the Alliance as an organisation based on collective defence and consensus as the key principles. However, ensuring Allied attention to Norway's region is perceived as demanding and that it will be closely related to Norwegian willingness to contribute to NATO operations (Norwegian MoD, 2009, p. 35). Concerning the third area, the document underlines the need for modern and flexible forces in a changed international stage. Their key task is to contribute to the prevention and handling of security challenges against Norway and areas under Norwegian jurisdiction. In the current globalised world, the tasks must be carried out at both home and abroad:

The NAF [Norwegian Armed Forces] are to be developed as a modern, flexible and Alliance-adapted instrument of security policy, with a balance being sought between tasks, structure and funding. The NAF's activities are to be based on close cooperation with relevant civilian authorities and on conscription adapted to the needs of the NAF. Focus will be on securing and promoting Norwegian interests through the ability to handle a broad range of challenges, both nationally and internationally (Norwegian MoD, 2009, p. 55).

Accordingly, from a Norwegian perspective, the traditional division between national and international security has been nearly erased. Since the end of the 1990s, and in particular after 11 September 2001, the threat posed by international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and non-state actors has been high on the agenda. Tasks outside Norway are therefore argued to have relevance also for security at home. The notion of a unipolar world, dominated by USA in the first decade after the Cold War, is no longer viewed as appropriate. The emergence of China as a global power, Russia's revitalisation as a regional power and also India's economic growth and aspirations, all have an impact on the global landscape. Hence, from a Norwegian perspective, the relative shift in power has already resulted in a multi-polar world (Norwegian MoD, 2009, p. 16).

The current whitepaper on defence further emphasises the abovementioned points. Central is that the combination of Russian great-power ambitions, military armament, and interests in the northern areas – with many important Russian military installations being situated on the Kola Peninsula – are considered a challenge to the future stability of the High North (Norwegian MoD, 2012, p. 13). In Norwegian eyes, the relationship with Russia will continue to be

characterised by asymmetry between a great regional power and a small neighbouring country. Hence, Norwegian armed forces are tasked to maintain a defence capability, which, supported by NATO, is sufficient to repel armed aggression. Another focus point is that cyber has become a domain alongside air, sea and land, where the perception is that operations and threats in the cyber area will become more commonplace (Norwegian MoD, 2012).

In 2014, due to increased Russian activities in Norway's vicinity, measures were taken to increase Norway's military presence in the north. The annexation of Crimea proved to Norway that Russia has the ability and the will to use military force to reach political goals abroad. Cooperation with Russia in the High North has a high priority in Norwegian policy on this area, and is followed up with military activities, visits, and exercises. However, after Crimea 2014, the relationship with Russia has been chill, and all military cooperation and contact with Russia is currently suspended.

A new whitepaper on defence is due sometime in 2016, and most likely there will be a stronger Norwegian focus on defence of own territory and the nearby area. The expert advice given by the Norwegian Chief of Defence certainly points to this direction, where he states that "my recommendation involves a significant shift from today's defence, with a clear reinforcement of the ability to defend Norway and allies against threats" (Norwegian Chief of Defence, 2015, p. 4). Moreover, in December 2014, the Norwegian Minister of Defence tasked an independent group of experts on Norwegian security and defence policy to advise on the Norwegian Armed Forces' ability to solve their most demanding tasks in severe crises and war. The report of the expert group underlines that Russia will be the most important factor in Norwegian long-term defence planning, and there is remarkably little focus on participation in international military operations (Expert Commission on Norwegian Security and Defence Policy, 2015).

Finland: continuity and consistency

From being in the shadow of the Soviet Union, Finland found itself in a different geopolitical situation as its large neighbour in the east dissolved. The policy of neutrality, adopted in the 1920s, was no longer seen as a possible policy after the end of the Cold War. The new situation was among other marked by the entry into the European Union (EU) in 1995, together with Austria and Sweden. A membership in NATO was still out of the question. However, Finland joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme in 1994. During the 1990s, an idea to shape and participate in international security cooperation in order to avoid marginalisation and prevent detrimental developments to Finland's security emerged. Finland would not isolate

itself from post-Cold War international developments, and under the new circumstances, Finland adopted a policy of active participation in international political and security policy cooperation (Finnish Government, 1995).

Evaluating the international environment in the 1990s, the changes in Europe are portrayed as uneven and uncertain. On the one hand, the threat of war has decreased significantly also from a Finnish perspective, but on the other hand the change was perceived as involving new security policy problems such as political instability, regional and internal conflicts, nationality disputes, and other security problems that can escalate into armed conflict or related refugee flows (Finnish Government, 1997, p. 6). However, it is emphasised that the military position of Finland is the same as before, determined by its location next to Russia. Accordingly, the Finnish defence doctrine is maintained.

