

# Nordic Partners of NATO

*How similar are Finland and Sweden  
within NATO cooperation?*

Juha Pyykönen





FIIA REPORT 48

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Juha Pyykönen



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# List of abbreviations

ACO	Atlantic Command Operations
ACT	Atlantic Command Transformation
ANP	Annual National Programme
BALTOPS	Baltic Operations
CBRN	Multinational Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion
CIMIC	Civil-Military Co-operation
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMX	Crisis Management Exercise
CRO	Crisis Response Operations
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DCB	Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EDA	European Defence Agency
ENRF	Enhanced NATO Response Force
EO	Enhanced Opportunities
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EOP	Enhanced Opportunities Programme
ETEE	Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation
EUBG	EU Battle Groups
EUMC	European Union Military Committee
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
FAWEU	Forces available for the WEU
FINCENT	Finnish Defence Forces International Centre
FFG	Follow-on-Forces Group
HNS	Host Nation Support
HVE	High Visibility Exercise
IFFG	Initial Follow-on Forces Group
IFOR	Implementation Force
IO	Interoperability Objective
IP	Interoperability Platform
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force

JEF	Joint Expeditionary Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MTEP	Military Training and Education Programme
	Open to Partners
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Co-operation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBF	Nätverksbaserade Försvaret (Swedish: Network-Based Defence)
NORDCAPS	Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support
NORDEFKO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSG	Nordic Support Group
OCC	Operational Capabilities Concept
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARP	Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process
PCC	Partnership Coordination Cell
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PG	Partnership Goal
PII	Partnership Interoperability Initiative
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSC	Political and Security Committee of the European Union
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
RFP	Response Force Pool
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SHIRBRIG	Standby High-Readiness Brigade
SWEDINT	Swedish Armed Forces International Centre
TEEP	Training and Education Enhancement Programme
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force



# Executive summary

‘The more distant certain objects are, the more similar they appear to be’, is an axiom that could very well be applied to the subject of this report, which describes and compares the two Nordic partners, Finland and Sweden, within the context of their military cooperation with NATO.

The focus of the comparison is actually defined by NATO, which officially initiated new programmes, processes and mechanisms, or tools, for closer and deeper cooperation with its partners. At the military level, the ultimate goals of the NATO partnership programmes were, and still are, to support partners in their efforts to reform their national defence structures and to assist them in developing their national capabilities according to NATO standards. These goals are subject to two prerequisites: well-prepared and stand-out applicants for membership, and qualified military capabilities for operations. The Nordic partners have met every expectation pertaining to capabilities, but have refrained from becoming members of the Alliance.

The point of departure was ground zero as there was no cooperation at all before the NATO Cooperation Council (NACC) was initiated in 1992. The actual starting point was the establishment of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994, and since then the two Nordic countries have shared the role of the most active partners of NATO. However, both the Alliance and the partnerships have transformed in many ways, illustrated by the fact that twelve former partners are now members of the Alliance, and the remaining partners differ from each other regarding their background as well as political and military ambitions.

From the outset, both Finland and Sweden were cautious and apprehensive for a number of reasons, one being their traditional policy of neutrality, but also because of their geography and history. Seen from a distance, these three factors make the Nordic partners appear very similar. At close range, the similarities cover more or less everything that is related to military training and exercises, capability development and standards, thereby facilitating crisis management operations. Both have taken part in the same NATO operations, apart from one, with quite similar contributions, privileges and responsibilities during the last two decades. Up to now, military capabilities have been the focus

of cooperation for both partners. However, NATO's focus is currently changing towards a more traditional, territorial-oriented defence posture, but again, the Nordic partners seem to be aiming for quite a similar objective.

At close range there are some differences, too. The biggest difference stems from the Swedish contributions to NATO's operations, firstly, as the framework nation in Afghanistan in 2006–2015 (ISAF PRT), and secondly, by providing vital capability for the NATO operation in Libya (Operation Unified Protector) in 2011. For Sweden, a strong contribution to crisis management operations was the main task of the armed forces and was exactly according to its foreign policy objectives, resulting in high visibility. Finland, for its part, concentrated its efforts on its national defence capacity and capabilities, out of which only a small pool of forces was designated, trained and evaluated for crisis management operations. In short, Sweden focused on smaller and more efficient military capabilities, whereas Finland counted on larger quantities with a small spearhead, all of which were primarily for national defence tasks.

A comparison of current political objectives and military activities is more demanding due to the changing security situation in the neighbourhood surrounding Finland and Sweden. Military threats in the Baltic Sea region are commonly shared among the allied and Nordic partners. Finland will continue with its conventional defence posture, but with strongly enhanced cooperation with others, especially Sweden. The Swedish Defence Bill (2016–2020) indicates a change in national defence policy towards a broader set of capabilities, which would also be more applicable for territorial defence. In addition, Sweden counts on military assistance from other actors, which is not the case with the Finnish defence posture. As stated at the NATO Summits in both Wales in 2014 and Warsaw in 2016, the Alliance is also back to the core business of territorial defence.

The emerging trend in the Baltic Sea region is defending one's territory, be it based on *deterrence by denial* (e.g. Finland) or *deterrence by punishment* (NATO in the Baltic Sea region). The main finding is that with increasingly similar perspectives on threats, and more cooperative ways to respond to them, the Nordic partners could gravitate closer towards each other, and towards NATO. This congruence, or vision, of a commonly shared defence paradigm of 'adequate' defence capabilities would lower the threshold for deeper defence cooperation between the two Nordic partners and NATO. This could happen regardless of the fact that neither Nordic partner has expressed very much interest in joining the Alliance lately.

**1**



# 1. Introduction

It is often said that Finland and Sweden have a great many similarities. However, given the dissimilarities in their history and foreign policies, differences must also exist. How do things stand with regard to the defence issues of the Nordic partners? And how about cooperation with NATO – is it similar or different?

The purpose of this report is to compare the military cooperation of Finland and Sweden with NATO. To this end, it will provide a chronological narrative, starting from the gradually intensifying military cooperation that has occurred since the end of the Cold War era.

NATO forms the framework for the comparison due to the fact that it's the Alliance that will ultimately accept both the content and the modalities for cooperation. This also requires a streamlined introduction to the Alliance's evolving way to work with partners. Actually, the cooperation system itself with all its inherent practicalities was designed and established more or less from scratch soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union. New cooperation tools were initiated and implemented along with the evolving new needs of the Alliance itself, the allied nations and their partners. On the other hand, these two partner countries have been highly active and successful in influencing NATO's policies and practices. Clearly, the evolution of cooperation has been, and still is, a common effort and a two-way street.

The driving force, together with the erupting Balkan wars, for closer cooperation between NATO and non-NATO European nations was the collapse of the Soviet Union and discontinuation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the ultimate opponent, in 1991. Since then, many changes have taken place: the security environment of the transatlantic community has changed drastically; the political and

military roles of the Alliance itself have been transformed twice; the number of NATO member states has almost doubled to 28, while the number of partners has also exploded from none to over 40 sovereign states across the globe.

Regardless of all these changes, certain major roles for the Alliance prevail: providing political–military stability in Europe; channelling cooperation between the US and Europe; and acting as the principal standardizer of military equipment, materiel and capabilities. In addition, NATO has espoused a new role of assisting non–NATO nations’ progress towards Western values. Also, and notwithstanding the numerous European security organizations, there seems to be a need for frameworks for discussion and military cooperation. With evidence of NATO’s ability to transform itself according to contemporary needs,<sup>1</sup> the Alliance has also been disposed towards deeper cooperation with Finland and Sweden.

It is often claimed that Finland and Sweden are pursuing highly similar policies and military cooperation towards NATO. Are Finland and Sweden really so similar in relation to the Alliance? The big question is how the two countries can proceed further from the deep and effective relationship they both currently share with the Alliance. A more in–depth analysis is necessary to facilitate discussion and debate on the way forward after the Wales Summit in 2014, and in the context of the Warsaw Summit 2016.

Three approaches are offered for the reader to contemplate: NATO’s policies and practices for military cooperation with active partner countries; Finland’s policies and practical goals for promoting its national interests through enhanced military cooperation with NATO; and Sweden’s policies and practices for promoting its national interests in the same way. The approaches are structured top–down, starting with national objectives, followed by the perspectives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), then the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and finally the armed forces. Hence, the deeper one probes, the more the details of military technicalities are addressed, and the less open

1 For example, at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO decided to launch a new maritime security operation and to provide military capabilities to support the EU’s Operation Sophia countering human trafficking and terrorism, NATO Warsaw Communiqué, Press Release (2016) 100, 09 July 2016, paragraphs 92–93. The NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians was endorsed at the 2016 Warsaw Summit. See also Carrie Weintraub, ‘NATO redefined? NATO’s anti–human smuggling mission in the Mediterranean highlights the organization’s broader priorities’, *FIIA Comment*, 9/2016, 15 March 2016, [http://www.fiaa.fi/fi/publication/578/nato\\_redefined/](http://www.fiaa.fi/fi/publication/578/nato_redefined/), accessed 15 March 2016.

source information is available. Thematically, issues include policy cooperation, capability development, as well as training, exercises and participation in crisis management operations. A restriction is in place regarding materiel development, acquisition and procurement.

The introduction to the report constitutes the first chapter. The second chapter focuses on NATO's new orientation, objectives and goals to promote networking with former adversaries. Along with the chronological narrative, the report describes how NATO's cooperation tools (programmes, processes and mechanisms) were established, the ideas that emerged, and how they were put into practice with an increasing number of activities.

The third chapter illustrates the development of a set of training events and exercises for partners. It also describes how military capabilities were constructed based on NATO standards and processes, resulting in partners' participation in crisis management operations in the Western Balkans. The overall usefulness of the cooperation tools is also evaluated.

The fourth chapter addresses NATO operations in Afghanistan and, briefly, in Libya. The two partners were both involved in Afghanistan, but only Sweden contributed to the NATO-led operation in Libya. Other diverging avenues of cooperation with NATO are also analysed to identify the differences between the 'twins'.

In the fifth chapter, an updated focus, a renewed 'paradigm', for NATO is addressed through recent initiatives as agreed at the Wales Summit 2014. The rationale for the initiatives, which are related to the topic of the report, stems from the deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea region and against which NATO is reacting with political and military actions. Where necessary, fundamental factors that continuously determine policies are elaborated. Bi-national (or bi-lateral) cooperation between Finland and Sweden is referred to briefly whenever there is a clear linkage to it, for instance with regard to capability development in the NATO context.

The final chapter, comparative conclusions, summarizes the similarities and differences between the two partner countries. This chapter also delivers alternative ways for Finland and Sweden to take cooperation even further in the future.

The report does not speculate about Finnish or Swedish membership of NATO, but the topic *per se* is closely related to issues that are at the heart of a nation's existential security. These issues are under continuous assessment by NATO itself, but also contemplated by potential applicant countries, as well as by Finland, Sweden and Russia.



2



## 2. NATO: From controversy to cooperation

### ESTABLISHING NATO'S MACHINERY FOR COOPERATION

The starting point for this report is the early 1990s, when Russia was emerging as the heir to the Soviet Union, and NATO was seeking a new role to legitimize its existence in the post-Cold War era. The sixteen NATO nations analysed various roles for the future, including functioning as an economic consultative forum in connection with the looming European economic unification, or as a coordinator for a diverse array of 'out-of-area' security concerns, such as weapons proliferation, terrorism and threats to freedom of navigation. New rhetoric and concepts like 'a broad concept of security', 'shared security' or 'indivisible security' were introduced. Some traditional terms still prevailed, such as 'defence', which maintained its territorial aspect until 1999. More importantly, concepts such as peace support operations (PSO), or crisis response operations (CRO) from 1999 onwards, were not linked to the concept of defence, but kept separate from it to differentiate the use of military capabilities.<sup>1</sup>

By its 40th anniversary in 1989, the Alliance had virtually no military undertakings or dialogue with non-member states, nor any military operations or exercises conducted outside its boundaries.

<sup>1</sup> J.A. Baldwin, 'Foreword', in Keith Dunn & Stephen Flanagan eds., *NATO in the 5th Decade*, National Defense University Press Publications, NDU Press, Washington D.C., 1990. See also Stefano Silvestri, 'Search for a European Pillar', and Alton G. Keel, Jr., 'An Atlantic Vision: Toward 1999', in the same volume; Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, *The Globalisation of NATO*, Clarity Press Inc., Atlanta, 2012, pp. 17–19; *NATO Handbook*, NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 2001, pp. 17–19; Jaakko Blomberg, *Vakauden kaippuu. Kylmän sodan loppu ja Suomi*, Werner Söderström Oy, Helsinki, 2011, pp. 608–609.

At the time, 7.5 million Warsaw Pact soldiers and 8.5 million NATO soldiers were in the active and reserve ground forces. From this perspective, it is quite surprising that as early as 1990 there seemed to be broad support for developing some new institutional mechanisms to trade modern technology and other incentives for ‘good’ behaviour on the part of the East without compromising allies’ security. However, at this stage, no clear conclusions were drawn about establishing more coherent European defence cooperation as such.<sup>2</sup> Some issues sound familiar even today, such as burden-sharing among allies or anti-Europeanism in the US. But some ideas, for instance the creation of an ‘Open Europe’ without any political or military will of its own, turned sour. In short, these historic changes offered fresh hope for those living in Eastern Europe and, similarly, a resurgence of economic integration together with a reassertion of political influence for those living in Western Europe. In general, common values stated at the Helsinki Final Act were regarded as guidelines for NATO in the future, and to that end, new avenues of cooperation were to be explored.<sup>3</sup>

NATO’s new approach and evolving policy in relation to non-members on the European continent was inaugurated along with the ‘euphoric’ atmosphere gaining ground in post-Cold War Europe. The essential purpose, as declared in the new Alliance’s strategic concept issued in November 1991, was to safeguard the freedom and security of all members based on common values. As a reflection of the new security understanding, the responsibility to enhance security in Europe in cooperation with partner countries was recognized.<sup>4</sup>

- 2 For further reading, see e.g. James Chase (proposed that NATO should be turned into an international police force for peacekeeping and an observer of elections), or Ronald Asmus, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Kugler, and Steven Larrabee (promoted further expansion beyond NATO’s boundaries). See also Nazemroaya, pp. 16–21. For NATO Headquarters IMS’s historic viewpoints, visit [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_publications/20120116\\_nato-mil-stru-e.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120116_nato-mil-stru-e.pdf), accessed 13 April 2016.
- 3 Ibid. See also Henning-A. Frantzen, *NATO and Peace Support Operations 1991–1999, Policies and Doctrines*, Frank Cass, New York, 2005, pp. 181–182.
- 4 The Strategic Concept is an official document that outlines NATO’s purpose and nature and its fundamental security tasks. It also provides guidelines for the adaptation of its military capabilities. In Nov 1991, the Alliance’s New Strategic Concept was accepted, addressing new issues, inter alia, a broad approach to security and unprecedented opportunities to increase transparency and predictability in security and stability affairs. Also, the Alliance commenced pursuance of dialogue and greater cooperation throughout Europe. The military would carry out intensified military contacts and greater transparency. After a decade, the next Strategic Concept was agreed upon in April 1999, followed by the 2010 Strategic Concept ‘Active Engagement, Modern Defence’ in Nov 2010. All NATO’s strategic concepts, and equivalents, are available at [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_56626.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm), accessed 14 March 2016.

In order to facilitate discussions with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (i.e. the former Warsaw Pact countries), the first formal institutional structure, the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC), was launched for dialogue and discussion on common concerns. Furthermore, the NACC was also initiated as NATO's outreach with the idea of establishing some sort of forum for Pan-European security cooperation.<sup>5</sup> Based on a very belated invitation, both Finland and Sweden considered taking part in the NACC meeting in Oslo, but in the end only Finland attended as an observer. The rationale for Finland's observer status was to follow NATO's development at a closer distance and to exert an active influence in order to promote its national interest. From the outset, a broader approach to security was adopted in NATO, thereby emphasizing dialogue, cooperation and the maintenance of a collective defence capability. Practical issues that were addressed included, inter alia, the full participation of invitees in security discussions as democratic countries, defence planning, the conversion of the defence industry, arms control, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic states, support for defence reforms, as well as building transparency and confidence.<sup>6</sup>

The opening up of the Alliance actually materialized with an official declaration at the Brussels Summit in January 1994, when leaders reaffirmed that the Alliance was open to membership for other European states in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. Following the decision, the rationale and criteria for admission into the Alliance were examined, leading to a deeper probing of the military details. The principles of enlargement and methods for contributing to the process, together with new members' rights and obligations and how to prepare themselves, were introduced in the Study of NATO Enlargement in September 1995. There were twelve interested partner countries, out of which the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were finally invited to start accession talks in 1997, resulting in membership in March 1999. However, NATO leaders emphasized that enlargement is an open, continuing process. In April 1999, to facilitate foreseeable

- 5 *NATO Handbook*, Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 2001, pp. 17–18.  
*NATO Handbook*, Public Diplomacy Division, Brussels, 2006, pp. 194–195. The NACC was launched in Dec 1991 and Finland was invited to the Oslo meeting as an observer in June 1992. Jaakko Blomberg, *Vakauden kaipuu, Kylmän sodan loppu ja Suomi*, WSOY, 2011, pp. 607–608. Jukka Tarkka, *Venäjän vieressä. Suomen turvallisuusympäristö 1990–2012*, Otavan Kirjapaino, Keuruu, 2012, pp. 218–219.
- 6 *NATO Handbook*, 2001, pp. 61–68. Blomberg, pp. 608–613.

enlargements, the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was launched in order to assist countries that wished to join the military alliance.<sup>7</sup>

The Finnish and Swedish foreign policy orientation of neutrality was questioned when both joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which was launched at the Brussels Summit in January 1994. At any rate, neutrality effectively came to an end when they joined the EU in January 1995. During the Cold War, and in practical terms, the Finnish version of neutrality was related to the confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union, where Finland was regarded as a small state. Military non-alliance, as a replacement for neutrality, was accepted as an official formulation by the parliament in March 1997. The other two fundamentals of foreign policy were independent defence and EU membership. In the ministerial joint statements of Finland and Sweden, military non-alignment was deemed not necessarily a permanent condition, indicating that an option to join the Alliance existed. On the other hand, and from the outset, neither country has regarded deepening military cooperation with NATO as being in conflict with non-alignment. Furthermore, in the context of the EU's common defence and the concept of battle groups, all of these issues were profoundly addressed in the parliament and in public, but no contradiction with participation in crisis management was recognized.<sup>8</sup>

Neutrality, in its evolving formats, has formed the basis of Swedish security and defence policy for 200 years, and also since the Second World War. Joining the PfP was regarded as acceptable because it supported the transformation of military capabilities and improved interoperability with other NATO affiliates, but without any risk of entering into the military alliance. Furthermore, the PfP provided the necessary freedom to individually decide in which areas, and in what way, to cooperate with NATO. Thus, the magnitude and intensity of involvement was decided in accordance with non-alignment. For Sweden, the PfP was an opportunity to seek guidance and information

7 *NATO Handbook*, 2001, pp. 61–67.

8 *The European Security Development and Finnish Defence. Report by the Council of State to the Parliament, 17 March 1997*, Edita, Helsinki, 1997. Pekka Sivonen, 'Sweden and NATO' in Bo Hultdt, Teija Tiilikainen, Tapani Vaahtoranta & Anna Helkama-Rågård (eds.) *Finnish and Swedish Security Policy, Comparing national policies*, Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm, 2001, pp. 93–94, 106. Teemu Palosaari, *Neither neutral nor non-aligned, The Europeanization of Finland's foreign and security policy*, Finnish Foreign Policy Papers 03, December 2013, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, 2013, pp. 8–9.

on adapting its armed forces to join NATO-led operations, which were predicted to become more common.<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, the widening concept of security and emerging new threats caused Sweden to hesitate over joining the EU. Sweden's policy of neutrality was seen as somewhat contradictory and incompatible with membership and wider security, but the political will to join a collective security organization was stronger than the need to preserve neutrality. Diluting the neutrality was seen as a logical consequence of entering an organisation based on solidarity. The fresh wording in 1991 read 'non-participating in alliances in peacetime, aiming at neutrality in war'. An adequate and territorial defence capability was regarded as vital to enable Sweden to remain neutral in the event of a crisis or war. At this stage, Sweden was cautious about utilizing the peace dividend because the development in the Eastern parts of Europe could either lead to increased democratization and economic growth, or to regression, resulting in more authoritarianism. After considering the issue for almost a decade, and with wide political support, the Swedish Armed Forces began major downgrading and modernization, emphasizing that even in economic difficulties a strong, comprehensive and independent defence is paramount.<sup>10</sup>

#### FIRST IDEAS, THEN PROCESSES AND PROGRAMMES

The most relevant initiative in terms of this report, the PfP, was launched at the Brussels Summit 1994 with the aim of enhancing stability and security throughout Europe. The background to the initiative, arising primarily from the US, was the dissatisfactory performance of the NACC. The invitation was addressed to all states

9 Dan Lundquist, *Swedish Security & Defence Policy 1990–2012, The transformation from neutrality to solidarity through a state identity perspective*, Royal Military Academy, Brussels, 2013, pp. 22–25. On the evolution of Swedish neutrality, see Mike Winnerstig, 'Sweden and NATO' in Bo Huldt et al., pp. 77–80. For a chronological account, see 'NATO's relations with Sweden', [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52535.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52535.htm), accessed 12 May 2016.

10 Winnerstig (2001), pp. 76–78. A 'peace dividend' refers to a potential long-term benefit as budgets for defence spending are assumed to be at least partially redirected to social programmes and/or a decrease in taxation rates. The existence of a peace dividend in real economies is still debated, but some research points to its reality. See e.g. Sanjeev Gupta, Benedict Clements, Rina Bhattacharya & Shamit Chakravarti, 'The Elusive Peace Dividend, How armed conflict and terrorism undermine economic performance', Finance and Development, IMF magazine, December 2002, Vol. 39, No 4, p. 1, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/12/gupta.htm>, accessed 4 July 2016.

participating in the NACC and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later OSCE). The main requirement, in addition to respecting the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents, was that countries should be able and willing to participate in the programme aiming at interoperable forces with NATO forces. With this decision, Finland and Sweden, together with other non-aligned European countries, were also invited to join the PfP. Most of the applicants were looking primarily for additional security, but none of the neutral European countries were interested in changing their international status. This established a fine line between the two types of PfP applicants. Finland and Sweden expressed their interest in striving for cooperation, but did not inform NATO of any interest in preparing to join the Alliance.<sup>11</sup>

Gradually, the activities offered by NATO created the need for additional information about national defence arrangements, capabilities, administration and planning, to mention a few. Consequently, with a view to increased meetings and other events, NATO offered facilities in the neighbouring building for partners. At first, in August 1994, Finland and Sweden accredited a military attaché to Belgium and a liaison officer to NATO Headquarters and the Partnership Coordination Cell. In 1997, both Finland and Sweden established their national representation and mission within NATO HQ. In the Finnish Defence Forces a new division of labour and responsibilities related to military cooperation, as well as re-organization of both the MoD and the Defence Staff were implemented. In Sweden, organizational changes were carried out in the context of the defence reform.<sup>12</sup>

During the next few years, the PfP programme developed steadily according to its own, mutually reinforcing dynamics and by building incrementally on the partnership arrangements. In order to add to the overall effectiveness, as well as efficiency, a guiding function for the PfP was established in 1995 called the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP), which charted a long-term political course for cooperation. The core function is for NATO and a respective partner to agree on development targets, the Partnership Goals, thereby providing a yardstick for measuring progress every two years. The use of PARP can also be extended to cover wider defence reforms, if a partner so wishes.

11 Michael Claesson, 'Sveriges deltagande in Natoleda operationer', in Karlis Neretnieks ed., *Nato – för och emot*. Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademien, Stockholm, 2014, p. 56.  
Heikki Holma, *Puolustusvoimat, Kansainvälistä sotilaallista yhteistoimintaa*, Tammerprint Oy, Tampere, 2012, pp. 41–43. Winnerstig (2001), p. 82.

12 Holma, pp. 42–45.

The process itself is quite similar to the planning tool used for NATO's and allied nations' purposes. Both Finland and Sweden joined PARP at the outset in 1995 and have been highly active in developing it further.<sup>13</sup>

In 1997, the NACC was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), thus paving the way for new forms of political-level cooperation. The EAPC established a guiding function for the PfP and advanced even more practical partnerships related to security issues. One step forward was NATO's offer for partners to appoint military staff officers to work inside the Alliance's military structure. Both Finland and Sweden were among the first six partner nations to occupy posts in NATO Headquarters starting in April 1998. From the outset, these officers were deeply involved in developing almost all cooperation concepts related to the partnerships, such as the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC), the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), and the Training and Education Enhancement Programme (TEEP, later MTEP, ETEE).<sup>14</sup>

Having an officer inside the military structure, together with the well-established national representations, constituted a two-track model to promote national interests in military cooperation. Since then, this two-track model has been a direct way to insert partner views and aspirations into the Alliance's new initiatives, programmes and mechanisms related to the PfP and the EAPC in general. It goes without saying that national representatives have had their mechanisms to convey official as well as informal information and valuations to NATO authorities since 1994. Both countries followed similar working methods, which were in most cases enhanced by joint preparation and intensive information exchange. Particularly during the initial years of cooperation with NATO, bi-national preparatory work was well recognized and appreciated by the two capitals and NATO authorities.

13 *NATO Handbook 2006*, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO, Brussels, 2006, p. 199.

14 These arrangements were known as the PfP Staff Element, PSE. The author served at NATO HQ IMS in 1998–2000 as the Secretary of the MCWG (COOP) (Military Committee Working Group on Military Cooperation) and was the principal drafter of concept papers for the OCC, CJTF, TEEP, etc. regarding partner participation.

WITH EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES,  
A MORE STRUCTURED APPROACH IS NEEDED

For practical reasons, when the number of NATO training events and exercises expanded, a coordination cell was deemed vital to avoid unnecessary overlapping and redundancy of participation. From NATO's viewpoint, it was also important to assist partners to choose the most appropriate training events when developing their capabilities, as agreed in PARP. The main contradictions existed between high-quality expeditionary capabilities, promoted by NATO, and more conventional solutions applicable for low-threat peace-keeping purposes, promoted by most partners. NATO representatives soon learned which topics were of a delicate nature for each partner and improved their tactics to promote their interests. However, both parties quickly acquired a higher level of knowledge, resulting in agreeable solutions. In order to tackle different views in a more systematic fashion, Finland occupied one military post on an ad-hoc basis as early as the summer of 1994, together with Sweden. This coordination cell was also the first solution to the long-lasting problem of accessing NATO classified information that was fundamental to the development of national capabilities according to NATO processes and standards.<sup>15</sup>

When PARP commenced in 1995, for the first two-year period Finland declared that the developed forces for the process would include the readiness battalion, the UN battalion and the engineer battalion. The readiness battalion was already in the national training process and the UN battalion was already deployed in the UNIFIL operation, but the engineering battalion was in reserve (non-active) in Finland. In the context of developing capabilities, and in order to become interoperable with allied forces, Finland accepted 13 interoperability objectives (later termed Partnership Goals) out of 20 offered by the Alliance. These constituted the first-ever requirements stated by NATO authorities and they were duly accepted by the Finnish authorities.<sup>16</sup>

The first set of interoperability objectives included, inter alia, language skills, generic knowledge of NATO and its functions, and planning process, together with abbreviations and terms. For security

15 The coordination element was called the Partnership Coordination Cell (PCC). Heikkilä (2000), p. 62. Holma, pp. 50–51.

16 Holma, p. 52. In NATO, the concept of interoperability is defined as the ability to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve allied tactical, operational and strategic objectives. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_69269.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69269.htm?selectedLocale=en), accessed 2 May 2016.

reasons, all branch- and service-related requirements were described at a generic level. One of the main doubts over information exchange related to national defence capabilities as they were classified information. In this respect, the Vienna Document 1994, which already included some relevant information on national defence structures, military equipment and units, was recognized as an acceptable format for information delivery. Soon after, more detailed information was delivered by the national authorities due to a deeper understanding of the process.<sup>17</sup>

After two years of testing the new process, newly established programmes and methodology, Finland concluded that NATO cooperation was beneficial. A detailed analysis was conducted of the courses and seminars offered by the Alliance and allied nations. The conclusion was that all events attended were well organized and properly implemented. Surprisingly, the events were primarily designed to meet partners' needs, irrespective of the fact that allied participants also attended.<sup>18</sup>

One of the findings concerned the similarities between PARP and the official NATO force and capability planning processes. In Sweden, the process was regarded as one of the most effective and useful tools for improving interoperability and overall modernization. There was a clear linkage to the shift in the Swedish military focus from national defence to participating in multinational peace support operations. During the coming years, this transformation would materialize with units being further reduced by between 60 and 90 per cent from the level in 1985, and the transition from conscription in favour of a standing professional armed forces. This not only affected the structure and training of the combat units, but also created distance from the traditional national defence and the ability to mobilize materiel and personnel throughout the country. The general political opinion counted on a forewarning and the fact that it would take at least ten years for the potential aggressor to rearm. The rationale was that

17 Vienna document 1994 of the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures. <http://fas.org/nuke/control/osce/text/vienna.htm#1>, accessed 19 April 2016.

18 Heikkilä (2000), pp. 17–19.

this forewarning would consequently ensure a decade for Sweden to refocus on a national defence once again.<sup>19</sup>

Finland and Sweden identified themselves as non-allied countries and hence distinct from the membership applicants. For Sweden, being more adamant on preserving neutrality and later non-alignment, the main change was recognition of the increasingly positive security development, which would imply a paradigm shift in defence posture later on. The domestic debate addressed, among other things, the level of force structure and number of units together with the duly increased participation in international operations. New threats gained more attention, while national preparedness to repel a large-scale invasion was regarded as quite obsolete. Gradually, the focus on new threats mainly replaced the territorial (and total) defence posture. The internationally accepted concepts and definitions related to crisis management supported the Swedish viewpoint. Further, NATO's guidance to focus more attention on expeditionary units became more acceptable. Finland followed suit with new concepts and definitions rather similar to the UN versions, but also introduced new categories of crisis management used by the allied nations. Finland had rather modest resources for any sort of transformation, and public opinion was opposed to any change, which restricted the formulation of the new defence posture. The majority of ordinary people opposing the changes counted on conservative arguments, such as historical experiences from the previous wars and Finland's geopolitical situation neighbouring Russia. Similarly to Sweden, but at a much slower pace, the debate in Finland resulted in a gradual reduction in the combined strength of the armed forces and only slow improvement in quality.

For NATO, one of the benefits – stemming in actual fact from the beginning of PARP – was that it made it possible to negotiate the level of ambition regarding the interoperability of a given partner. In addition to facilitating participation in exercises and operations through better military capabilities, Sweden found that PARP enhanced the country's

19 Bo Hugemark & Johan Tunberger, *Trovärdig solidaritet?: försvaret och solidaritetsförklaringen*, Den nya världfärden, Åd Tryck, Bromma, 2010, p. 19. Bo Hugemark, 'Historical Background to the Swedish Declaration of Solidarity' in Bo Hugemark *Friends in Need: Towards a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with her Neighbours*, the Royal Swedish Academy of Military Sciences, Stockholm, 2012, p. 14. Tomas Bertelman, *International Defence Cooperation. Efficiency, Solidarity, Sovereignty*. Report from the Inquiry on Sweden's International Defence Cooperation (Fö 2013:B), Government Offices of Sweden, Stockholm, 2014, p. 20. For details, see Kristen Andrén, *Krigsavhållande tröskelförmåga. Det svenska försvarets glömda huvuduppgift?* (FOI-R-3852-SE), pp. 26-27, 31-36. Lundquist, p. 31.

political credibility in the eyes of NATO and in the bilateral relationship with allied nations.<sup>20</sup> A similar impact was recognized by the Finnish authorities, but the focus remained on peace-keeping and exercises. However, the necessary preparations were made for sending a military unit on an international exercise in 1997, and for hosting a PfP exercise in Finland in 1998.

The contents of the second PARP phase, from 1997 to 1998, reflected changing political attitudes in the Finnish security policy discussion. The government's 1997 report on security and defence policy addressed, among other things, military non-alliance as well as the importance of the US and NATO as a stabilizing force in Europe, and Nordic cooperation. The political terminology was reformulated from peacekeeping to crisis management in more demanding operations after quite a wide debate on conceptual approaches.<sup>21</sup> During the first PARP phase, the objective was to increase the interoperability of dedicated, individual peacekeeping units without a direct linkage to national defence. The second PARP phase introduced the concept of a readiness brigade, which would be trained for both national defence and crisis management tasks.

The national debate on whether or not to participate in peace enforcement was intense. One of the issues was the lack of official terminology to distinguish concepts of peace-keeping from more proactive concepts such as peace-making and peace enforcement. The outcome was a formulation that reflected wider peace-keeping, thereby excluding use of force against another state and also peace enforcement as such. The ensuing political decisions included the task of establishing the readiness brigade (in reserve), but also of sending the first-ever military unit to participate in an exercise abroad, in Norway. Furthermore, most of the personnel in the Finnish infantry company were conscripts, which has always been deemed more delicate than sending professional soldiers abroad. Similarly, using

20 Michael Claesson, 'Sveriges deltagande i Natoleda operationer', in Karlis Neretnieks ed., *Nato – för och emot*, Kungl Krigsvetenskapsakademien, Stockholm, 2014, p. 57. Holma, pp. 53–54.

21 For conceptual approaches, see e.g. Puolustusvaliokunta, *Lausunto 2/1995 vp Valtioneuvoston selonteko 1/1995 vp*.

conscripts abroad for purposes other than exercises was not acceptable in Sweden.<sup>22</sup>

The government's proposal on Finland's future participation in peacekeeping operations opened a new avenue for international military cooperation. The core amendments were: firstly, to allow participation in humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians; secondly, the possibility to take part in an operation mandated by the UN or the OSCE regardless of the lead organization; and thirdly, to contribute to an operation mandated to use limited military force in order to meet the goals of the operation, as well as in cases where no consent of the parties was reached. The final proposal excluded peace enforcement and the use of force against any state. Further, the legislation had to be updated to meet the new political guidelines and additional requirements of more demanding operations, especially in relation to the concept and practice of wider peacekeeping.<sup>23</sup>

The Finnish government's 1997 report on security and defence promoted deeper cooperation with the Nordic countries, especially with Sweden. The declared goal was an interoperable Nordic readiness unit, which could be established quickly based on joint planning and preparation. This unit could duly be assigned for UN- and OSCE-mandated operations. For future cooperation with NATO, it was elementary that conducting regular joint exercises was set as a requirement. All this generated a lively public debate on the fundamental purpose and use of the military capabilities. The dividing line between contradictory approaches was the importance, and resources, of national defence and participation in international cooperation, especially in crisis management operations. The most complicated issue to resolve early enough to facilitate participation in an operation in the Western Balkans was the related legislation,

22 Valtioneuvosto 1995 VNS 1, *Turvallisuus muuttuvassa maailmassa Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan suuntalinjat, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle* 6.6.1995, Helsinki, 1995, luku 1.4. [http://www.defmin.fi/files/246/2513\\_2143\\_selonteko095\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/246/2513_2143_selonteko095_1_.pdf), accessed 19 April 2016. For a set of definitions and critiques on preparing legislation, see Puolustusvaliokunta, *Lausunto 2/1995 vp Valtioneuvoston selonteko 1/1995 vp*, [https://www.eduskunta.fi/F1/vaski/Lausunto/Documents/puvtl\\_2+1995.pdf](https://www.eduskunta.fi/F1/vaski/Lausunto/Documents/puvtl_2+1995.pdf), accessed 16.6.2016. Turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selonteko, *Euroopan turvallisuuskehitys ja Suomen puolustus, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle* 17.3.1997, VNS 1/1997, chapters 1/3.3 and 11/3.4. [http://www.defmin.fi/files/245/2512\\_2142\\_selonteko097\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/245/2512_2142_selonteko097_1_.pdf), accessed 19 April 2016.

23 Government's proposal 8.12.1995, Hallituksen esitys laiksi Suomen osallistumisesta Yhdistyneiden Kansakuntien ja Euroopan turvallisuus- ja yhteistyökonferenssin rauhanturvaamistoimintaan annetun lain muuttamisesta ja eräksi siihen liittyviksi laeiksi. HE 185/1995. <https://www.edilex.fi/mt/uavm19950021>, accessed 19 April 2016.

which was mostly non-existent. Together with new legislation and the readiness brigade in the force production, Finland had all the necessary tools to acquire a higher military profile in the international political arena.<sup>24</sup>

In the military sphere, the number of partnership goals (formerly Interoperability Objectives) was tripled to 36 out of 47 offered. For Finland, the designated forces included three battalions, one infantry, one jaeger and one engineering battalion. In addition, one navy vessel and the Finnish Rescue Force of the Ministry of the Interior was added to the pool of forces. In order to improve the quality of equipment, the signalling and information system as well as related training for staff personnel and logistics was also offered for cooperation. In general, the previous goals remained on the list, but new goals were needed to elevate the level of performance already reached and for newly assigned military units from all services. In the coming years, the total number increased until the first goals were completed and removed from the list. From the outset, and establishing a reciprocal exchange with NATO, both partner countries offered to host training and education events.

To sum up, the main impact of the PfP as a cooperation structure, subsequently enhanced with PARP, was the new tendency to develop military capabilities based on cooperation and commonly accepted standards with a long-term perspective. For both Finland and Sweden, not only technologically oriented standards were most welcome, but also well-established and tested concepts and doctrines had a profound influence on national thinking and the development of the theoretical basis. Prior to the PfP, for both armed forces, new initiatives and models were imported, mostly by students returning from their military academies abroad. With the PfP, there was a significant benefit, because the heritage of all NATO member states' military research and development community was condensed into one commonly accepted piece of documentation, which was available for partners to adjust according to their national needs. As a result, many new Finnish and Swedish doctrines, concepts, processes and methodologies have a lot in

24 For domestic divisions, see Teemu Palosaari, *The Art of Adaptation: A Study on the Europeanization of Finland's Foreign and Security Policy*, TAPRI Studies in Peace and Conflict Research no. 96, Tampere University Press, 2011, pp. 213–214. Government's report *The European Security Development and Finnish Defence 17.3.1997*, Turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selonteko, Euroopan turvallisuuskehitys ja Suomen puolustus, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle 17.3.1997, chapter 11/3.4., [http://www.defmin.fi/files/245/2512\\_2142\\_selonteko97\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/245/2512_2142_selonteko97_1_.pdf), accessed 19 April 2016. Holma, p. 57.

common with the respective NATO and allied nations' documentation, but also add to the commonalities between the two Nordic partners. Furthermore, this unity of effort multiplied the overall interoperability as well as the efficiency of the allied and partner armed forces. The lower the hierarchical level of cooperation, the closer the partners' capabilities and procedures were.

NATO's cooperation tools were also utilized by the EU and its member states when they initiated the establishment of crisis management capability in the Helsinki Summit in 1999. In short, both the doctrinal and operational development of EU crisis management benefitted greatly from NATO's existing structures, processes, standardization, policy papers as well as numerous military concepts and equivalents. Much of the content was simply duplicated and amended to fit the smaller scale in the EU.<sup>25</sup>

#### GOING DEEPER INTO PRACTICE MEANS MORE EXERCISES AND CAPABILITIES

Finnish participation in NATO exercises commenced soon after joining the PfP. The first-ever national contribution to such exercises took place in Poland in September 1994 with observers. Everything was started from scratch and this offered a lot of room for fresh ideas and thinking. Even then, Finland and Sweden were the closest cooperation partners for NATO. Quite often they were also regarded as the most prominent partners for bringing added value to drafting and planning training events and exercises. Most of the work was related to future models of partner participation and it was very useful for NATO to hear what the most 'Westernized' and experienced partners thought about the Alliance's ideas for the way forward. One of the core issues where Finland and Sweden had a strong influence was PARP. This opportunity for influence existed because other experienced neutral countries stayed outside of the PfP for the first two or three years of its existence.<sup>26</sup>

The main trend in Finland's participation was a steady increase in all categories of the PfP. For instance, during the first full year, Finland

25 Claesson, p. 57. The author of this report served as the national representative in the working group in order to innovate, plan and establish the initial crisis management capability for the EU in 2000–2001.