When defining Finland's security policy, Helsinki outlines three basic factors: military non-alignment, an independent defence, and membership of the European Union. To Finland, the EU membership has clarified and strengthened its international position. The Finnish argument is that although it does not include military security guarantees, the membership includes protection based on solidarity (Finnish Government, 1997). It is stated that the agreement to the role of the EU in crisis management and the collective defence objective does not affect Finland's non-alignment. In return, the non-alignment does not prevent the Finns from being involved in military crisis management (Finnish Government, 1997, pp. 43-45).

The ability to defend the country's own territory against a military attack or against the threat of it remains the core task of the Defence Forces. Nonetheless, it is clear that the trend of transforming and reform the armed forces, is also felt in Finland. In the 2004 whitepaper on security and defence, the Government called for a defence for Finland based on general conscription and on a modern territorial defence system. More attention is given to develop military crisis management and rapid reaction capabilities and on increasing international cooperation (Finnish Government, 2004). Nonetheless, there is a widely shared perception in Finland of the importance of national defence, paired with limited possibilities to participate militarily in demanding international crisis management (Seppo & Forsberg, 2013). Finland participates in order to show political responsibility and learn from international operations for its national defence but it acknowledges both the material and moral limits to wide-reaching military crisis management.

The current defence reform of the Finnish Defence Forces, initiated with the 2012 White Paper on security and defence, aims at reforming land warfare doctrines and forces (Finnish

Government, 2012). While the Finnish Defence Forces are undergoing a major reform, the defence doctrine is still based on the basic principles of maintaining national capabilities with territorial defence and general conscription. Key causes for the transformation include the rising operational costs, defence materiel becoming obsolete and smaller age groups in national service. Austerity-driven economic policies have stalled Finland's defence budget to less than 1.4 per cent of GDP (Finnish MoD, 2016). The reform, which is being implemented by 2015, is viewed as a necessary precondition for the capacity and further development of the Defence Forces while the defence for the 2020s is being built (Finnish Government, 2012, p. 106).

A report by the Parliamentary Defence Committee published October 2014, urges more investments and budget increases for the Finnish Defence Forces. The proposal is to raise the material budget with approximately 50 million Euros in 2016, with a stepwise increase up to 150 million Euros towards 2020. If not, the Defence Committee is concerned that Finland's defence ability will deteriorate. Notably, the Ukraine crisis and the worsened relations between Russia on the one side, and the EU and NATO on the other, are stated to be the background for the evaluation (Sunni, 2014).

In addition to the EU, the cooperation with NATO is important for Finland, and the country participates actively in the wide-ranging development of NATO's partnership policy. After the NATO summit in Wales 2014, this has gotten increased relevance. That NATO reviewed its activities, means for Finland even closer cooperation as a Partnership for Peace country (Finnish Defence Forces, 2015). The growing assertiveness of Russia has revived discussions about Finland's defence strategy, particular regarding the possibility of NATO membership. Although membership does not have majority support, there is now a greater readiness to discuss the issue. Russia's recent role has in many ways reinforced the already existing positions among the Finnish public; those in favour of joining NATO continue to argue that Finnish capabilities are insufficient, and that Russia may already consider Finland a de-facto NATO member. Opponents are still concerned that NATO membership will cause Finland to be designated a potential enemy of Russia, and provoke retaliation from Moscow. As part of the current debate and in connection with the forthcoming whitepaper on security policy, there will be a new study on the potential implications of full Finnish NATO membership.

In an overall assessment of the Finnish security and defence since the end of the Cold War, there is much continuity. As a small power, Finland has a doctrine of total defence, which harnesses all the resources of the Finnish society for defence whenever required. National defence has the absolute priority over any other military task. Finland has remained wary of

Russia and followed its developments closely. Although the military situation changed following the end of the Cold War, the Finnish view is that the military position of Finland has not. Hence, the central principles of the Finnish defence solution are upheld: territorial defence (although somewhat reformed), general conscription, military non-alignment, and a credible national defence capability. At the same time, however, Helsinki intends to continue to support international crisis prevention and management. This is given a more important role in order to prevent and handle crisis that may affect Finland. This is among other exemplified with the Navy and Air Force being developed for the purpose to participate internationally. In recent years, politicians have decided to cut down the number of standing forces and increase or maintain the financing of Special Forces (Salminen, 2011). Moreover, an interesting and contradictory point in current Finnish defence thinking is that Finland must continue to have a credible defence on its own, even as a completely independent national defence is no longer viewed as a viable concept (see Finnish Government, 2012).