26 Holma, p. 42.

participated in two major exercises with a kernel of (UN) battalion staff. Both exercises gained plenty of highly positive media attention in Finland. At this stage, the PfP was not regarded as a way to improve national defence or related capabilities, but only to improve the interoperability of the designated forces. In 1995, the government's report on security and defence policy established solid guidelines to create the readiness to implement more demanding humanitarian and peacekeeping tasks. This instigated several changes in the defence structure, command relationships and responsibilities that were to be implemented in the near future.<sup>27</sup>

The level of ambition was raised in 1996 when Finland sent participants to engage in three major exercises and decided to focus on the national command and control systems to be amended for crisis management situations. At the same time, NATO was increasing its expertise and knowledge of large-scale peacekeeping exercises. These were based on traditional UN Charter Chapter VI-type scenarios, but with the military tasked to separate parties by force in order to disengage. In addition, the UN was updating its concept of peacekeeping towards a set of alternative operations that would vary according to the overall situation in the crisis area.<sup>28</sup> As a presentiment of the most demanding operations, the wording of the tasker read 'all necessary means', which would become common parlance in future UN-mandated but NATO-led operations.<sup>29</sup>

The government's security and defence policy report 1997 stated that international military cooperation is a growing part of security policy. The report also stated that Finnish air space and territories in the North had remained strategically important and that the security situation in the Baltic Sea had increased the importance of both the Åland Islands and the southernmost parts of Finland. These arguments would be restated once the Crimea was occupied in 2014. The report also recognized that participation in demanding crisis management operations strengthens military interoperability and thus supports the development of national defence. This was interpreted as pointing to an increase in both the quantity and quality of multinational exercises. Consequently, Finland started to train and equip a national readiness brigade to meet the new demands of the government.

27 Holma, pp. 41–46. *The Government's Security and Defence Policy Report 6.6.1995*.

28 For the final report on the outcomes, see Bouthros Bouthros-Ghali, *An agenda for peace*, 1995, Second Edition with the new supplement and related UN documents, United Nations, New York, 1995.

29 Holma, pp. 50–55.

Several changes facilitated broader Finnish participation from 1997 onwards. The new concept of wider peacekeeping indicated that there was a strong need for humanitarian support and protection for civilians in a future crisis. Finnish units participated in nine NATO exercises and also in five 'in the Spirit of Pfp' exercises, together with Sweden. This type of exercise was an innovation to serve the common Nordic interest more effectively and with selected participating countries, thus adding to the effectiveness of an event. For example, Nordic Peace 1997 was organized in Norway and Sweden with the goal of enhancing the readiness to plan and execute a NATO-led multinational peacekeeping operation from a common basis.

The concept of Nordic Peace exercises was developed to facilitate and promote regular cooperation. The exercises were rotated in four Nordic countries, and all Nordic countries contributed with personnel and materiel. The goal was to improve the readiness and cooperation of the Nordic countries in a multinational operation. One of the main benefits was that all participating units could perform at the same level of quality with the Nordic units. For the first time, a Finnish jaeger company consisting primarily of conscripts took part in a military exercise abroad. Similarly, for the navies operating in the Baltic Sea, an important exercise has been, and still is, the annually organized Baltops.<sup>30</sup>

The development goals for Finnish defence in 1998 stated that international military cooperation is to support Finland's security policy, to strengthen national defence and its credibility, and also to promote capabilities to participate in international crisis management. By the end of the year, it was clear that the credibility of Finnish defence had strengthened due to its participation and also because the main contribution of a brigade, the Rapid Readiness Force, was declared operational.

In 1999, most of the partnership goals remained the same as before, but progress was made within each of them. Most hindrances stemmed from the fact that training and materiel issues were dependent on national programmes. Discrepancies within the military were severe in relation to prioritizing either national or international investments. Over 95 per cent of all resources of the defence forces were allocated to national defence, but the debate continued. However, PARP was

30 Holma, pp. 58–59. *The Government's Security and Defence Policy Report 17.3.1997*, available online in Finnish as pdf at [http://www.defmin.fi/julkaisut\\_ja\\_asiakirjat/suomen\\_turvallisuus-\\_ja\\_puolustuspoliittiset\\_selonteot/selonteko\\_1997](http://www.defmin.fi/julkaisut_ja_asiakirjat/suomen_turvallisuus-_ja_puolustuspoliittiset_selonteot/selonteko_1997), accessed 5 April 2016.

utilized according to NATO standards, procedures and processes. Several new ideas were also introduced, such as Host Nation Support (HNS) to receive foreign assistance, if needed. HNS was also linked to the EU's emerging military structures (such as PSC, EUMC, EUMS) to be initiated at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999.

Decades-old Nordic military cooperation also benefitted from enhancing cooperation with NATO as a spin-off. In 1997, a new organization for enhanced cooperation, the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), was established. The flagship of NORDCAPS was the readiness brigade, composed of modules from Nordic countries, and brigade-level exercises were held in the early 2000s. In addition, the permanent planning element was active, formulating tentative scenarios as well as more detailed operational plans on how to use the brigade, if nations so decided. They never did, and so the arrangement faded away and was finally closed down to create more room for the new concept, the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO), which emerged in 2009. NATO has often used NORDEFECO as an example of an effective model for regional multinational cooperation.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the early 1990s, NATO avoided discontinuance of the Alliance, and hence did not suffer the same fate as the Warsaw Pact. Instead, NATO was re-tasked with maintaining stability and peace on the continent for the allied nations, but, as a secondary aim, with establishing a relationship with non-allied nations, too. The innovation was to involve former adversaries with their national capabilities in the development projects. Actually, every country and organization was looking for ways to take advantage of the strategic change in Europe. When it came to Finland, the Nordic country was to establish closer contacts with NATO by applying for observation status in the NACC. Almost simultaneously in March 1992, Finland, in the wake of Austria and Sweden, submitted an application for EU membership as another sign of further rapprochement towards the Western security institutions. Hence, both Nordic partners proceeded separately, but ended up with quite a similar solution.

In the background, the Balkan Wars legitimized intense security cooperation among all the European states, including Finland and Sweden as strong supporters of peacekeeping. The increase in both

the quality and quantity of the partners' contributions was, of course, modest in the beginning, but was stepped up following the plans and procedures prepared in close cooperation with NATO and allied nations. This happened in conjunction with NATO's new task to make its military capabilities more applicable for out-of-area operations.

Discussions on the NATO enlargement process started soon after the PfP was inaugurated, and the process was elaborated in the context of, and closely linked to, the PfP and PARP. The issue of enlargement did not cause much additional tension among applicants, non-applicants or member states alike. Alongside the emerging new cooperation machinery, both NATO and the Nordic partners supported the UN in the Western Balkans.

Security development in Europe provided enough flexibility for Finland and Sweden to redefine their policies. Both countries found military non-alignment to be an appropriate term to replace neutrality. Domestic debates were intense and prejudice against deeper cooperation with NATO, but also pertaining to the emerging EU military capabilities, was strong. Gradually, new steps towards cooperation were taken, experiences were analysed, and positive and mutual interest motivated further progress.

The guidance provided by NATO for partners' defence administration created an increasing need for information exchange, thus strengthening the PfP as an environment for military cooperation. NATO invented and launched well-functioning programmes (e.g. the PfP), processes (the EAPC) and mechanisms (PARP). During the early years of cooperation, the principle of reciprocity in order to strike a balance between partners' demands and NATO's supply was mostly put aside by NATO. This imbalance was recognized by both Finland and Sweden, but not regarded as a problem. On the other hand, the imbalance 'legitimized' NATO to guide partners when selecting activities or capabilities for further development, but naturally not all of these were accepted in the capitals.

Finland possessed rather little room for manoeuvre due to a lack of resources, as well as public opposition. Finland accepted the new definitions, but due to domestic debates the transformation of the armed forces remained very cautious. Sweden took the opportunity to utilize increasingly positive security development, and prepared itself for a paradigm shift in defence posture. New threats gained more attention and gradually started to replace the large-scale offensive as the main threat, which had legitimized the territorial (and total) defence posture. The emerging Swedish viewpoint was supported

by new concepts and definitions of crisis management, but also by NATO's guidance to focus more on expeditionary units. All in all, Sweden was better prepared for enhanced cooperation on capabilities due to its looming defence reform aimed at high-quality capabilities, compared to Finland with its more traditional and larger armed forces. However, both countries enjoyed a similarly high level of respect based on their UN experiences, although more expertise, as well as competition, ensued after Austria, Ireland and Switzerland joined the PfP in the late 1990s.

The Nordic partners took the opportunity to advance multinational cooperation not only through the PfP, but also via bi-national endeavours. Following the guidance and expectations of NATO authorities, all four Nordic countries effectively started to become more uniform regarding concepts, doctrines, standards, equipment, and even operational art and tactics. In Finland in particular, the cooperation helped to elevate the country's national legislation, concepts and military capabilities to the required level for crisis management operations. Conceptual progress made in the UN regarding crisis management alleviated domestic restrictions in both partner countries. In the coming years, this would pay off when contributing to NATO-led operations.

In hindsight, it seems clear that neither NATO, nor any of its sixteen members, were prepared for the strategic security changes on the continent. The idea of inviting former adversaries to engage in closer dialogue seemed to be a temporary solution and bought more time for the Alliance when it was searching for a fresh start. With a reasonable amount of caution and prejudice, minor steps to support partners' defence reforms were taken, but with an exit plan in mind if something were to go wrong. However, based on strengthening trust and the evident eagerness of former adversaries to do their utmost to fulfil the criteria, progress continued. The process itself, together with its results, is historic: two former military alliances merged partially into one without any use of military force.



3



### 3. Operational cooperation in Europe

The crisis situations and wars that erupted, one after another, in the Western Balkans marked the next major turning point for NATO and its role after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In June 1992, NATO announced its readiness to support the OSCE, on a case-by-case basis, in making available resources and expertise for peacekeeping operations. In December 1992, NATO stated that it was also ready to support peacekeeping operations under the authority of the United Nations (UN), including in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup> Between 1992 and 1995, the Alliance took several decisions, which led to operations by NATO naval forces in conjunction with the Western European Union. These forces monitored and enforced the UN embargo and sanctions in the Adriatic. In 1992, the Alliance also provided air interdiction support for the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following year, NATO became responsible for deterring attacks against safe areas declared by the UN. After the Bosnian Peace Agreement (the Dayton Agreement) was signed in December 1995, the Implementation Force (IFOR) was established for population protection, to control military forces and for the separation of warring parties in order to stabilize the situation. These tasks, including close air support tasks, continued under the Stabilization Force (SFOR) from December 1996 until January 1998. SFOR's primary task was to continue implementation of the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. Both the legal status (UN Charter Chapter VII) and

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Behnke, 'Crisis management as a civilisatory project: NATO's experience in the Balkans' in Susanna Eskola ed., *Crisis Management in Crisis?* National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, Edita Prima, 2008, pp. 28–29.

rules of engagement were the same as for IFOR authorizing robust use of force, when necessary. These characteristics of crisis management created a new, more demanding environment for partners to cooperate with NATO forces.

In terms of the gradually emerging new role, both IFOR and its continuation operation SFOR clearly illustrated that NATO had to adapt itself to out-of-area operations. The relationship between territorial defence (based on Article 5) and the new type of operations created discrepancy among the members because some were not willing to extend the concept of defence to cover out-of-area responsibilities. In the end, defence was consciously attributed to a territorial meaning of the concept only, and consequently out-of-area operations were not incorporated as an Article 5 task.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation was welcomed by Finland and Sweden because it partially resolved their domestic disputes on participation in operations as an EU member, and when their units were subordinated to the command of the Alliance. Similarly, the concept of wider peacekeeping<sup>3</sup> became more applicable and necessary for non-allied partners due to the devastating situation in the Balkans that awaited a response. New demands highlighted the need to update national legislation regarding crisis management, especially the use of military force. Defence reforms were under consideration in both armed forces, which transformed the environment for wider peacekeeping and made legal amendments more complicated. In Sweden, there was strong reliance on national defence capabilities, but simultaneously the focus on expeditionary capabilities was under consideration. Some doubts were expressed in regard to the Swedish defence posture itself. For instance, the use of conscripts or reservists on a voluntary basis was not regarded as reliable enough for crisis management operations. In general, and actually in both countries, there was a fear that the training and equipment would not be effective enough in cases where a peacekeeping mission morphed into a more demanding operation. This debate in Sweden was one indicator of the

2 Frantzen, p. 182.

3 Wider peacekeeping as a concept emphasizes the consent of parties, but takes into account the requirements of a highly volatile environment. Among other things, in a conflict process, it is located between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The UK Army Field Manual, *Wider peacekeeping, Operations other than war*, Volume 5, Part 2, Army Code 71359(A) (Part 2), Interim, 1994.

transition from national defence to an expeditionary mode for the armed forces.<sup>4</sup>

Controversially, while NATO distanced itself from the most demanding collective defence responsibilities towards 'lighter' crisis management operations, its military operations in the Balkans proceeded from 'easier' and self-defence-oriented peacekeeping towards a more proactive use of powerful military force (peace enforcement). The first such powerful activity took place when NATO established, and also deployed, the Rapid Reaction Force under UN auspices to balance Serb land forces in Bosnia. The second time this extension of the use of military force took place was in Sarajevo, where NATO balanced Serb forces by delivering several hundred flight sorties against Serb heavy weaponry in the vicinity of Sarajevo. Finally, the air campaign in Kosovo was the strongest evidence of NATO's potential to deliver military force to protect the civilian population when needed, even without UN Security Council authorization.<sup>5</sup>

#### FINLAND AND SWEDEN IN NATO OPERATIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

As the first evidence of PfP outcomes, several partner countries sent their forces to join IFOR for its one-year-long operation, which commenced in December 1995. Sweden contributed to IFOR with a mechanized battalion assigned to the Nordic-Polish Brigade, which also included one battalion from Denmark, Norway and Poland. Finland contributed a construction battalion to IFOR, which was replaced with a jaeger battalion for SFOR as a part of the Nordic-Polish Brigade. Both Finland and Sweden contributed to the continuation operation of IFOR and SFOR, which was termed the Kosovo Force (KFOR). The major contribution for both nations was a mechanized

- 4 Försvarsdepartementet, Försvarspolitisk rapport från Försvarsberedningen (2001:44), *Ny struktur för ökad säkerhet – nätverksförsvar och krishantering*, Regeringskansliet, Stockholm, 2001, p. 246. <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/07178917391f48cab557f49210c5186b/ny-struktur-for-okad-sakerhet---natverksforsvar-och-krishantering-ds-200144>, accessed 21 April 2016. Mikael Holmström, (2015), pp. 597–599, p. 604. Palosaari (2013), pp. 11–12. See also Palosaari (2011).
- 5 Juha Pyykönen, 'Sotilaallisen kriisinhallinnan kuvan muutos', in Jyri Raitasalo & Joonas Sipilä ed., *Sota – teoria ja todellisuus, näkökulmia sodan muutokseen*, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulun Strategian laitos, Julkaisusarja 1, No 24, Edita Prima, 2008, pp. 110–111. Nazemroaya, 18. Also, the Gulf War in 1990–1991 had already shown that interoperability between some allied nations would suffice for out-of-area operations.

battalion, which was later reorganized and downgraded according to the overall reductions in the KFOR organization. Typically, both nations provided similar types of contributions and almost the same number of personnel in each phase of reduction. The performance of both nations was highly appreciated by other contributors as well as by the NATO military authorities. Remarkably, and as a recognition of trust, officers from both non-allied nations served as the commanding officer of a multinational brigade.<sup>6</sup>

Nordic military cooperation reached the next level within the Nordic–Polish Brigade, which offered a fruitful environment for cooperation innovations, such as a joint supply function for all contributors (the Nordic Support Group, NSG). Nordic operational cooperation was far from new, but in comparison to the former 40 years of peacekeeping operations under the UN Charter Chapter VI, NATO operations turned out to be remarkably more demanding and risky. Consequently, they were implemented with much more robust roles of engagement supported with the necessary military assets and capabilities. This was the main lesson learned by non-allied Europeans. For Finland and Sweden, active cooperation with NATO, with numerous lessons learned from exercises, helped them to make their national preparations effectively and in a timely manner, and to adapt themselves to joining the NATO-led operations in the Balkans. Many of these early lessons learned in the Balkans were taken into consideration and included in the national crisis management modalities.

For Finland, preparations for KFOR started in February 1999, political decisions were made in June and the Finnish contingent assumed its tasks in late August. Recognizing that requirements for the Finnish contingent would be much more demanding than earlier, the battalion was trained and equipped following the best-known practices. This was facilitated through amended conscript training for the companies, which had already started in late 1996. Initially, there was a plan to offer a Swedish–Finnish battalion, but Sweden soon withdrew from the joint effort.<sup>7</sup>

The main challenges for Finland stemmed from materiel, personnel and administrative issues. This was the first time that a battalion had been established using the regular processes and programme of the

6 Claesson, 58–62. Markku Iskanius, *Porilaisten marssi. Kuninkaan joukoista kansainväliseksi kouluttajaksi*. Porin Prikaatin Perinneyhdistys ry., Saarijärvi, 2016, pp. 263–264. Heikkilä (2000), pp. 111–112. *Swedish International Forces in the Service of Peace*, Försvarsmakten, Armé- Marin- och Flygfilm and Bokförlaget Arena, 2006, pp. 188–191.

7 Holma, pp. 83–84. Iskanius, pp. 256–258.

defence forces with a minimum of ‘ad-hockery’. Materiel had to be collected from numerous training units all around the country, but only minor deficits remained in the end. Ultimately, the military expertise among trainers and trainees met most of the criteria, and the military units and headquarters were transferred to the Balkans on time. Later, for the following rotations, the same training and education system was used collectively within the NORDCAPS community in order to make it more systematic in the years to come. The lessons learned, such as readiness and force protection, were included in the third PARP cycle as amended Partnership Goals for further work. The deployment to KFOR was remarkable for many reasons, one being that it demanded more rapid and flexible national procedures because there was no such plan in 1998 to deploy the following year. Previously, decision-making on potential participation in a peacekeeping operation had taken much longer and new operations had been started only a couple of times in a decade. Together with NATO, the frequency of new operations gradually increased, providing a much shorter period of time for preparations.<sup>8</sup>

The quality of Swedish forces, systems and headquarters, in military terms, was commonly regarded as higher than in Finland. Moreover, Sweden’s equipment and materiel were largely on a par with those of its framework nations (the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Belgium, etc.). In certain areas of high-technology, Sweden had very ambitious goals to establish state-of-the-art systems to multiply the efficiency of the modernized armed forces. With sufficient resources and relentless work, the concept of network-based defence (*nätverksbaserade försvaret*, NBF) proceeded with the aim of contributing to the defence reform. The concept was aimed at utilizing information technology to multiply the performance of the whole armed forces, making it fully interoperable with units of other countries and the Swedish civilian defence.

8 Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *The Effects of Finland’s Possible NATO Membership: An Assessment*. Annex: Finland’s participation in international operations 1956–. Helsinki, 2016. Later, in the 2010s, it became even more common to deploy and redeploy. For instance, between 2006–2015 Finland deployed or redeployed on average three military units or training missions every year. Figures exclude rotations and include only new and closed operations.

The level of ambition was later moderated and finally merged with other ongoing technology projects related to the reform.<sup>9</sup>

The Viking series of exercises was a part of the development of network-based defence capabilities. Initially, it was demonstrated at the 50th anniversary of NATO in April 1999. The exercise opened a new chapter in the development of the Swedish Armed Forces. It was a computer-assisted simulation exercise for training higher-level officers for operations, but has since been expanded to cover all services at all levels of the military profession, including EU battle group units led by Sweden. Today, participants are from numerous countries and non-governmental organizations. Lessons stemming from the multifunctional exercise have been utilized when developing Finnish operational leadership training. Finnish participation in Viking exercises has continued since and no similar system was required in Finland on a national basis.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of the evolving role, as a continuation operation of IFOR and SFOR, KFOR illustrated that NATO had managed to adapt itself to out-of-area operations. In March 1999, after the 77-day-long air campaign over Kosovo against the Serbs without a UN mandate, the stage was set for NATO-led KFOR to commence. This operation was mandated by the UN in June. Political and military strategic findings were reflected in the Strategic Concept 1999. At this point, it was crucial that out-of-area operations were not under the Article 5 collective defence commitment because there was no obligation for members to join the force. From the active partners' standpoint, which is connected only to crisis response, this division added to the future utility and legitimacy of the Alliance.

Both Finland and Sweden contributed a 'reservist' battalion to the UK-led brigade in KFOR. The environment for the operation was fragmented due to Serbian enclaves, which called for redoubled efforts in the prevention of violence. Due to the improving security situation, and as an indication of successful crisis management,

- 9 Håkan Syren, *Vägen framåt – en liten bok om en stor förändring*, Edita Västra Aros, Västerås, 2004, p. 17. Statskontoret, *Införande av ett nätverksbaserat försvar. Avslutande granskning av utvecklingsarbetet*. Status i maj 2007. <http://www.statskontoret.se/upload/Publikationer/2007/2007100.pdf>, accessed 15 May 2016. See also *Försvarsberedningen (2001:44), Ny struktur för ökad säkerhet – nätverksförsvar och krishantering*, Regeringskansliet, Stockholm, 2001, p. 13.
- 10 Kaisa Heikkilä, *Suomi ja Naton rauhankumppanuusohjelma*, 2nd edition, Defence Command, International Division, Ykkös-Offset Oy, Vaasa, 2000, p. 17. For further information, visit <http://www.ltc.mil.se/default.aspx>, accessed 16 May 2016.

the operation was downsized and reorganized. Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008 and NATO amended its role towards liaising and monitoring. Both the Finnish and Swedish contingents were accommodated accordingly. Simultaneously, NATO increased its contributions to ISAF in Afghanistan and redeployed resources from the Balkans, which opened up wider opportunities for partners to receive high-level officer posts in the KFOR structure. Both Finland and Sweden commanded multinational brigades in SFOR and KFOR. These extended partner contributions and responsibilities soon clashed with NATO security protocol issues, such as access to operational information for the Commanding Officer of the brigade. Typically for Nordic troop contributors in a NATO context, practical solutions for bureaucratic hindrances were reached and implemented, instead of getting bogged down in a very time-consuming process to circumvent official protocol and processes.<sup>11</sup>

From the first instance, for Finland and Sweden, the main source of national motivation to do their utmost stemmed from a need to show that a conscription-based military force is capable of fulfilling all of its tasks. In other words, if the battalion could deliver, then national defence for its part, consisting of hundreds of similar battalions, must likewise be credible. This also applied to the equipment and materiel, which was quite similar to that of territorial defence and offence, and not limited to crisis management. In reality, and especially during the first decade of NATO-led operations, Finnish units preparing for missions abroad were much better trained and equipped than those designated for national defence only. The same applied to Sweden, but the overall quality of national equipment more closely resembled that used abroad. Materiel used for national defence or crisis management became more uniform with the subsequent defence reform in Sweden in the 2000s. One of the main challenges for the Swedish defence industry was to adjust its traditional products, such as navy vessels, aircraft, armoured vehicles and field artillery, to the needs of remarkably smaller, deployable, sustainable and more rapid units deployed abroad. Cost-effectiveness deteriorated with much smaller series produced for fewer Swedish units only.<sup>12</sup>

For both Finland and Sweden, the Balkan wars provided an extraordinary opportunity to promote military cooperation with NATO for their own benefit. Of course, NATO had developed its forces

11 Claesson, pp. 60–62. Iskanius, pp. 258, 264.

12 Syren (2004), pp. 36–38.

and capabilities to fulfil needs that arose from the changing security situation in Europe. An illustrative example of how Finland and Sweden managed to get involved in the core development programme is the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). Involvement was important, especially for Sweden with its high ambitions when innovating and constructing the network-based defence system. Finland contributed primarily to the concept development and accordingly to the implementation of national command and control capabilities.

Right from the beginning, the pivotal areas of capability development for both countries included command and control systems, signal units, and communications. For Sweden, the goal was more ambitious, aiming at network-based defence, with Finland to follow suit, at least to some degree and at a political level.<sup>13</sup> Developing these areas was also urgent for Finland because it planned to deploy a battalion-size force to Bosnia as early as 1996, and later to take over the commandship of a brigade, which would require the Finnish host nation to provide networks (such as command and control, and communications) for the other nations delivering subordinate units. For implementation purposes, the NATO standards, experiences and knowledge provided during exercises were valuable in order to create a system that would be interoperable in the Balkan theatre.

As far as the partners' capability development was concerned, the main benefits stemmed from operating together with NATO forces within its command and force structures. In practice, even in SFOR and KFOR, capable partner forces were incorporated into the operation almost on the same basis as forces of the member states. Special arrangements were applied only to Russian forces during their stay in SFOR. For NATO and the allied units deployed in the Balkans, the main benefit was the additional capacity, which was regarded as trustworthy. The functioning of both Finnish and Swedish battalions was commended as reliable and effective by all counterparts. A commonly used argument for success in the Balkans was the Nordic training model, which provided multi-skilled military personnel due to their civilian professions. Criticism of the Nordic system stemmed primarily from lower readiness of mobilization in comparison to fully professional allied units. On the other hand, sustainability of contributions was often regarded as a strength of the Nordic system.

For Finland, experiences and lessons learned on leadership, operational art, tactics, technologies and systems were vital for

<sup>13</sup> Puolustusministeriö, *Puolustusministeriön strateginen suunnitelma*, Helsinki, 2011.

further improvement and for deepening interaction and trust between militaries. As already stated, progress demanded mutual and reciprocal interaction to define partner needs and detect the most appropriate methods for implementation. To this end, the cooperation mechanisms invented and developed for KFOR emphasized the practical approach NATO adopted. One well-recognized improvement was the inclusion of contributing partners in consultations at key meetings and with opportunities to express their views and to associate themselves with the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decisions. In general, the lower the hierarchical level, the smoother and more problem-free the cooperation.

One of the main benefits of new tools, such as PfP, PARP or EAPC, was the possibility to establish individual cooperative relations with NATO, which were tailored to the partner's situation and national needs (self-differentiation). Consequently, cooperation has had to be deepened and broadened to meet the new aspirations of diversified partners, while simultaneously maintaining NATO's attractiveness. At regular two-year intervals, the summit meetings have launched new initiatives and also brought numerous important PfP enhancements to fruition. In the 1999 Washington Summit, the updated Strategic Concept established crisis management and partnership as one of the fundamental security tasks of the Alliance. In order to facilitate the new requirements after the summit, and in the wake of the Kosovo crisis, the Membership Action Plan and the Defence Capability Initiative were launched.<sup>14</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The deteriorating security situation in the Western Balkans accelerated the development of both cooperation and appropriate capabilities for intervention. Nonetheless, it took several years for the first-ever NATO-led operation to commence, apart from supporting the UN with military forces. This cooperation and the PfP tools turned out to be useful because the operation could be carried out together with partners.

There was hardly any master plan to firstly develop all the cooperation tools and then accommodate all the capabilities for NATO,

<sup>14</sup> NATO, *NATO Handbook*, Public Diplomacy Division, Brussels, 2006, pp. 194–5. NATO, *NATO Handbook*, Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 2001, p. 74.

its allies and partners, and finally utilize the capabilities in the Western Balkans. However, NATO capabilities were available on time for IFOR once the peace agreement was signed in late 1995. They could scarcely have been available any sooner because NATO was already engaged in the UN operations from 1992 onwards, and many allied nations and partners, including both Finland and Sweden with large contributions, were also deeply involved in these operations.

For NATO, refocusing its role from a collective defender to a crisis manager continued in the Balkans. Both Finland and Sweden recognized the ongoing change and got involved from the outset. Based on domestic discussions, both partners welcomed cooperation that would not be linked with collective defence in order to avoid any responsibilities. Moreover, the clear difference regarding allied nations' responsibilities between collective defence and crisis management alleviated pressure on partners to assume a bigger role. On the other hand, more proactive use of military force (e.g. peace enforcement) raised concern among partners. Both Nordic partners, especially Sweden, were cautious to maintain their non-allied status regardless of their EU or PfP linkages.

Along with the decision to take part in IFOR, several issues had to be resolved nationally, and amid debates on the next defence reforms. Among others, the national training and exercise systems were modified to produce capable reserve units for the operation. This was implemented on a case-by-case basis according to the results of the domestic debate on new initiatives to extend NATO cooperation. The success of the Finnish battalions, especially in KFOR, was crucial for the credibility of the military, but also as evidence that Finland, with well-trained reserve-based contract soldiers, is a reliable partner in demanding operations. This argument for participation represented the fresh wording that was also used in the domestic debate.

The applicable aspects of NATO's principles, procedures and programmes were implemented in both partner countries. Sweden had a higher level of ambition for network-based systems, and also regarding regular military equipment. It was fortunate that there were quite similar contingents from the four Nordic countries as this promoted cooperation.

Through participation in the Balkans, both Finland and Sweden found themselves in a new situation. Traditionally, both had been most active in UN peacekeeping endeavours, but otherwise rather isolated from the rest of the military world. With the PfP and considerable contributions in the Balkans, they were compelled to broaden their

national defence thinking as well as military activities. Interestingly, this series of ‘eye-openers’ occurred in conjunction with additional responsibilities as commanding officers, or provided access to meetings and consultations with all the allied representatives (in NAC+N composition). In all likelihood, this was not so much according to any plan, but resulted from the evolving cooperation, which generated new ideas for ever deeper and more equal cooperation. In actual fact, the Nordic partners soon spearheaded military cooperation with NATO and the allied armed forces. This attitude was vital for further enhancement of national capabilities in more demanding operations outside Europe.



4



## 4. Operational cooperation outside Europe

### MORE EFFECTIVE CAPABILITY FOR MORE DEMANDING OPERATIONS

NATO decided to streamline its military structure in order to facilitate political and military planning and decision-making to meet more demanding operational requirements for the full range of Alliance missions. At the Prague Summit in 2002, a decision was made to refurbish both strategic commands, one for operational needs (ACO) and one for transforming NATO (ACT),<sup>1</sup> from geographical to functional roles. Another goal was to establish a leaner, more efficient, effective and deployable command structure to meet new threats emerging from outside of NATO's area of collective defence. In addition, the Prague Capabilities Commitment was agreed in order to improve allied nations' capabilities in areas such as strategic air- and sealift, and air-to-ground surveillance.

One of the major efforts to elevate cooperation to a higher level was the inauguration of the Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP), also at the Prague Summit. These plans are open to countries that aim at a deeper relationship with NATO, but which are starting at the lower level of cooperation. The goal was to coordinate all the various cooperation mechanisms and sharpen the focus of activities to better support a partner's domestic reform efforts. As a result, focused country-specific advice on defence and security-related reform was offered for an appropriate partner. IPAP also make it easier to

1 ACO stands for the Atlantic Command Operations and ACT for the Atlantic Command Transformation.

coordinate bilateral assistance provided by individual allies and partner countries. Objectives covered all the general categories of political and security issues.<sup>2</sup>

For the most advanced partners, such as Finland and Sweden, these decisions created a more demanding exercise environment to meet higher goals for their armed forces, if invited. For the Swedish state leadership, this may have been easier to digest due to the decade-long close military cooperation with some NATO nations during the Cold War era, in secrecy<sup>3</sup>. For Finland, cooperation with NATO has been the most delicate security policy issue from the beginning, and exercises going ever deeper into the core of (national) defence capabilities raised serious concerns about the implications for the security environment. If Swedish citizens were not so well informed, in Finland public opinion was in favour of non-alignment by a clear majority, and consequently against any deeper international cooperation related to national defence.<sup>4</sup>

A NATO delegation visited Helsinki to plan the third phase of PARP in March 2000. A profound analysis of previous cooperation was discussed in depth. Finland's active collaboration and peacekeeping expertise, together with tangible contributions to exercises and operations, especially the battalion deployed in KFOR and support for the Baltic countries, were highly appreciated by the NATO delegation. According to NATO's analysis, the main goal of the PfP, namely interoperability of designated forces, had progressed as planned with good results.

The time frame for PARP was extended to six years (2001–2006), with assessments every two years. During that time frame, NATO offered Finland 70 Partnership Goals out of which Finland accepted 64 for implementation. Recent lessons learned from KFOR were embedded into the new goals, which mainly aimed at fulfilling the previously agreed capability areas and related acquisitions. As a new area, an F-18 Hornet fighter squadron was declared for training and

2 NATO Istanbul Summit Communiqué, paragraph 31, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm>, accessed 1 April 2016. IPAP objectives covered defence, security and military issues; public information; science and environment; civil emergency planning; and administrative, protective security and resource issues. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49290.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49290.htm?selectedLocale=en), accessed 1 Apr 2016.

3 For instance, see Mikael Holmström, *Den Dolda Alliansen. Sveriges hemliga NATO-förbindelser*. Fjärde upplagen. Utökad med Det nya kalla kriget. Atlantis, Stockholm, 2015, pp. 27–36. Also Petersson (2003), Agrell (1991), Dalsjö (2006).

4 Holmström (2011), pp. 575–577 on "... Sveriges dubbelpolitik ...". On differences regarding how much to tell the people, see pp. 586–588. Sivonen, pp. 98–99.

exercises by 2006. The most important unit was the jaeger battalion of the Finnish Rapid Deployment Force, aiming at full operational capability by the beginning of 2003. These goals and implementation details were included in the annual action plan of the Defence Forces.<sup>5</sup>

Sweden had accepted a similar number of partnership goals, totalling 63 for this PARP phase. The goals were related to capabilities such as staff for civil-military cooperation, two mechanized battalions, a military police company, an engineer company, a submarine unit, a corvette unit, a marine mine clearing unit, an airborne JAS 39 Gripen unit, a radio intelligence aircraft and an air transport unit. At this stage, the Swedish military broadly followed NATO principles in staff work, which had been one of the goals for some years. For the purposes of transparency, Finland as well as Sweden invited other non-allied EU member states to join PARP consultations with NATO.<sup>6</sup>

During the first years of the new millennium, NATO-led exercises focused on UN Chapter VII-mandated crisis response operations. When participating in large-scale exercises, the size of the Finnish contingents grew as a rule to several hundred personnel. All services were involved, duly distributing expertise around the national defence and force structures. The Nordic Peace exercise was gaining importance because it was the other annual multinational exercise with conscript units participating. The Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT) had taken over the main responsibilities to command, establish, deploy and support all crisis management operations. Annually, FINCENT was responsible for approximately 1,500 personnel in almost ten ongoing operations. NATO accredited FINCENT as a PFP Training Centre in 2001, from which it could offer courses for NATO, allied and partner participants. In Sweden, SWEDINT, which has a rather similar role to its Finnish counterpart, acquired the status as early as 1999, and was among the first centres to emerge soon after the new concept was inaugurated. All this was a reflection of the enlarged pool of forces, which for Finland included four battalion-size units (mechanized, jaeger, the Finnish Rapid Reaction Force Battalion, and an engineering battalion), one navy vessel together with company-size units, and the command and control capability of a brigade.

5 Holma, pp. 98–99.

6 Government Communication 2003/04:84, *Sweden's cooperation in the EAPC and PFP*, Stockholm, 2004, p. 14. Also at <http://www.government.se/contentassets/2e85a5b2191c4a4393afbd2e608cc613/swedens-cooperation-in-the-euro-atlantic-partnership-council-eapc-and-partnership-for-peace-pfp>.

The larger pool of forces required more training and exercises and, with limited resources, bilateral cooperation was a partial remedy.<sup>7</sup>

The Swedish computer-assisted exercise Viking 01, with sixty Finnish staff officers, was an eye-opener for participants. It turned out to be the Swedish flagship exercise as one of the first of its kind globally. The main goal was to develop and test the networked operational environment. Similarly, in the NATO context, the multinational and multi-service concept (CJTF) was practised to test operational networking regularly. It was also opened to partners including dozens of personnel from Finland and Sweden. As a token of the country's reliability, one of NATO's CJTF headquarters held a training event in Finland. The training audience also included members of the Finnish staff, who would be attending another CJTF exercise later in Poland. In this exercise, readiness to receive external assistance as a concept was put to use for the first time after being included in the partnership goals in 1999. In all, Finland participated in approximately 30 international exercises in 2001.<sup>8</sup>

In the ISAF operation, an additional aim for both Finland and Sweden was to enhance national capabilities for crisis response operations, comprising, on the one hand, operational capabilities demonstrating overall success in operations, and on the other, an image of a partner country as a capable, willing and reliable participant in a crisis. The latter aim was linked to the Finnish defence posture and its credibility based on capabilities. Credible defence constitutes an enhanced defensive threshold, thus implementing defensive deterrence and the concept of *deterrence by denial*. From this viewpoint, more demanding exercises and operations were welcomed by both Finland and Sweden. These needs were satisfied to a large extent in the 2002 Prague Summit when NATO decided to create the NATO Response Force (NRF). This would be a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land,

7 The pool of forces included capabilities conditionally available for the UN, the EU, NATO, NORDCAPS, SHIRBRIG and FAWEU (Forces available for the WEU). Holma, pp. 103–110, 116, 151, 198. SHIRBRIG was the first successful attempt to establish a standby, rapid reaction force pool for the United Nations as described in the UN Charter, Article 43. It conducted several crisis management operations from 2000 onwards until its closure in 2009. Sweden was one of the six founding parties, but Finland was not active in this effort. See the history and lessons learned at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/566-v~Shirbrig\\_lessons\\_learned\\_report.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/566-v~Shirbrig_lessons_learned_report.pdf), accessed 22 April 2016.

8 Holma, pp. 114–115.

sea, and air elements available wherever needed. The whole concept has been updated regularly, most recently in the 2014 Wales Summit.<sup>9</sup>

Seen from NATO's viewpoint, the NRF was intended to serve as a vehicle for the transformation of allied nations' military structure and capabilities, and not only as a spearhead capability itself. This also applied to participation by partners because the NRF could be used for training as well as for increased exercises and better use of technology. To date, Finnish contributions to the NATO Response Force Pool (RFP, renamed the Follow-on-Forces Group, or FFG) include: a Deployable CBRN Laboratory (available in 2012), a Special Operations Task Group (2013), an F-18 Hornet Squadron (2014), and a Light Amphibious Infantry Company (2015). The planned contributions include a Mechanized Infantry Company (2016), a Coastal Mine Hunter, and a Deployable CBRN Laboratory (2017). The amphibious company conducted exercises with a similar Swedish unit with the aim of merging them into one combined amphibious battalion. These units conduct exercises annually, and in 2016 the two companies operated together in the Baltops maritime exercise off the coasts of Finland and Sweden.