Sweden: neutrality and solidarity

No one else defends Sweden, and we only defend Sweden (Swedish MoD, 1992)

This statement by the Swedish Government in the early 1990s reflects Sweden's long-standing tradition of non-alignment and neutrality. After World War II (WWII), no powerful groups in Sweden questioned the connection between neutrality policy and the necessity of having a strong defence (Johansson & Norman, 1986, pp. 23-24). According to Nils Andrén (1978), Swedish policy of neutrality has been a flexible adaption to power relations in the world. During the Cold War, Swedish neutrality was rather west leaning, and the country was heavily armed, with a large reserve army, powerful air force and strong domestic arms industry.

As the Cold War ended, an uncertainty concerning continued developments lingered in Sweden. The development in Eastern Europe was viewed as much more unpredictable, especially in Russia. Accordingly, in the early 1990s, it was emphasised from the Swedish government that the planning of the future total defence should continue to be on a possible armed attack on Sweden (Swedish MoD, 1992). In Swedish eyes at that time, the military strategic conditions in north Western Europe and in nearby ocean area remained unchanged. However, the new political situation was seen to open up for opportunities for cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy with other European states. Hence, Sweden joined NATO's Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) in 1994, and the EU in 1995. Nonetheless, due to the perceived strategic realities in the north European and north Atlantic areas, the core in Swedish security policy

remained military non-alignment with a credible defence capability during the first decade after the Cold War.

By the end of the 1990s, an armed attack on Sweden was viewed as unlikely. Stockholm adopted a broad security concept and issued several cuts in the defence sector. Although emphasis was still on territorial defence, international tasks for the Armed Forces became increasingly important. The focus was on a comprehensive approach, as well as a modern, flexible and mobile defence with interoperability. Although there is some uncertainty regarding Russia, it is stated that the foundational positive security situation of Sweden remains and that the country is no longer threatened by great power war (Swedish MoD, 1999).

At the turn of the millennium, the Swedish government acknowledged that Swedish security is even more interwoven in a broad international cooperation on security in Europe – which has a foundational significance for Sweden (Swedish MoD, 2001). Accordingly, an internationalisation of the Armed Forces is forwarded, with an aim to increase Sweden's capability for international operations. In short, because the current threat scenarios do not include the possibility of armed aggression against Sweden, the Armed Forces are developed with international crisis management in mind. The Swedes also continue to improve their interoperability with the other EU member states and NATO.

The 2004 Defence Bill portrays the Armed Forces as an important resource in an active Swedish security and defence policy. While a military attack on Sweden is still viewed as unlikely, there are other threats that points to the need for a defence. The emphasis is on international terrorism, as well as national and international efforts, based on the argument that new international threats and conflicts have consequences also for Sweden: “Sweden, as rest of Europe, faces new threats, which are more diverse, less visible and more unpredictable. The threats and challenges arise from regional conflicts, states that are unravelling, organised crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism” (Swedish MoD, 2004, p. 14).

The 2009 Swedish Defence Bill was postponed a year awaiting an analysis on how the Russian action in Georgia August 2008 would affect Sweden's defence needs. The assessment of the conflict was that Russian motive for the intervention was driven by an expansionist geostrategic agenda in the Caucasus. However, this was not believed to happen in the Baltic area or towards former satellites in East- and Central Europe because of deterrence (i.e. the Baltic memberships in NATO and the EU) and interdependence (i.e. trade with Europe) (Swedish MoD, 2009, pp. 24-25). During the 2000s, the Swedish Armed Forces underwent major changes, which culminated with the 2009 Defence Bill. The aim was to complete the transition to a flexible,

modern, and professional force that is able to operate with international partners. This reform included abandoning conscription and introducing an all-volunteer professional force. The threat picture painted by the Government is broad, and there is a notable shift from a defence of the territory to a defence of national interests. Moreover, notably the document states, “Sweden will not remain passive if a catastrophe or an attack should hit another Member country or Nordic country. We expect these countries to act similarly should Sweden be hit. Sweden should have the ability to give and receive military support” (Swedish MoD, 2009, p. 9). With the solidarity clause, the Swedish government acknowledges that this excludes the option of neutrality in case of a conflict in the nearby area – a major shift from the policy of the 1990s.