The Swedish defence reform was agreed in 2004 based on the changing security environment and the need for a larger contribution to international crisis management, but also for financial reasons. The new defence would be based on much leaner structures and a highly effective composition of capabilities. It would respond to the updated threat scenarios, such as ethnic cleansing, collapsed states, genocides, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This would be achieved in close cooperation with European and global partners. For the military itself, a revolutionary change in thinking was a necessity: the former defence system had been built up to repel large-scale offensives and would not be applicable against the new threats. Consequently, the PfP was important for carrying out the internationalization of the Swedish armed forces. During the years of reform, it became evident that defence should be based on a multinational effort. The reform would significantly decrease the number of personnel and transform the compulsory conscript service system towards voluntary service. On the other hand, it would help reallocate resources to modern materiel, personal equipment, more effective training and exercises. In November 2005, legal, financial,

9 Government Communication 2003/04:84, p. 15.

personnel and other administrative aspects related to the reform were also decided.<sup>10</sup>

At the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul, one of the decisions was to shift the focus of the PfP towards Caucasian and Central Asian partner countries, the reason being that the development in these countries was more modest compared to partners in Eastern and Central Europe. As an indication of the new focus on Caucasus and Central Asia, the first partner to agree on an IPAP was Georgia in October 2004, followed by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008. Using IPAP as a tool, a partner also pursues membership aspirations through development of an Annual National Programme (ANP) and finally by following the MAP.<sup>11</sup> Montenegro is the latest successful example of this process towards membership. Finland and Sweden supported this effort to strengthen stability and democratic values with experts in the Balkans, South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The fourth PARP phase was negotiated in 2006 and covered cooperation until 2012. A total of 62 new partnership goals were accepted for Finland, out of which 15 were new. For Sweden, 57 goals were accepted for the period. Again, the most important goals addressed the interoperability of capabilities most relevant for international military cooperation and crisis management divided into generic, land, maritime and air chapters. Some of the new goals were needed for ISAF contingents, such as explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), enhanced force protection, medical care as well as intelligence, surveillance, targeting and reconnaissance. Many of the goals were related to the EUBG concept and future Finnish participation in the NRF. During the PARP phase, OCC evaluations became more common in the Finnish army units and in the Swedish maritime units, requiring more precise standardization. This was often fulfilled through the partnership goals. The Swedish decision to take the lead in the EUBG in 2008 defined the focus for capability development for the coming years. In all four participating EU partner countries, PARP was used as the planning tool to further develop the pool of forces and battle groups. Similarly, NATO standardization was utilized to ensure the

10 Syren (2004), pp. 42–44. Ulf Henricsson, 'Underlag till ett markstridskoncept "tillsammans med andra"' in Gunilla Herolf & Bo Hultdt, eds., *På egen hand eller tillsammans? Sverige i det nya Europa*, Kungl Krigsvetenskapsakademien, Kaigan AB, Sundbyberg, 2013, pp. 93–95. Government Communication 2003/04:84, *Sweden's cooperation in EAPC and PFP*, Stockholm, 2004, pp. 3, 15.

11 Currently, Montenegro, Bosnia–Herzegovina and Macedonia (FYROM) are in the MAP.

interoperability of these capabilities. Furthermore, requirements for the Swedish-led battle group were regarded as quite similar to those for the crisis management capabilities of the Swedish military. Part of the rationale to focus on the battle group was to simultaneously serve the European cause as declared in the European Security Strategy in 2003.<sup>12</sup>

One of the characteristics of the cooperation between Finland and NATO was the serious intent to take full advantage of planning tools. In the early 2000s, Finland convinced NATO counterparts that it would be more effective to accept partnership goals that are related to, if not integrated into, national defence capability development programmes. This would ensure funding for interoperability through the defence budget. It was implemented piecemeal and was officially accepted by NATO representatives during the PARP negotiations in 2008, and integrated within national planning processes in 2010. For the sake of comprehensiveness, capability work that was carried out in the EU and Nordic contexts was also integrated into the national capability process in the early 2010s.

Since 1996, partnership goals had become more detailed and tackled the same issues of interoperability as was the case with the force goals of the allied armed forces. During the PARP phases, goals that had been implemented and accordingly removed were related, for instance, to command and control systems, information security, logistics systems, joint fires, force protection and the pool of forces. For Finland, many of these are directly linked to certain types of military units produced within the conscript system. This means that these units will be trained again with new conscripts and, consequently, that the partnership goals will be relevant for years to come. For Sweden, with its professional military units, the personnel remain the same, thereby reducing the overall need for training and exercises.<sup>13</sup>

In order to complete the process of force development, all capabilities designated to the pool of forces were evaluated according to NATO's OCC process. This also included detailed feedback provided by professional evaluators, coming from both NATO and partner countries. For Finland, this became routine as soon as NATO tools were available for partners from 2000 onwards. For both countries, the OCC was quite a learning experience because, for the first time since the

12 Syren (2004), p. 16. Syren (2006), pp. 29–33. Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:137, *Sveriges samarbete med Nato inom Euroatlantiska partnerskapsrådet (EAPR), Partnerskap för fred (PFF) och krisanteringsinsatser*, Stockholm, 2009, p. 15.

13 Holma, p. 263.

Second World War, an outsider was evaluating and ranking military performance and capability for a broader audience. In the initial years, Sweden focussed on maritime units and used only national teams for evaluations, followed by international teams later on. In 2015 the Army and the Air Force also had their first units evaluated at the highest level by an international team. The quality of the evaluation and feedback mechanism improved along with the education of team members, some of them trained and put through exercises in Finland. A holistic system was established in Finland: a jaeger company was trained in 2014–2015, including two international exercises; it was evaluated in December 2015 (with exceptionally high scores); finally, the company was designated to be part of the NRF Response Forces Pool, starting in January 2016 for the rest of the year. Furthermore, this company is a replacement module for the 1996 readiness battalion, which was trained for the Western Balkan operation in 1998 and deployed with KFOR in 1999.<sup>14</sup>

The political-level exercise for NATO is the Crisis Management Exercise (CMX). It existed even before the Pfp, the first being held in 1992, but it has been open to developed partners quite often. By nature, it is a scenario-based decision-making exercise to practise crisis management procedures, measures and arrangements, including civil-military cooperation in order to maintain and improve participants' ability to manage crises at the political level. As an annual event, it educates allied nations' state leadership and relevant ministries supported by their experts and other officials. During the virtual exercise, participants get to know how a player thinks and what the potential impact on the remaining players would be. In 2016, the EU was involved as an observer in the exercise while the two partners, Finland and Sweden, participated alongside the allies. For Finland, the regular participants constitute the key authorities on comprehensive security in Finland. The same applies to the Swedish participants, and even more so after the concept of comprehensive defence (*civila försvaret*) is restored. However, in CMX 16 there were differences concerning the Swedish contribution, including the total mobilization (60,000 personnel) of the Armed Forces, and authorizing NATO to use Swedish air and maritime space. The Finnish contribution followed

14 Försvarsmakten, Högkvarteret, *Genomförda OCC E&F nivå 2 evalueringar 2006–2015, 2015–11–05*. Teemu Nurmela & Joni Ylöstalo, Nato-kelpoisen jääkärikomppanian kokemusten hyödyntäminen. *Sotilasajakauslehti 4/2016*, 91. vuorikerta, Upseeriliitto, 10–Paino, Mikkeli 2016, pp. 9–10.

a more cautious approach with a focus on Finland's national role in the exercise. Traditionally, this role has been to defend Finnish territory and to contribute to efforts such as information exchange.<sup>15</sup>

It is noteworthy that the two Nordic partners have attended CMX several times and the exercise plans have been adapted to accommodate non-allied partner views. Quite often, Finland and Sweden have coordinated their views on scenarios, plans and contributions as well as national goals for CMX well in advance. This has been a necessity, especially when the overall exercise scenario has involved Article 5 (collective defence) situations or characteristics. In the decision-making and preparatory work, both capitals have negotiated with NATO, separately and jointly, to formulate scenarios making them more permissive in their participation. The same method has normally been used in relation to demanding exercises at the military level, such as large-scale Article 5-type exercises, where a separate part of an overall scenario could be amended to accommodate partners' views. In addition, Sweden has been involved in various war games, often organized by US think tanks, whereas Finland has not participated very often. The war games have been very realistic, as in 2015 and 2016 when two separate war games included a Russian aggression against NATO and states in the Baltic Sea region. Participant's countermeasures were highly realistic as well.<sup>16</sup>

15 For Finland, the regular participants are the Prime Minister's Office and the Situation Centre, MFA, MoD, the Ministry for the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Communications and Transport, the Defence Command, the Police and the Finnish Mission to NATO. In 2016, the Swedish participants included MFA, MoD, Ministry for Justice, the Armed Forces, MBS and the Swedish Mission to NATO. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_128783.htm?selectedLocale=en&mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_128783.htm?selectedLocale=en&mode=pressrelease), accessed 16 May 2016. Mikael Holmström, 'Försvaret mobiliserades i krigsspel med NATO', *Dagens Nyheter, Sverige*, 1 June 2016. Also at <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/forsvaret-mobiliserades-i-krigsspel-med-nato/>, accessed 21 June 2016. Miika Viljakainen, 'Suomi harjoittelee Naton kanssa säännöllisesti – tällainen on paljon puhuttu CMX-harjoitus', *Kotimaa*, <http://www.iltasanomat.fi/kotimaa/art-200001126589.html>, accessed 21 June 2016.

16 Mike Winnerstig, 'Mike Winnerstig: Krigsspelen visar Sveriges verkliga ansikte', *Svenska Dagbladet, Ledare*, 26 June 2016, <http://www.svd.se/mike-winnerstig-krigsspelen-visar-sveriges-verkliga-ansikte/om/sakerhetsradet>, accessed 26 June 2016. Sydney J. & Freedberg JR., 'Wargame Warns NATO Unready For Baltic Crisis', *Breaking Defence*, 12 April 2016, <http://breakingdefense.com/2016/04/wargame-warns-nato-unready-for-baltic-crisis/> Latvian soldiers train with US Airborne troops, accessed 26 June 2016. The think tanks referred to here are RAND and the Center for New American Security (CNAS).

The 1991 NATO Strategic Concept stated that ‘... none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence ...’. However, as described above, from late 1992 onwards NATO used its overwhelming weaponry against one party to the war on behalf of another, thus distancing itself from the principles of neutrality and impartiality. This policy continued in all three operations in the Western Balkans. The next step was taken in the Washington Summit in April 1999. As stated in the Alliance’s Strategic Concept, the fundamental tasks were broken down into five new categories: to ensure a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment, to serve as a forum for consultations (among members), to deter and defend according to Article 5, to contribute to conflict prevention including crisis response operations, and to promote wide-ranging partnerships in the Euro-Atlantic area. The value of partnership was emphasized and the door was conditionally left open for further enlargements after the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were accepted as members of the Alliance. The structural and procedural amendments necessary for NATO to implement these decisions were already in place, including partners, missions and partner staff personnel in the command structure.

In the years that followed, NATO transformed its military tools primarily according to ‘out-of-area’ operational requirements, while simultaneously downsizing its peace- and war-time structures. These requirements included enhanced readiness, availability, sustainability, training and exercises, deployment, and mobilization. Furthermore, NATO extended its repertoire to the civilian hemisphere, adding to the overlapping and redundant capabilities with the EU, the UN and the OSCE. This took place simultaneously with the EU extending its toolbox to military security activities, including initial operational military capability for crisis management in July 2001, to be completed and fully operational in 2003.

The UN Security Council approved the resolution, which authorized the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to support the interim government in maintaining security in and around the Kabul area. The mandate was based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, including peace enforcement. The Alliance had crossed the Rubicon in the Reykjavik meeting in May 2002 by stating that it was prepared

to engage in operations beyond its traditional remit.<sup>17</sup> In other words, NATO was available for members to deploy in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the US on 11 September 2001, and again in 2003, resulting in the change of command from the US to NATO. The war in Iraq was started by the coalition of the willing in March, thus having an impact on US priorities in Afghanistan.

ISAF's aim was to help Afghanistan out of four decades of authoritarian rule, foreign occupation and civil war, which had turned the country into a suitable base for the training of terrorists. Initially, the operation had a lead-nation decided on a rotational basis with NATO support, but for continuity reasons the Alliance took over full responsibility for leadership in August 2003.

At first, starting in January 2002, Finland contributed to ISAF with a small civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) detachment in Kabul. International pressure was considerable and all the Nordic states were set to take part in the operation. Initially, there was great enthusiasm in Finland to join the force, even with a larger contribution, but after domestic discussions, and based on the UN resolution, Finland decided to join the coalition of the willing with some 50 personnel. Subsequently, from 2004 onwards, the Finnish contingent moved to Northern Afghanistan to become part of the Norwegian-led force. The Swedish-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) reached full operational status in March 2006, and in summer the following year the Finnish contingent to ISAF was subordinated to the Swedish PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif, Northern Afghanistan. The Finnish contingent was gradually increased to one hundred, including advisory teams. This level of personnel was maintained until 2006 and was later raised to almost two hundred military personnel.<sup>18</sup>

The PRT was a civil-military construction group that supported local authorities in restabilising the situation and assisting them to re-build what had been destroyed. The PRT consisted of a set of various capabilities, which were developed according to changing demands. These capabilities included, inter alia, a mobile observation team collecting information on security issues as well as on needs for development aid and ways to support and assist local authorities, military detachments and units for force protection, military experts on mentoring and liaising with local authorities, as well as

17 Nazemroaya states that the point of no return for NATO was passed earlier, both regarding its functions and its zone of operations. See Nazemroaya, pp. 26–27.

18 Holma, pp. 166–167.

military trainers. In practice, the PRT created improved conditions for local actors to develop their region. The most demanding task was establishing and maintaining a secure working environment for the civil personnel assisting and supporting locals. Even Swedish Infantry Fighting Vehicles were deemed necessary to achieve a safe and secure environment for PRT assistant personnel.<sup>19</sup>

Sweden commenced its participation in ISAF in the Kabul region in a similar way to Finland with a special operation detachment providing security. The Swedish contingent moved to Mazar-e-Sharif to join the British-led unit when NATO took over the leadership of ISAF. Sweden also operated an air-transport unit from Uzbekistan in 2004. In March 2006, Sweden took over the leadership of the PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif with 400–500 military and civilian personnel. In the new military structure, British forces took command of the Southern provinces and Germany took command of the Northern Region of Afghanistan.

The organization of the Swedish contingent was, for the first time since 1956, not established on the basis of the national defence battalion structure. The structure and strength of the Swedish PRT was adjusted according to increasing security needs and responsibilities, which was facilitated with the maximum number of personnel. As a well-functioning procedure, Sweden amended the number of personnel according to rotational and other needs. For instance, the highest number was approximately 600, excluding an additional 250 for temporary needs, such as rotations. The enhanced capability was in response to a multiple and complex combination of threats stemming from mounting insurgency against NATO, local Afghans and troop contributors. This turned out to be a timely, flexible and necessary solution when insurgents stepped-up their attacks against NATO-led units from summer 2009 onwards in order to jeopardize the elections. The most intense phase lasted until autumn 2010. For its part, Finland decided to double the contingent, improve the quality of materiel, and regroup into a company under the Swedish-led PRT. The security situation deteriorated before the elections and ISAF rapidly

19 Claesson, p. 63. <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/var-verksamhet/internationella-insatser/pagaende-internationella-insatser/afghanistan-isaf/>, accessed 5 April 2016.

reformulated its strategy and tactics in order to counter insurgents' new fighting methods and techniques.<sup>20</sup>

The Swedish-led PRT amended its tactics and capabilities by introducing mine-protected armoured vehicles and information systems to counter the emerging threats. For Sweden, the level of ambition was set according to NATO's request but also taking into account what would be nationally relevant for the Armed Forces to accomplish. The outcome of this effort strongly resembled a mechanized battalion with some additional support elements and enablers. Finland struggled with similar problems in close coordination with national command, which was responsible for the subsequent mechanized battalion company to be rotated to the PRT. Actually, both nations implemented their national force production processes in order to have the subsequent rotation ready on time every six months. This was the litmus test for both armies with modern capabilities, which duly succeeded.

The programmes for training and exercises in the Finnish training unit, as well as in the Swedish regiments, were systematically updated every six months to meet topical threats. This was a necessity due to nationally organized training. Tactics, equipment and materiel, as well as training events, changed from one rotation to the next. In retrospect, one could conclude that the evolutionary process to counter new techniques and tactics implemented by the insurgents was conducted in time. Through the process, expertise and knowledge accumulated for the next rotation unit to utilize. The Swedish units in particular reached a very high level of interoperability in the areas of technologies, doctrine and methods, while the Finnish units particularly improved where operational tactics and techniques were concerned. It goes without saying that proper documentation is vital in order to maintain the level of expertise and performance of the units and training systems in both countries.

Thanks to successful proactive and preventive work in concert with ISAF, the PRT modules were capable of implementing their responsibilities, counting heavily on the enhanced capabilities.

20 Claessen, pp. 65–66. See also *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2009*, 23.1.2009. [http://www.defmin.fi/julkaisut\\_ja\\_asiakirjat/suomen\\_turvallisuus-\\_ja\\_puolustuspoliittiset\\_selonteot\\_selonteko\\_2009](http://www.defmin.fi/julkaisut_ja_asiakirjat/suomen_turvallisuus-_ja_puolustuspoliittiset_selonteot_selonteko_2009), accessed 25 April 2016. Several recommendations were made in order to improve Nordic-Baltic cooperation for future operations. See Nujin Tasci & Cecilia Dahlgren, *Svenska erfarenheter av nordiskt och baltiskt samarbete i Afganistan, En rapport från insatsledningens avdelning för erfarenhetsanalys*, Försvarsmakten och FOI, Stockholm, 2016.

These capabilities were identified and consolidated into a model for future needs in complex operations. The methods to support local security authorities varied according to the security situations and political guidance, finally leading to the mentoring and liaison teams. This concept was militarily demanding due not only to the divided responsibilities and decision-making authorities between the Afghan and PRT personnel, but also because of clear differences between military cultures.<sup>21</sup>

Irrespective of contradictory directives and orders issued both from the capitals and NATO commands, which diluted some of the results, several improvements took place. Top military representatives from both partner countries maintained the pressure for enhanced, operationally relevant, and regular exchange of information. In Finland and Sweden, adequate force protection for partner soldiers was regarded as vital as it was for allied soldiers. Strongly-worded, high-level statements in official ISAF meetings at all levels was the method employed to exert enough pressure for improvement. NATO finally accepted the fact that all troop-contributing countries, including partners, must share the same situational information and be part of the operational planning. One of the key findings was the importance of the systematic exchange and distribution of situational awareness, which had a direct impact on security. In both countries, this was later validated and documented for future training and operational needs.<sup>22</sup>

The political objectives, decision-making process, as well as argumentation for and against contributions, varies from one contingent to another. This applies to both Finland and Sweden. On the other hand, the political leadership sometimes provided clear, highly detailed and binding factors to restrain implementation. For Finland, the most common gauge has been the number of personnel deployed. In actual fact, the debates have mostly focussed on how to adapt the fixed war-time military organization, trained and equipped for operations on Finnish soil, to the number of personnel based on political or financial considerations, while still meeting the military

21 In Finland, the responsible training unit for all rotations, and actually for all operations abroad, was the Pori Brigade, whereas in Sweden, the responsibility for training and exercises was distributed to regiments all around the country. The author served as Commanding Officer of the Pori Brigade in 2011–2014. Claesson, pp. 66–67. For Sweden, a detailed analysis is in the report by Tasci & Dahlgren.

22 Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:137, *Sveriges samarbete med Nato inom Euroatlantiska partnerskapsrådet (EAPR), Partnerskap för fred (PFF) och krisanteringsinsatser*, Stockholm, 2009, p. 13.

requirements in the area of operation. The modular structure of military units in the pool of forces has helped in selecting the most functional but politically acceptable combination. However, it quite often happens that politically appropriate modules are too small and lack vital functions from a military viewpoint, such as force protection. The Swedish process to plan a contingent for the Swedish-led PRT in ISAF was modified successfully, constituting a good example.

A noteworthy step towards an in-depth analysis of effectiveness (*vaikuttavuus*) was taken when a collection of arguments for Finnish participation was included in the Governmental Report in 2002. These include a UN or OSCE mandate, agreement by parties that a conflict exists, that reactive use of force is legitimate, peace enforcement is authorized and rules of engagement are based on minimum use of force and relativity. Unfortunately, this has not been inserted into the regular decision-making process. On the contrary, quite often the criterion is formulated according to the tasks that the contingent would perform, or by simply dictating the maximum number of unit personnel. For example, in ISAF there were more than a dozen different tasks stemming from the actual situation on the ground. These had to be reflected in the capabilities and training for the next rotation.<sup>23</sup>

Thanks to being responsible for security support for four provinces in the region, Sweden achieved high visibility and political-military influence, especially when compared to Finland. This was evident not only in the Northern region, but also in the fact that Sweden had a seat at the table when shaping policy directions in NATO headquarters in Kabul and Brussels. Sweden made a great effort to assist Afghans on the ground, helping to advance political and military stability in the region. Of course, Sweden worked together with other PRT contributors, such as Norway, Latvia and Finland, and military cooperation among the contributors was practical and flexible. Consistently throughout the years, Finnish as well as Swedish civilian crisis management was characterized by a noticeable contribution in terms of personnel and funding.

Before transforming ISAF to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) by the end of 2014, security functions were handed over to the Afghan authorities with NATO's gradually diminishing support. Major challenges for ISAF, such as long distances for logistical support and rapidly changing security demands, forced the Alliance to revise its

23 Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle, *Suomen osallistumisesta sotilaalliseen kriisinhallintaoperaatioon Afganistanissa*, 4.1.2002, VNS 5/2002 vp.

approach several times. In each phase, Finland and Sweden did their utmost to influence NATO's decisions. It is also important to note that the partner countries followed ISAF's transformations by amending their own methods, capabilities and structures. As always, exceptions existed, such as the Swedish-led PRT organized under civilian leadership in the military operation. Having an ambassador as the head of the PRT provided added visibility and better access for Sweden, of course. By the final phase of ISAF, NATO had become a more flexible and transparent lead organization, which could be more amenable to non-allied contributors' proposals and ideas in the future.<sup>24</sup>

During 2015, both Finland and Sweden downgraded their contingents to less than one hundred personnel. The RSM continued to support the Afghan authorities through security and civilian mentors and experts in order to re-build the country and increase stability in the region. In other words, both countries reverted to a role quite similar to the one they had adopted more than a decade earlier. Progress had taken place in the interim, but the security situation remained fragile and the prognosis for the future was rather poor.

#### THE THREE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NORDIC PARTNERS

From the outset of PfP cooperation, both countries proceeded shoulder to shoulder. A particular trait shared by both is their considerate approach towards cooperation with NATO, for instance, in comparison to former partners that are now members. In this regard, both have implemented a similar approach: one small step after another. However, some issues have been handled quite differently.

The first dissimilarity, chronologically speaking, is related to the NATO Response Force (NRF), which was established at the Prague Summit in 2002, and which aimed at a high readiness force of 25,000 personnel. In 2007, NATO opened certain NRF activities to qualified partners. Both Finland and Sweden unofficially expressed their interest in contributing. In March 2008, Finland sent an official note to NATO stating that it would contribute to the NRF. Sweden was about to follow suit, but in April 2008 the government changed its mind. The first reason concerned the framework nation responsibilities of the EU battle group (EUBG) in 2008, and the other was a combination of

<sup>24</sup> Claesson, pp. 64–67.

ongoing defence reforms and resource deficits. The EUBG was ranked as the most important effort and fulfilment required a nationwide contribution. Furthermore, as a prerequisite for contributing to the NRF, NATO regarded the international OCC evaluations as compulsory, but Sweden did not begin these evaluations until 2015. However, Sweden conducted the first evaluations nationally following the NATO process and requirements at the highest level as early as 2006.<sup>25</sup>

Rapid reaction capabilities, and ways to enhance them, was the main reason for Finland's interest, firstly in the NRF concept, and subsequently in the EUBG concept. For Sweden, interoperability was generally regarded as the main objective because it would allow participation in NATO operations. Sweden had not allocated units to the NRF before 2015, but OCC evaluations had been accomplished on a national basis. For Finland, the EUBG concept required higher readiness than joining the NRF and what the Finnish units were prepared and resourced for. However, Finland contributed to EUBGs from the first instance in 2007 under the Dutch leadership. For Sweden, the EUBG was the primary effort in the years to come due to the country's leadership role, firstly in 2008.

From 2007 onwards, when Finland initially decided to join NRF exercises, the designated forces for potential operations were at least at the minimum level required by the OCC evaluators. The readiness battalion's subunits had been officially evaluated and accredited earlier. In 2006, simultaneously for both countries, the first naval vessels passed the evaluation followed by the first flight squadrons in 2009.<sup>26</sup> In all, Sweden has evaluated more units for the maritime domain than Finland, while Finland has focused on army units. For Finland, both the EU and NATO military capabilities currently form one package, which has been developed and practised according to a national plan in coordination with NATO. Re-evaluations are accomplished regularly in order to maintain the qualifications of the units.

EUBGs were established to increase the EU's rapid reaction capability, which was already recognized as a need when the EU's crisis management capability was defined in 2000. The first two EUBGs became operational in 2007, and Finland participated in

25 Holmström (2011), p. 584. Håkan Syren, *Här och nu – en liten bok om den fortsatta vägen framåt*, Försvarsmakten, Stockholm, 2006, pp. 12–14.

26 Markus Malila, 'Panssarintorjuntakomppanialle huipputulos Naton yhteensopivuusarviointissa', *Porilainen 2/2014*, [http://www.porinrykmentin-porinprikaatinkilta.fi/image/porilainen/porilainen\\_414web.pdf](http://www.porinrykmentin-porinprikaatinkilta.fi/image/porilainen/porilainen_414web.pdf), accessed 6 June 2016. Iskanius, p. 303.

the Netherlands-led battle group. For both partner countries, the development process was based on PARP and the PfP, including NATO exercises and evaluation tools, to substitute for the EU's non-existent exercise programme. Sweden's decision to assume the lead nation's responsibilities was crucial, thus paving the way for the Swedish-led Nordic Battle Groups in 2008, 2011 and 2015. For both countries, the EUBG concept served as a vehicle for the transformation of qualified military capabilities. For Sweden, the targeted capabilities covered a large percentage of all national units, whereas for Finland only capabilities in the pool of forces were directly involved. Using the EUBG concept for transformation was most important for Sweden because it did not use the NRF concept for the same purpose. For Finland, both avenues were available and utilized. As to whether there was any significant difference in the end, it seems that there was not because both had their transformation vehicle, be it EUBG or NRF, and quite similar capabilities from all services were in the programmes. Further, they were all qualified in accordance with NATO standards.

The second dissimilarity concerned the higher level of international visibility and better access gained by Sweden. This became evident for the first time thanks to the Swedish-led PRT in Afghanistan, as described above. The second time concerned the lead-nation roles of the Nordic Battle Groups. The third action was the more robust military contribution in Libya, which Finland did not contribute to. The major difference was due to Sweden's important role in Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya in 2011. The aim of the NATO-led and UN-mandated operation was to establish a no-fly zone, safeguard civilians against government oppression, and support arms embargoes. The UN Resolution mandated its members to use all necessary means to prevent the situation from deteriorating. NATO took overall responsibility for leadership in both the maritime and air domains in March 2011, while land operations were prohibited by the UN. A Swedish flight squadron was in the operation area poised to continue the necessary preparations only one day after the final political decision was made in Stockholm.<sup>27</sup>

Sweden attained a new level of partnership, which 'has no parallels among partner states' as stated in the official media publications of the Alliance. The NATO leadership was particularly appreciative of

27 Kjell Engelbrekt & Charlete Wagnsson, 'Introduction' in Kjell Engelbrekt, Marcus Mohlin & Charlete Wagnsson, eds., *The NATO Intervention in Libya: Lessons learned from the campaign*, Routledge, Contemporary Security Studies, New York, 2014, pp. 11, 112.

the rapid response. In Sweden itself, there was also strong public support for participation. The contribution amounted to eight JAS Gripen aircraft, and a refuelling aircraft together with one Gulfstream surveillance aircraft. Personnel numbered approximately 140 soldiers in total. Some caveats were introduced for the use of the capability, but support was regarded as significant for the Alliance, with 570 reconnaissance and air-policing operations. The implementation was coordinated with Swedish diplomatic activities throughout the operation. From NATO's viewpoint, Sweden's defence capabilities, as well as its defence industry, was highly and publicly appreciated. It was widely recognized by all parties that past training and exercises conducted in the PfP context had been vital in achieving such a high level of interoperability with the allied forces. Self-evidently, the Swedish military equipment and materiel needed to be interoperable and units trained well in advance in order to reach the Sicilian airbase on time and to deliver. From the Swedish viewpoint, Sweden has demonstrated how a partner can assist the Alliance by providing vital capability in demanding circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

The third difference between the two Nordic partners is related to the remarkably different national priorities between territorial defence and crisis management. After the Cold War era, Finland continued with the main task of defending its entire territory, followed by support tasks for other authorities and, thirdly, its participation in military crisis management. Gradually, Finland modernized and reduced its armed forces to the current maximum of 230,000 soldiers. There were no major changes in the tasks, priorities or concept of national defence. Potential savings in defence expenditure were only a secondary reason for the reduction. In any case, it was the first time that Finland had

28 At some phase of the operation, the Swedes had provided at least 30 per cent of all reconnaissance sorties. One of the caveats with Gripen's role was a prohibition against the use of force on ground targets. Visit <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/var-verksamhet/internationella-insatser/avslutade/truppinsatser/oup-libyen/>, accessed 5 April 2016. NATO Review 2013, dated 23 April 2013, [http://www.nato.int/docu/review/index\\_EN.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/index_EN.htm), accessed 24 March 2016. The rapid response was also due to Sweden's ongoing lead nation responsibilities in the EU's Nordic Battle Group, including the Expeditionary Air Wing already on high readiness. When the Libyan crisis unfolded, the parliamentary authorization was delivered in 24 hours and these together constituted the rapid response. Claesson, p. 69. Unfortunately, practical hindrances between allied and partner force contributors also existed in Libya, including access to classified information, cryptographic systems and modems. Anders Nygren, 'Executing strategy from the air', in Engelbrekt eds., *The NATO Intervention in Libya*, Routledge, Contemporary Security Studies, New York, 2014, pp. 104, 112.

evaluated its security primarily from a resource perspective, instead of the traditional threat-based perspective.

In the case of Sweden, defence reforms have had a strong impact on the military priorities of the Armed Forces. In 2004, the primary task for the Swedish Armed Forces was officially changed from defending the entire country (*territorialförsvaret*) to contributing to crisis management (*insatsförsvaret*), while the civilian and military doctrines (*totalförsvaret*) were downgraded due to savings and the defence forces were transformed to meet new threat scenarios and for enhanced international cooperation. All this would be implemented with a modest quantity of units, materiel and personnel. The level of funding was reduced moderately, even though the argumentation used in Sweden emphasized defence expenditure cuts as the main purpose of the reform.<sup>29</sup>

The Swedish argumentation put forward in 2004 for the drastic change in priorities was fourfold: (i) the former Soviet armed forces did not pose the same kind of threat as before; (ii) states in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Baltic states were in NATO, and the Baltic Sea was surrounded by EU members apart from Russia; (iii) Russia was approaching Western values; and (iv) new global threats required attention and additional resources.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Swedish defence was structured to repel a large-scale invasion, but this sort of defence system consisting of over 800,000 soldiers (in 1990) was no longer regarded as necessary.<sup>31</sup> Instead, it should protect territorial integrity, develop modern capabilities, and respond to a range of new threats together with the military forces of other countries. In June 2007, the ministerial planning assumptions for the future armed forces were that they needed to become modern, flexible and cost-effective in order to protect Swedish interests and values, and that this could be accomplished with 60,000 professional personnel. The requirements for development stemmed from an international context that emphasized interoperability. Through the prevention of

29 For the total defence spending 1990–2009, see Andrén, pp. 32–33.

30 Håkan Syren, *Vägen framåt – en liten bok om en stor förändring*, Försvarsmakten, Stockholm, 2004, pp. 12–15. The first defence proposal that acknowledged the priority of a 'leaner but meaner' defence capacity to meet a 'strategic surprise attack' was made in February 1992 (Regeringens proposition 1991/92:102). The first decisions on reductions based on the logic presented here were made in September 1996 (Regeringens proposition 1996/97:4).

31 By way of a quantitative comparison, the maximum strength of the military forces for Finland was 700,000. For the figures for reductions of the Swedish Armed Forces 1985–2009, see Andrén, pp. 26–27.

crisis and war, the objective of protecting sovereignty and supporting civilian authorities would be achieved together with other countries globally, in Europe, in the neighbourhood and in Sweden. In this context, Nordic defence cooperation was emphasized. The global security perspectives were most positive and were anticipated to continue as stated in the analysis carried out in 2003 and 2004.<sup>32</sup>

The short war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 raised security concerns throughout Europe, Sweden included. This rude awakening gradually became visible in domestic debates related to the military defence capabilities and how to use them, but also in the renewed understanding of a comprehensive approach to the security of society at large. Military issues such as availability, readiness and force structures were criticized by the experts, but also by ordinary citizens. Enhanced multinational cooperation in the context of defence became an issue for public debate. In the 2009 Defence Bill, the government declared that threats would be responded to in conjunction with other countries, in the spirit of the solidarity declaration.<sup>33</sup> However, in practice, governmental guidance followed the previous directives from 2004. For instance, general conscription in peacetime was mothballed and professional armed forces were established instead. Some improvement also occurred, and the defence budget was raised slightly due to increased political and public pressure.<sup>34</sup>

Interestingly, and simultaneously with the reconsiderations of Swedish defence reform, NATO's new strategy was published in 2010. The Alliance rededicated itself to collective defence with several references to this original task. Consequently, NATO commenced contingency planning, thus adding to the previously maintained

32 Syren (2006), pp. 11–12. Claesson, 59. Lindström & Lindvall, pp. 33–36. Försvarsdepartementet, Försvaret i användningen (Ds 2008:48), Regeringskansliet, <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/86844f7c6dd04bfd8713deae76321024/forsvar-i-anvandning-ds-200848>, accessed 19 May 2019. Försvarsdepartementet, *Säkerhet i samverkan*. Försvarsberedningens omvärldsanalys (Ds 2007:46), Regeringskansliet, <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/a4f990ca682b4badb1781124cef5240b/sakerhet-i-samverkan-ds-200746>, accessed 19 May 2016.

33 The Swedish solidarity declaration stipulates: 'Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to take similar action if Sweden is affected. Sweden should therefore be in a position to both give and receive military support'. See for example 'The Swedish Parliamentary Defence Commission report'.

34 See for instance, Andrén, pp. 9–10, 36, 46–47, 64–65 and Lindström & Lindvall, p. 9. Försvarsdepartementet, Försvarsberedningen, Försvar i användning (Ds 2008:48), Missiv, Regeringskansliet, <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/86844f7c6dd04bfd8713deae76321024/forsvar-i-anvandning-ds-200848>, accessed 20 May 2016.

operational planning, for defending the Eastern member states. The planning was supported through related exercises with units from most of the allied countries, including the USA.<sup>35</sup>

Gradually, Swedish policies were reoriented in response to the deteriorating security environment. The wording in the related documents of the parliament and the government envisaged drastic changes in the security environment. Public concerns over national defence capability were common and more emphasis was duly placed on national defence as a result. The tipping point probably came in late December 2012 when the Chief of Defence used the expression 'one-week defence' (*en-veckas-försvaret*) to describe the dissatisfactory endurance and sustainability of defence. The debate lasted several months and was further fuelled by Russian violations of Swedish territory. Another crucial point was the so-called 'Russian Easter' (*ryska påsken*) in March 2013 when Russian strategic (nuclear) airplanes practised air strikes against Swedish territory near Stockholm. The subsequent Defence Bill stated in April 2014 that the most crucial issues for defence were the military capabilities of the armed forces. Further, an additional budget was approved for measures to strengthen military activities and presence. Air surveillance, additional exercises and an enhanced military presence in Gotland were also emphasized.

35 For a holistic study on the fundamental change, see Bo Hugemark, 'Historical Background to the Swedish Declaration of Solidarity' in Bo Hugemark, *Friends in Need*. The public debate on Sweden's security environment and status has been active. E.g. Peter Hultqvist's speech in Folk och Försvar in Jan 2015, available at <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2015/01/prioriteringar-infor-nytt-forsvarsbeslut---anforande-folk-och-forsvars-rikskonferens-2015/>, accessed 8 April 2016. On strengthening Gotland's defence, visit <http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2015/11/gotlands-forsvar-starks/>, accessed 17 May 2016.

Another priority was the deepening of the Finnish–Swedish bilateral cooperation.<sup>36</sup>

The Swedish Defence Bill 2016–2020 finally set a new trend for defence. It was prepared in the context of the developments in Russia, and specifically the Russian aggression towards Ukraine. This defence bill reflects both a new trend in Swedish defence spending as well as a new direction for the further development of the armed forces. For the first time in more than two decades, a decision was made to significantly increase defence spending (by 11% over five years up to a total annual bill of €6.5 billion). The key priority is to enhance the warfighting capability of the armed forces, but also to develop a new concept for a comprehensive approach to security (total defence). Concrete goals for the new start will entail placing emphasis on national defence and planning for wartime scenarios with a renewed regional focus. In terms of military hardware, the new trend will materialize in the form of main battle tanks, artillery and mortars, anti-tank weapons, air defence, communication equipment, radars, trucks and cyber capabilities. The rationale behind the new trend was that Sweden’s understanding of its national security and related policies had changed.<sup>37</sup>

- 36 Försvarsdepartementet, *Vägval i en globaliserad värld* (Ds 2013:33), Regeringskansliet, <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/0783c292579948ec8d9fb1ba70e-b056b/vagval-i-en-globaliserad-varld---ds-201333>, accessed 19 May 2016. Försvarsdepartementet, *Försvaret av Sverige – Starkare försvar för en osäker tid* (Ds 2014:20), Regeringskansliet, <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/departementsserien-och-promemorior/2014/05/ds-201420/>, accessed 19 May 2016. Government Offices of Sweden, *Budget reinforcement to the Swedish Armed Forces’ regimental and air surveillance capabilities*, <http://www.government.se/articles/2014/10/budget-reinforcement-to-the-swedish-armed-forces-regimental--and-air-surveillance-capabilities/>, accessed 20 May 2016. The tipping point events are introduced by Holmström (2015), pp. 602–604. Also e.g. Mikael Ölander, ‘Ryska kärnvapenövning mot Sverige’, *Expressen*, 22 April 2013, <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/ryska-plan-ovade-attack-mot-sverige/>, accessed 21 June 2016. The statement ‘En-veckas-försvar’ indicates that only 5 regions could be defended, for a week or so without external military support, but only one region out of five at any one time.
- 37 Försvarsdepartementet, *Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020* (Prop. 2014/15:109), Regeringskansliet, <http://www.government.se/government-policy/defence/the-swedish-defence-bill-2016-2020/>, accessed 20 May 2016.

## CONCLUSIONS

Seen from NATO's perspective, the Nordic partners contributed to the ISAF operation with high-quality and high-quantity capabilities from start to finish. NATO appreciated the fact that its tools were in effective use, producing certified capabilities according to mutually agreed plans. The principle of reciprocity expanded to the satisfaction of allied nations because some of the organizing responsibilities could be re-allocated to partners. Both Nordic partners also supported other partners, first in the Baltic states and later in the Caucasus and Central Asia, in coordination with the Alliance. In addition, the two partners requested more demanding exercises, which were provided by NATO, mainly due to a growing need for qualified contributors.