The 2015 Defence Bill, however, brings the focus back on territorial defence, in which the events in Ukraine are described as the greatest challenge to the current European security structure (Swedish MoD, 2015, p. 28). A serious concern in Sweden is that Russia has demonstrated its ability to gather its military resources quickly and carry out complex operations in its neighbourhood without any warning. The annexation of Crimea accelerated a debate on the capabilities of the Swedish armed forces and the military presence on Gotland – a strategically important Baltic island where spending cuts in recent years have all but eliminated defences. After the events in Ukraine, from a Swedish point of view, the Baltic Sea region is the area most exposed to increased Russian military activity (Swedish MoD, 2015, pp. 44-45). A potential crisis or conflict situation in Sweden’s vicinity is believed to be possible, given the limited military resources of the Baltic States, the relative closeness to Russia, and the need of the West to move military units quickly.

Sweden’s partnership with NATO is characterized as comprehensive and well developed. Since 2013, Sweden has participated as a partner in the NATO Response Force (NRF). Moreover, in 2014, Sweden signed an agreement with NATO regarding host nation support. The government intends to increase Swedish participation in NATO’s most advanced and complex exercises, primarily within the NRF framework, as well as in NATO’s large-scale exercises (Swedish MoD, 2015). In this regard, the importance of participating in exercises taking place in the vicinity of Sweden is emphasized.

The security policy of solidarity is still valid but the main task to prevent an armed attack is once again emphasised as the main priority in the 2015 Defence Bill. The Swedish government throughout underlines that it is necessary to take into account the changed security political environment in Europe (Swedish MoD, 2015). Consequently, the armed forces are going from

a mission-based defence to a defence that is more clearly directed towards the national defence dimension. However, unlike during the Cold War era, the measures are not taken based exclusively on Swedish conditions considered in isolation. Today, Swedish defence thinking also takes into account the larger Baltic Sea, as well as European and the global contexts.

Nordic security: change and continuity

The aim of this paper was to analyse how external shocks in the security environment in the period 1991-2014 have influenced Nordic security, both regarding each country's security strategy, as well as their approach to Nordic defence cooperation. Historically, geopolitics has divided the Nordic region more often than it has unified it on hard security issues. In spite of a shared geographical space with shared problems, Nordic security priorities are disparate. After the end of the Cold War, each country has faced a different point of the compass; Norway with its focus in the north, Finland orienting itself eastward, Sweden looking to the west, and Denmark with its global engagement to the south.

Diverging from its Nordic neighbours, Finland retained its mobilisation-based territorial defence concept. The key factor here is Finland's long border with Russia, in addition to being located in close proximity to several Russian strategic areas such as St. Petersburg and the Kola Peninsula. Hence, Russia is, and has been, perceived as the main potential threat, which guides Finnish strategic thinking. The other three have to a far greater extent internationalised their Armed Forces, mostly so in the Danish case, and arguably the Swedish case. Norway has always been concerned with national interests in the High North, but proving its value as an ally in NATO has also been important post-Cold War.

11 September 2001, accelerated this trend of internationalisation, where a more complex security picture influenced security thinking and strategic plans. This has led to a notion in all countries that security challenges need to be addressed both nationally and internationally, in order to prevent and handle crises that might affect state security. Nonetheless, as the analysis above shows, the degree and scale of this internationalisation differ between the Nordic countries.

After Crimea, there is a common Nordic view that the security situation in their vicinity has notably deteriorated. Arguably, Russia's actions have brought the different Nordic geopolitical outlooks closer together. Denmark is now focusing more on defence in the nearby area, and Sweden is turning its security focus back eastwards towards Russia. While there is no

discontinuity in Finnish defence policy, the acknowledgement of the country's dependence on external support for its defence is notable. In Norway, there has been an increased focus on the High North and territorial defence since 2014 and after the disbanding of the NATO-led ISAF in Afghanistan in December 2014.

While there are declared intentions of enhanced Nordic defence cooperation, it is underlined time and again that this needs to be in a wider European and transatlantic context – a point that underlines the role of small states in the international system and their dependence on greater powers (i.e. the USA and NATO). Furthermore, the increased cooperation after 2014 do not seem to include new areas of cooperation, but to further already established cooperation within the framework of NORDEFECO from 2009.

The priorities and refocus of NATO after the Wales 2014 summit have affected Denmark and Norway, as well as the non-aligned countries Finland and Sweden. The public and political debates in the two latter countries over possible NATO membership are more heated, although it does not seem likely that they will join anytime soon. Both governments have commissioned reports on the potential implications of a NATO membership, even though they currently seem unwilling to risk a reaction from Moscow by joining the alliance (Scrutton & Suoninen, 2014). Instead, after Wales 2014, both Finland and Sweden are seeking closer cooperation as PfP countries to the extent that they may be regarded as informal NATO members. In summary, all the four Nordic states seem to refocus to the perceived Russian threat in their vicinity after NATO went global in the decade after 9/11 with ISAF – and all of them, even the two non-members focus on NATO and transatlantic security rather than pushing the Nordic security road.

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