The military in both armed forces managed to define the rationale for enhanced participation. The motivation for Finland to participate was that ISAF represented the most demanding operational environment in which to test military tactics, technologies and procedures. Amendments to national decision-making, planning and the construction of units together with modernized logistics are the most valuable lessons for the Finnish military. During the most intense phase of ISAF, the production of capable units was adjusted and modified every six months to serve the next rotation. These adjustments were identified in a war-like environment in Afghanistan and injected into the programme. Today, with no such testing ground foreseen, the documentation, distribution and implementation of these lessons more broadly vis-à-vis the Finnish national defence posture is paramount.

For Sweden, the primary rationale for participating in ISAF and OUP was to contribute to crisis management and to signal national values, thus supporting the foreign policy objectives. The development of civil-military cooperation and very high standards concerning military technologies, doctrine and methods are important lessons. The most valuable military outcomes included tactical, technical and methodological improvements at all levels. Equipment was developed further based on requirements stemming from the rapidly changing security situations on a daily basis. In practice, the national decision-making processes and acquisition of equipment in both countries became streamlined to delegate authority on time. For both Nordic partners, fighting techniques at the lower troop level, personal equipment, knowledge and methods of handling new threats together with information-gathering, distribution and analysis were the most appreciated updated capacities.

ISAF has not only been the most demanding, but also the longest, the riskiest and the most complex of all NATO operations to date. The vital importance of information distribution among all troop-contributing countries was one of the main lessons. This important goal was reached during ISAF, was also extended to OUP, and is currently in force in RSM. For Finland and Sweden, sufficient force protection of partner soldiers was regarded as being as vital as it was for allied soldiers. The official processes and methods were not always flexible and rapid enough to allow a timely response to the violent acts of insurgents and belligerent groups. Consequently, they were sometimes compromised to fulfil the mission more safely.

In sum, an open and transparent dialogue among NATO, allied and partner participants is of crucial importance. Since ISAF transformed for RSM, NATO appears more flexible and transparent – at least towards the Nordic partners. However, the fundamental problem remains: How to follow NATO's security regulations as a partner and how to provide the necessary security information for non-NATO contributors?

The three main differences identified in this report indicate that, regardless of similarities on a technical, tactical, operational as well as military-strategic level, political appreciation can make a significant difference. This is the plausible explanation behind the diverging avenues regarding participation in the NRF, PRT and OUP. Two out of three major differences stem from these activities, while the third is due to the quite different tasks of the armed forces.

The first major difference is Finland's contribution to the NRF, while Sweden has used the EUBG concept. For Finland, very active NRF participation from the first instance, including participation in concept development and contributions to exercises in various phases, could be regarded as a sufficient investment towards the common capability. It is clear, however, that in NATO there is no doubt about the level of quality of the Swedish capabilities. Indeed, Sweden has successfully led EUBGs three times, also providing the main contingent. Furthermore, Sweden commenced its national OCC evaluations in 2006 as a certification of quality. Actually, this could indicate that both avenues, NRF or EUBG, are equally acceptable for NATO. As a conclusion, with dissimilar avenues, both Nordic partners reached the same goal.

The second major difference is the higher visibility and improved access of Sweden in comparison to Finland, which is due to significantly larger contributions to ISAF and OUP. Sweden took the lead in PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif, covering four provinces with the support of

the Finnish and other contingents, which resulted in much higher visibility in both the political and military arenas. The high visibility enjoyed by Sweden was well deserved, of course. Finland could also have applied for PRT leadership, but did not.

The main source of the higher visibility was Swedish participation in Operation Unified Protector (OUP). While ISAF was a land-locked operation with some 40 participating countries, OUP was a more restricted mission with few participating allies and partner countries. However, by providing vital capabilities, Sweden received plenty of goodwill and visibility. Participation also provided valuable lessons in the operational use of Swedish-made aircraft, both for the military and the defence industry. In the case of Finland, non-participation in OUP indicated that national interest was not strong enough, coupled with the fact that Sweden's rather similar capability, which had already been tried and tested, was readily available.

The third and most influential difference stems from the prioritization of tasks for the armed forces. For Finland, over a timespan of some 30 years, defence reforms have downscaled the total military strength to one-third, whereas in the case of Sweden, less than one-tenth has remained. The main difference between the reforms lies in the results, whereby Finland regards itself as having the capability of defending the entire country, whereas Sweden focuses on a handful of strategic regions out of which one could be defended for one week. Another serious difference is that, in the case of Finland, national defence is regarded as self-sufficient in contrast to the Swedish posture, where external assistance is expected after one week of fighting.

These major, even contradictory, approaches towards the main task of the armed forces have hardly given rise to any differentiation in the eyes of NATO itself because both countries have worked very actively, followed the commonly agreed plans, and contributed with qualified units. For Finland, its large army provides the majority of certified capabilities, while its navy and air force have a smaller share of certified capabilities. In Sweden, NATO standards and guidance on training and exercises are implemented more widely in all services. Quantity-wise, the number of qualified crisis response capabilities is quite even between the Nordic partners. However, the Finnish capabilities are all primarily for the defence of Finland, whereas the Swedish capabilities are, at least currently, primarily for global crisis response purposes.

The two narratives of the Nordic partners since 1994, only partially dissimilar, illuminate the evolution of their cooperative relationships with NATO. In the next chapter, the latest initiatives from the 2014 Wales Summit bring more intensity and innovation to the story. Some findings from a cooperation viewpoint based on the 2016 Warsaw Summit will also be elaborated.



5



## 5. NATO's renewed focus and cooperation tools

### SETTING THE SCENE FOR DEEPER COOPERATION

The transition of twelve former partners to members has transformed the nature of partnership and membership alike. The differences between partners are also wider today than previously. For the two most active partners, Finland and Sweden, the partnerships have evolved into a 'two-way street', indicating that the more a partner invests in cooperation, the more it benefits from it.

The objective of NATO's partnerships is to safeguard security together, as stated in all three post-Cold War Strategic Concepts, although with varying wording. In the current strategic concept (2010), the three core tasks of NATO are collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. Out of these, cooperative security is very much about partnerships. Crisis management as a concept is partially based on partners' contributions following NATO's lead and standards. Collective defence is for member states only, which has been clarified frequently since Russia occupied Crimea in early 2014.<sup>1</sup>

NATO provides a multiple set of frameworks for cooperation with countries from the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean and Gulf regions. Furthermore, it has individual relationships with additional

1 'The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend NATO's territory and populations. Article 5 of NATO's founding charter, the Washington Treaty, sets out the Alliance's collective defence commitment, stating that an attack on one shall be considered an attack on all.' NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg. *The Secretary General's Annual Report 2015*, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Brussels, 2016. [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_01/20160128\\_SG\\_AnnualReport\\_2015\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_01/20160128_SG_AnnualReport_2015_en.pdf), accessed 16 Mar 2016.

partners across the globe (e.g. Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea). This is often called the globalization of NATO, and is indicative of the enlargement both geographically and functionally (e.g. energy security, freedom of commons).<sup>2</sup> Resulting from two decades of cooperative evolution, partners can contribute to many of NATO's core activities, including decision-shaping, defence capability-building and crisis management at large. At the Lisbon Summit in 2011, NATO invited partners, including Finland and Sweden, to participate in shaping strategy and decisions on NATO-led operations to which they contribute. Even more topical and closely related to this report, the Alliance has outlined modalities for consultations with partners before or after a crisis, when appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

PARP has remained one of the most effective tools for partners. As a result, there are currently officially declared partner forces amounting to 13,500 personnel in about 100 military units.<sup>4</sup> In addition, partners also provide non-military contributions, such as political support, funding, transit, facilities and logistics, which adds to the efficiency at large. NATO's evaluation and feedback mechanism, the OCC, was utilized in 2015 for 38 units from 16 partner countries to ensure their level of interoperability.

NATO prepares itself for new member states through the process of Intensified Dialogue, which currently covers cooperation with three Balkan countries, together with Georgia and Ukraine. Montenegro is the next partner in line to join NATO. In May 2016, the Accession Protocol for Montenegro was signed, thus providing the country with the status of 'Invitee', allowing its representatives to participate as observers in

2 See e.g. Nazemroaya, pp. 26–27.

3 Based on decisions taken at the Lisbon Summit in 2011, NATO streamlined its programmes and partnership tools in relation to cooperative activities and exercises for all partners. To this end, the Alliance reviewed the Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in Operations establishing a more influential role for those partners which contribute to operations. Furthermore, it established a single Partnership Cooperation Menu (PCM) and a tailored Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) as an entry-level programme available to all partners. The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and Planning and Review Process (PARP) was also to be opened to all partners. All partners that have IPCP or other programmes agreed with NATO have access to the same PCM, comprising more than a thousand activities annually offered by NATO and allied nations. For details, see [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_04/20110415\\_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf), accessed 14 Feb 2016.

4 Officially declared partner forces include, i.a., land, air and maritime, ranging from platoon to battalion-sized units, surface ships, submarines, medical units and air fighter units. Also, from 15 partner countries and NATO commands, 138 new OCC evaluators were trained in 2015. Stoltenberg (2015), p. 70.

allied meetings. Once all 28 allies have ratified the Accession Protocol, Montenegro will become a full member of the Alliance.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to structures and programmes, political dialogue is fundamental to cooperation. The goal is to exchange information, thus enhancing mutual understanding, as well as situational awareness. In the case of Finland and Sweden, proactive work at NATO's policy-level committees and military-level cooperation structures is very often carried out together, resulting in common statements and initiatives.<sup>6</sup>

One example of close cooperation is the memorandum of understanding on Host Nation Support (HNS), which was signed by both Finland and Sweden at the Wales Summit in September 2014.<sup>7</sup> Since 2001, the Finnish security and defence policy reports have outlined that securing the capacity to receive external assistance is one element of defence development. Consequently, HNS has been among the partnership goals for Finland since 2002. Preparations for the agreements were coordinated together with Sweden, which has similar goals. The agreement with Finland has been in force since

- 5 The Intensified Dialogue includes the Membership Action Plan, the Annual National Programme and the Special Relationship. Among several programmes, the Defence and Security Related Capability Building (DCB) has gained additional support from other partners since the occupation of Crimea. In 2015, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Jordan and Iraq were supported by NATO's allied nations providing advice, assistance, support, training, education and mentoring activities in the defence and related security sectors. Stoltenberg 2015, pp. 68–69. During his visit to Finland on 25 April 2016, Chairman of the Military Committee, Gen Petr Pavel noted that if Finland decides to join NATO, accepting its membership will only be a formality. See Reijo Lindroos, 'Korkea Nato-kenraali: Suomi täysin Natoon sopiva', YLE Uutiset, Ulkomaat, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/korkea\\_nato-kenraali-suomi\\_taysin\\_natoon\\_sopiva/8836425](http://yle.fi/uutiset/korkea_nato-kenraali-suomi_taysin_natoon_sopiva/8836425), accessed 27 April 2016.
- 6 The figures vary from one year to another, but on average Sweden is represented in approximately 190 committees and an additional 120 military committees tackling materiel development and procurement, maintenance, command and control, research and development, etc. Holmström (2012), pp. 580–581. As an estimate, Finland is represented in fewer committees and working groups, but is not far behind Sweden. Example figures for consultations in 2015: top political-level, NAC meetings with partners took place 42 times; senior military-level, MC, 16 meetings; political committee-level meetings in a variety of formats 123 times. Stoltenberg (2015), p. 63.
- 7 Försvarsdepartementet, Samförståndsavtal med Nato om värdlandsstöd (Ds 2015:39), <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/lagratsremiss/2016/02/samforstandsavtal-om-varldlandsstod/>, accessed 25 May 2016. Pertaining to Swedish legislation, see Försvarsdepartementet, Deltagande med väpnad styrka i utbildning utomlands. En utökad beslutsbefogenhet för regeringen, (SOU 2015:1), Stockholm, 2015. <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/75fcdcf4cb4dcebb8778eb245e736a/deltagande-med-vapnad-styrka-i-utbildning-utomlands---en-utokad-beslutsbefogenhet-for-regeringen>, accessed 20 April 2016. Government Communications Department, News, 8/27/2014, Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/default.aspx?contentid=311370&culture=en-US>, accessed 27 August 2014.

May 2016 and the related legislation was updated in 2016. In Sweden, ratification is expected to enter into force by the end of 2016.

The memorandum is essentially a political framework document in nature. In other words, it is not an international treaty with compulsory responsibilities for any party. The memorandum does not require either party to give or accept assistance or forces. The host nation will therefore decide, as a sovereign in all circumstances, whether it will initiate an activity in which HNS needs to be agreed. HNS is a tangible result of the increasing integration of higher preparedness in an emergency, be it a natural disaster or a man-made disruption. Previously, both countries have provided HNS regularly for foreign participants, for example in international exercises held in the respective countries. Thanks to the agreement, the negotiations are faster and more efficient because the standardized procedures and models, namely the framework, are already in place.

Today, the Nordic partners are regularly involved in the practical planning and implementation of various forms of support provided in the context of HNS. The most significant step reinforcing NATO's commitment to the core task of cooperative security was taken at the Wales Summit in September 2014 when the Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) was launched. PII consists of two parts: the Interoperability Platform (IP), and the Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP). Simultaneously with PII, the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCB) was also launched.<sup>8</sup> For both Finland and Sweden, PII is regarded as the primary effort because it offers important ways to deepen cooperation with NATO. PII provides particular measures to ensure participation in, and the necessary preparations for, contributions to future NATO-led operations. For five partners, including Finland and Sweden, NATO declared its willingness to grant specific opportunities to proceed (much) further beyond the level of cooperation reached so far. These offers are termed Enhanced Opportunities (EO), and the five invitees are accordingly called EO partners.

In practice, these five partners could more easily utilize processes to prepare for and participate in demanding exercises and training. Furthermore, where applicable, the five countries are allowed to contribute to the NATO Response Force (NRF) through related training

8 *Wales Summit Declaration*, 4–5 September 2014, NATO, Brussels, 2014, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?mode=pressrelease), accessed 16 April 2016. Stoltenberg (2015), p. 69.

and exercises. Regular consultations on security matters are also facilitated for the EO partners.

For selected partners that have demonstrated their commitment to reinforcing interoperability with NATO, or that have contributed to NATO operations, the Interoperability Platform (IP, 25 partners) was initiated in Wales. In this format of a standing forum for meetings, allies and partners address interoperability issues at committee and working-group levels. For EO partners Finland and Sweden, the IP has relevance because the meetings of this group quite often address issues that concern all partners, while EO meetings usually take place between one or two partners and NATO (28 + N format). So there is good reason to be active in both groups.

#### STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN OFFERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The objective of the Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP) was to improve tools to maximize interoperability, cooperation and dialogue between allied nations and those partner nations that are willing and able to contribute significant forces and other capabilities to operations, or provide other kinds of support for the Alliance. A set of criteria for admission to the EO group was used when assessing candidates. Out of 40 partners, five qualified, with Finland and Sweden sharing the top position, followed by Australia, Georgia and New Zealand (in alphabetical order). The first qualification is valid for three years, and NATO promised to consider inviting new partners as their contributions and interest warrant. This indicates that the IP would include potential candidates for the EO.<sup>9</sup>

The target audience was those partners that have contributed the most to NATO operations and that have designated qualified military capabilities. The novelty for NATO is that partners are primarily categorized according to certified capabilities (OCC), which are also designated (PARP, pool of forces) and practised at the highest level (NRF). For NATO, the major concern previously was the overall usability

9 Wales Summit Declaration, paragraph 88. Related paragraphs address, inter alia, two Chicago Summit initiatives also aiming at enhanced interoperability called the Connected Forces Initiative and Smart Defence.

of the interoperability tools;<sup>10</sup> in other words, whether they were being used effectively and to their full potential.

Both Finland and Sweden have been keen to take advantage of NATO's offers since the Wales Summit. The two programmes, EO and IP, are not exclusive and do overlap to some degree. Offers in IP are more about sharing information and exchanging views, and thus do not provide so much added value for Finland and Sweden. However, some issues handled in the IP are relevant for the two partner countries because they relate to exercises, standards, doctrine development, access to documents, as well as education and training. In addition to the NATO authorities, individual allies can also improve progress through bilateral or multilateral activities with selected partners.

Perhaps the most significant benefit for both Finland and Sweden is that EO opens up the format of bilateral cooperation with all allied nations as one group (i.e. 28+1 format). Previously, this format has rarely been used, but it could now be established as an alternative forum for contentious meetings on topical issues. The first such meeting in a 29+5 (EO partners) format was organized in February 2016, and the first 28+2 (Finland and Sweden) meeting in May.<sup>11</sup> Dubbed 'flexible formats', other combinations are also possible when a shared agenda so demands. In general, EO provides a new avenue for self-differentiation for each partner, within which the scope, level of ambition and content could be adapted as per each partner's specific national needs.

Potential agenda items for flexible formats could address long-term problematic issues, such as early consultations or the earliest involvement in operational planning, as well as updates and assessments for future operations. As Finland and Sweden have often contributed to the same operations, early involvement could help Finnish-Swedish coordination from the first instance (e.g. fact-finding missions,

10 The most frequently used tools include: PAPP; OCC; Partnership Cooperation Menu (PCM); Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation programme (ETEE); Military Training and Education Programme Open to Partners (MTEP OTP); Defence Education Enhancement programme (DEEP). To complete the picture, the technical dimension includes cooperation in command and control, logistics, doctrine, lessons learned, defence investment, standardization, and science. These two dimensions are coordinated in partner-specific programmes (e.g. IPCC, IPAP, ANP), leading to the fulfilment of partnership goals (PG).

11 Pekka Mykkänen, Nato sai turkkilaisen yllätyksen syliinsä, Helsingin Sanomat, Ulkomaat, A 23, 11 February 2016. Kari Huhta, Nato keskittyy taas pelotteeseen, Helsingin Sanomat, Ulkomaat, A22, 20 May 2016. Kari Huhta, Soini: Naton neuvoston kokous Suomelle tärkeä, Helsingin Sanomat, Ulkomaat, B5, 21 May 2016. Regeringskansliet, Margot Wallström deltar i Natos utrikesministermöte, Utrikesdepartement, <http://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2016/05/margot-wallstrom-deltar-i-natos-utrikesministermote/>, accessed 25 May 2016.

composition of contributions, training responsibilities of shared capabilities, and logistics). EO partners are also entitled, pending a NAC decision, to have early access to NRF exercise planning, which would conserve resources and boost efficiency. In this context it is possible to share intelligence and situational information, as has already occurred in relation to the Baltic Sea security assessments. The partners have proceeded together on all these issues.

The Nordic partners have been active in improving cooperation through simplifying programmes, mechanisms and processes. Based on the seven partners' proposal to the NATO authorities,<sup>12</sup> an Individually Tailored (Interoperability) Roadmap (ITR) was introduced in order to merge multiple alternatives for cooperation, prolong the planning horizon, and add to predictability. Finland has volunteered to be the test case in the pilot phase. As an example of enhanced simplification, having only one point of contact at each level of the organization being responsible for the usage of one interoperability tool could clarify cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

The EO initiatives constitute the basis for Finland and Sweden being able to reach the next level of cooperation, if they so wish. One viewpoint is that NATO military leadership anticipates an equilibrium between offers utilized and contributions allocated by the partner. This cooperation must be mutually beneficial. Moreover, both Nordic partners must convince NATO and the allied nations to agree on the continuation of the EO status through reaching a higher level of interoperability, or by providing more capabilities. Some indication of this was already apparent in the Warsaw Summit in July 2016. In any case, this should not be unduly difficult for the Nordic partners in comparison to the latest and the next new member states.

12 In 2014–2015, the seven partner countries (AUS, AUT, FIN, IRL, NZL, SWE, CHE) establishing the Partner Interoperability Advocacy Group (PIAG) made some 30 proposals to NATO HQ to promote better functioning partnerships. All proposals are informal, unclassified and open to public debate. The author served the group as Chairman of the PIAG in 2014–2015.

13 For simplification, the following exemplary division of labour among responsible NATO authorities could constitute a starting point: IPCP/PASM NATO HQ, ITR/C&RS IMS NATO HQ, PGS/ACO, Area-Specific Plans/MPD ACT and JFCS. An Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP), which is jointly agreed for a two-year period, lays out the programme of cooperation between Finland, or Sweden, and NATO.

COMMON SECURITY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION  
REQUIRES DEEPER COOPERATION

Historically speaking, the importance of the Nordic and Baltic Sea region has fluctuated widely. In effect, the major differences between Finland and Sweden stem from their history and geography, which have also had an impact on their national identities. Sweden's policy during the Cold War could be described as self-chosen neutrality,<sup>14</sup> and during the last two centuries this principle has permeated the national identity. This has been possible due to the successful Swedish history and Sweden's relatively strong ability to influence its security environment, including secret cooperation with some allied nations during the Cold War era. Furthermore, due to the country's strengths in political, economic and cultural spheres, one could also contend that Sweden has been tempted to act as a leading state in the Nordic-Baltic Sea region. For Finland, on the other hand, being a relatively young nation-state and in a more vulnerable geostrategic position, there was no such possibility to choose a highly beneficial foreign policy. Instead, the foreign policy was imposed with a sort of compromised neutrality acceptable to the Soviet Union. This could be one of the main reasons why the Finns do not necessarily see neutrality or military non-alignment as a characteristic of national identity. Instead, there is a common fear of being left 'alone', namely without foreign support in times of crisis and war. In any event, both Nordic partners have remained militarily non-allied.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to history, geopolitics has also gained relevance in relation to cooperation with NATO. Finland neighbours Russia, which has a direct link to national security. Southern Sweden, including Gotland, is close to the Russian exclave Kaliningrad. For Russia,

14 Since 1945, for Sweden, the term 'neutral' has been interpreted as 'non-alignment in peace aiming at neutrality in war'. For Finland, the term 'neutral' has been constantly debated for many reasons, one being the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. Mike Winnerstig & Pekka Sivonen, p. 106. Bo Hugemark ed., *Friends in Need*, 'Foreword', Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, Stockholm, 2012.

15 An example of differences regarding participation is ISAF. ISAF is known as 'Sweden's forgotten war', whereas in Finland, the rationale behind participation has been more commonly and openly debated. For the Finns, participation is acceptable because, inter alia, it conveys the message to potential supporters that it should be reciprocal support, i.e. not left 'alone'. Mike Winnerstig & Pekka Sivonen, pp. 105–106. Pertaining to identities, see Anneli Portman, *Values, identity, trust. Comparing Finland's and Sweden's public rhetoric 2000–15*, Helsinki, 2015. Presentation given in the seminar held by Ax:son Johnson Foundation and FIIA on 22.1.2016. See also Holmström (2012), pp. 589–590.

and similarly for NATO, Southern Sweden is the direct passage through the country to the heartland of Europe, or to Russia, respectively. There is a direct linkage between Sweden and the Baltic states, Poland, Denmark and Germany, but this is not the case with Finland. Instead, Southern Finland neighbours St. Petersburg, which is the second most important area in all of Russia. Another major geopolitical difference is the primary military concentration in the Kola Peninsula neighbouring Northern Finland, not directly Sweden. This links Finland to NATO countries Norway, Iceland and the UK, and to the 'GIUK passage',<sup>16</sup> which is of military strategic importance. Pertaining to this report, interoperability among the countries in Northern Europe has been established and is promoted in the context of NATO. As a relevant feature of this interoperability, exercises in the region participated in by these countries add to the military stability, or instability, in the vicinity of Finland and Sweden. In short, Finland and Sweden share this geopolitical situation with NATO and the allied nations in the region.

Since the Cold War, the security situation in Europe had improved steadily, until recently. Three simultaneous trends are eroding security in the Baltic Sea region. The first is the drawdown of military capacities, both expeditionary and territorial defence, in all European armed forces. The second trend is the diminishing US political will and military capabilities to defend Europe, regardless of the recent and planned reinforcements. These two trends are exacerbated by the increasing military strength of Russia. In addition, Russia has expressed a strong political will to play the military card to promote its national interests, and it also operates successfully in the information and media domains. These trends prevail in the vicinity of both Finland and Sweden, including the allied nations.

In response to the regional military imbalance, NATO has accelerated its military planning, elevated readiness and increased its military presence with a focus on collective defence. This has materialized in the form of new defence plans for the Eastern member states of NATO, rotating military units according to operational needs, and establishing a reassurance policy for NATO's capacities and readiness. In this context, the concept and capabilities of the NRF have been updated

16 'GIUK' stands for Greenland, Iceland and the UK. These countries were vital in closing the GIUK passage, preventing Russian navy vessels from disrupting sea-lines between North America and Europe. New technology has offered new methods for exerting an impact on foreign soil and seas through long-distance and precision weaponry. This applies to both defender and aggressor.

to meet higher readiness, larger capacity, and enhanced capability requirements according to the decisions made at the Wales Summit.<sup>17</sup>

NATO has strengthened its command structure in various ways, also in the vicinity of the Nordic partners. For instance, two military officers, one from Finland and Sweden respectively, are working at the NATO multinational headquarters in Szczecin, Northern Poland. This new headquarters is responsible for planning in the Baltic Sea region and is, exceptionally, in permanent readiness. Finnish and Swedish military officers are also currently working in most of the headquarters of the command structure that have relevance for the Baltic Sea region.<sup>18</sup>

The goal for allies is to plan exercises, and re-organize them when necessary, to better serve NATO's current security interests. Together with elevated readiness, host nation support arrangements are also tested. At the political level, decision-making rehearsals (e.g. Crisis Management Exercises, CMX) are organized in order to improve dialogue, consultations and leadership. At the military level, these demands are addressed through enhanced NRF exercises, aiming for a new level of interoperability in some key areas such as command and control networking, situational awareness, and a more visible military presence in the region. In this respect as well, both Nordic partners are quite often invited at the earliest to deliver.

NATO has refocused on the collective defence of allied nations, citizens and territory. This focus could also be deemed as supportive of the Finnish defence posture. The rationale stems from the commonalities between the renewed focus of NATO, collective defence,

17 The enhanced NRF (ENRF) consists of 40,000 personnel, compared to the previous 13,000. In 2016, the US proposed two brigades, potentially in addition to the previously planned two, in high readiness in the Baltic and Eastern-Central European member states to assure them of NATO's support. For the same purpose, the US will allocate 3.4 billion euros for additional reassurance measures in 2017. However, based on the above-mentioned RAND war game study, not even four US brigades would suffice to balance Russian potential in the region. The report itself says that the game's findings are unambiguous: As currently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members. David A. Shlapak & Michael Johnson, 'Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank. Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics', RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2016, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1253.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html), accessed 13 April 2016. Lauri Nurmi, 'Yhdysvallat asettaa Baltian suojaksi kaksi prikaatia', *Turun Sanomat*, Uutiset, 8 May 2016, p. 12. Government Offices of Sweden, 'Peter Hultqvist participated in the Munich Security Conference', <http://www.government.se/articles/2016/02/peter-hultqvist-participated-in-the-munich-security-conference/>, accessed 15 May 2016.

18 Lauri Murto, 'Suomi siirtyi Naton kartoilla', *Turun Sanomat*, *Sunnuntai* TS2, pp. 12–13.

and the main task of the Finnish Defence Forces at large, territorial defence. As a result of this rapprochement, NATO's future plans and capability requirements could become more similar to the Finnish national defence posture. In other words, NATO's previous focus, crisis response, is more remote from the Finnish territorial defence than the new trend of collective defence.

With regard to Sweden and its focus on international crisis management capabilities since 2000,<sup>19</sup> in comparison to NATO's emerging new focus on collective defence, discrepancies could be widening. However, rapprochement would be obvious in the event that the Swedish armed forces refocus towards a sufficient level of national defence, as illustrated in Sweden's Defence Policy Bill (2016–2020) and in the 2016 Military Doctrine.<sup>20</sup> In short, both Sweden and NATO are re-orientating towards a defence posture of 'adequate' territorial deterrence, thus approaching the Finnish traditional defence paradigm (*deterrence by denial*). This congruence could lower the threshold of possible deeper defence cooperation between the two Nordic partners, allied nations and NATO.<sup>21</sup>

When the Baltic states joined NATO in 2004, the strategic situation in the region changed in NATO's favour. With the Swedish solidarity clause in force, the whole Baltic Sea region is also a Swedish security issue,

19 Försvarsdepartementet, *Vårt framtida försvar*, Regeringens proposition (2004/05:5), Regeringskansliet, pp. 1–2, <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/proposition/2004/09/prop.-2004055/> (pdf). Försvarsdepartementet, *Vårt framtida försvar – försvarspolitisk inriktning 2005–2007*, Regeringens Proposition (2004/05:5), EO Print, Stockholm, 2004, pp. 9–11.

20 Krister Andrén, *Krigsavhållande tröskelförmåga, Det svenska försvarets glömda huvuduppgift?*, (FOI-R–3852–SE), Stockholm, 2014, p. 9, 49–51. Försvarsdepartementet, *Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020*, Regeringens proposition (2014/15:109), Stockholm, 2015. Försvarsmakten, *Militärstrategisk doktrin för Sveriges militära försvar (MSD 16), Bilaga 1) till 2016-03-22, FM2016-7616:1*, Stockholm, 2016, pp. 1–4. See Defence Minister Hultqvist's speech *Prioriteringar inför nytt Försvarsbeslut – Anförande*, Folk och Försvars Rikskonferens 2015, Sälen, 12 January 2015, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2015/01/prioriteringar-infor-nytt-forsvarsbeslut---anforande-folk-och-forsvars-rikskonferens-2015/>, accessed 25 May 2016. For more details, see Defence Minister Hultqvist's speech in Folk och Försvars Rikskonferens 2016, Sälen, 2016, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2016/01/tal-av-peter-hultqvist-pa-folk-och-forsvar-rikskonferens-2016/>, accessed 25 May 2016.

21 In short, *deterrence by denial* means that the enemy will not attack because it is convinced that the attack will be defeated – in other words, that it will not be possible to achieve its operational objectives. An alternative paradigm, *deterrence by punishment*, means that the adversary is convinced that it would be pointless to initiate any military activity due to immediate cost and pain as well as the difficulty of maintaining what it has possibly achieved. The two forms of deterrence are not mutually exclusive and could be complementary.

setting some requirements for its military. Sweden, without sufficient capacities to defend the country on its own, regarded itself as dependent on military assistance from outside. Similarly, the solidarity clause in the Treaty of Lisbon, in force since 2009, also obliged Sweden and Finland, as well as all other EU member states, to assist another member exposed to an armed attack on its territory.<sup>22</sup>

Sweden has been consistent in terms of its transformation of defence in qualitative terms. Swedish contributions with land capabilities in ISAF, maritime capabilities in the Gulf of Aden, and air capabilities in Libya have shown that the Swedes are well able to perform even the most demanding duties entrusted to them. The fighting forces of all services have demonstrated high standards with competent personnel, operational art and materiel of high quality. The discrepancy is between current capabilities, being expeditionary at large, namely small in number, and the deteriorating security situation, which emphasizes larger forces and ensured territorial defence systems. As stated in Sweden's Defence Policy Bill (2016–2020), the government's decision in 2004 to transition from large-scale territorial defence to international crisis management is to be re-oriented to meet current and future security challenges.

In the case of the Baltic Sea region, NATO has implemented its reassurance policy in practice, thus ensuring that Article 5 guarantees are in force for the allied nations in the region. Pertaining to both Finland and Sweden, the only partner countries in the Baltic Sea region (apart from Russia), the difference between being a partner and an ally is becoming more blurred than before due to ever-stronger similarities between the two partners' national defence needs and NATO's (territorial) defence. As concluded above, this could promote deeper cooperation. The other side of the coin is that fewer dissimilarities between allies and partners could imply a sort of 'semi-membership' in one form or another.

22 Björn von Sydow, 'Why Should Sweden Have a National Defence?', in *The Swedish National Security: Challenges and Opportunities*, The Royal Swedish War Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, 2013, p. 19. Johan Turnberg & Jan Blomqvist, 'A Strategic Sea-change Unfolding' in *The Swedish National Security: Challenges and Opportunities*, The Royal Swedish War Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, 2013, pp. 27–28. Bo Hugemark, 'Historical Background to the Swedish Declaration of Solidarity' in *Friends in Need: Towards a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with her Neighbours*, the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, Stockholm, 2012, pp. 9–10. Holmström (2015), pp. 604, 619. Mickael Holmström interviewed the Swedish CHOD Sverker Göranson, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 30 December 2012. The statement 'En-veckas-försvar' indicates that only 5 regions could be defended for a week or so without external military support, but only one region out of five at any one time.

After the Wales Summit, Finland and Sweden suggested to NATO that they could have some particular expertise related to the Baltic Sea region. Consequently, since 2015, Finland and Sweden have gathered together with the NATO authorities in order to construct a common situational awareness in the Baltic Sea region. Military considerations have focused on risks that could be linked to the deteriorating security situation and that would have an impact on all parties and allied nations in the region. Both Finland and Sweden have contributed with their national perspectives.<sup>23</sup>

NATO has declared that partnerships are more valuable for the Alliance than ever. This could indicate ideas of a common effort to enhance the security of the Baltic Sea region. For this to materialize, a commonly prepared plan could include, if so decided, issues such as security scenarios, operational planning alternatives, and structural and systemic solutions similar for all participants. This requires information, and a political decision on what sort of role partners would play in relation to the concept of collective defence for the region. A recent study on the Baltic Sea region proposes closer cooperation not only with Finland and Sweden, but also with the EU due to the Lisbon Treaty obligations as well as with the US.<sup>24</sup> However, the decision on how to strike a balance between partners' contributions and gains without security guarantees from NATO is of paramount importance.

#### NEW SECURITY SITUATION – NEW CAPABILITIES – DEEPER COOPERATION

Finland and Sweden have benefitted from NATO cooperation through common planning (PARP, IPCC, PGS), training and exercises (MTEP, OCC, NRF). The longer the relationship has been, the deeper the practices of daily cooperation currently are. In the foreseeable future, a practical approach and tangible activities will also be a focal point.

As stated above, the limit lines stemming from the Alliance's collective defence privileges and responsibilities are closer than ever

23 *Itämeren alueen turvallisuus esillä Suomen ja Naton kumppanuusyhteistyössä*, Mission of Finland to NATO, Brussels, updated 17 February 2016, <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/default.aspx?contentid=339365&nodeid=39170&culture=fi-FI>, accessed 29 January 2016.

24 Wesley Clark, Jüri Luik, Egon Ramms & Richard Shirreff, *Closing NATO's Baltic Gap*, International Centre for Defence and Security ICDS, Tallinn, 2016, pp. 7, 20, 24. A detailed proposal is introduced by Stefan Forss and Pekka Holopainen in *Breaking the Nordic Defense Deadlock*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Oxford, the UK, 2014.

in relation to the Finnish and Swedish defence posture. The crucial question is how to proceed without crossing the membership limit line. If we use a *linear development approach*, namely higher quality or greater quantity, the following alternatives are rather self-evident:

- participation in more demanding exercises, such as enhanced NRF exercises<sup>25</sup>
- hosting international, NATO-led, large and medium-size training exercises in Finland and Sweden as an element of national training programmes
- jointly providing personnel and expertise for education and training related to armed forces in conflict areas ('soft' capabilities)
- establishing a permanent system for sharing experiences and lessons regarding defence (including planning, training and exercises)
- holistic participation in security cooperation, including regional security assessments, and cooperation related to hybrid security, encompassing cyber defence and Smart Defence
- better connectivity to systems for situational awareness, such as the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System
- involvement in NATO research and development projects and in procurement open to EO partners.

25 With the linear approach, more demanding exercises could mean, inter alia, more involvement in enhanced NRF exercises (including IFFG and VJTF, also High Visibility Exercises), cyber-defence competitions, or CMX decision-making rehearsals. For Finland, units trained and educated in the NRF context consist mostly of units designated to the NATO Response Force Pool (RFP, more recently the Follow-on-Forces Group, or FFG) and the EUBG. The planned annual Finnish contributions include the Mechanized Infantry Company (2016), the Coastal Mine Hunter and the Deployable CBRN Laboratory (2017). For Sweden, more than 30 applicable units include mechanized battalions, an engineer company, military police units, corvettes, naval mine clearance units, a JAS 39 aircraft division, a transport aircraft division, an air defence platoon, an intelligence platoon, etc. See e.g. Minister of Defence Hultqvist, *Anförande Krigsvetenskapsakademien*, Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademien, 3 December 2014, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2014/12/anforande-krigsvetenskapsakademien/>, accessed 25 May 2016.

Of course, more ambitious proposals have also been made, such as establishing a Baltic Sea Commission as a framework for cooperation between NATO, Finland and Sweden.<sup>26</sup> As active EU member states, Finland and Sweden could promote cooperation between NATO and the EU in areas where the EU has related expertise and capabilities that NATO does not possess.

NATO has shifted its focus to collective defence capabilities, thus emphasizing large-scale training exercises based on operational or contingency planning. All the Finnish and Swedish capabilities, units and systems that are selected for NATO programmes have also been designated as contributions to UN or EU tasks. For enhanced efficiency, Finland and Sweden could also shift their focus from operations to training and exercises. In practice, this could mean that some of the capabilities currently in UN-led and EU-led crisis management operations would be reallocated to more demanding and large-scale exercises, primarily in Europe. This would enhance national defence capabilities and raise the preventive threshold for using military threat or force. For both nations, binational cooperation would benefit due to increased cost-efficiency.

One of the new opportunities for deeper cooperation would be participation in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) in 2017, when the UK will be the framework nation for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), the spearhead unit of the NRF. For 2018–2019, the High Visibility Exercise (HVE), hosted by Norway and organized in Northern Europe, would constitute the next phase towards effective common use of military capabilities. The NAC has already invited Finland and Sweden to take part in the exercise and its preparatory modules.

Examples of exercises organized during the first half of 2016 included four multinational maritime exercises, all arranged in the Baltic Sea, with both Nordic partners participating. The common goal was to further develop the interoperability of the command and control systems of a multinational naval task force consisting of vessels from participating navies. In spring 2016, the US Stryker company and the US Flight Unit conducted training exercises together with their counterparts in Finland. Finland has participated in Baltops since 1993

26 For instance, Anna Wieslander, 'NATO, the U.S. and Baltic Sea Security', UIPaper, *Swedish Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)*, No. 3/2016, pp. 20–21; Anna Wieslander, 'A new normal for NATO and Baltic Sea security', UIBrief, *SIIA*, No. 2/2015, p. 4; and Pauli Järvenpää, 'NATO's Truly Enhanced Partnership', *International Centre for Defence and Security*, Publications/Baltic-Nordic, 5 July 2016, [www.icds.ee/publications/article/natos-truly-enhanced-partnership](http://www.icds.ee/publications/article/natos-truly-enhanced-partnership), accessed 5 July 2016.

and several US Air Force units have conducted exercises in Finland and Sweden annually. In 2016, almost one hundred multinational exercises were attended by Finland, mostly in Europe.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of reciprocity, partners with new capabilities, such as comprehensive hybrid warfare or cyber defence,<sup>28</sup> could be beneficial for NATO and the allied nations. As EO partners, both nations could strive for an even stronger influence on NATO's new ideas and policies. This should be planned and implemented in closest cooperation with the EU to ensure congruence, effectiveness and efficiency.

A *non-linear development approach* would indicate a break from the previous pattern of cooperation. In other words, something other than 'more of the same'. It could be based on a regional grouping of partners focusing on shared interests with NATO. A good example is the Swedish-led Nordic Battle Group project, which was in readiness in 2008, 2011 and 2015. The framework for regional grouping could be orchestrated on exercises attended by both Finland and Sweden. Another example could be the Iceland Air Meet 2014, where the Nordic partners and Norway provided the air fleet, while the US and the Netherlands provided support with necessary systems. NATO coordinated the event from the air operations centre in Germany.<sup>29</sup>

As a *non-linear development* approach for enhanced cooperation with NATO, bilateral cooperation with the Alliance (1+1; Finnish-Swedish on the one hand, NATO on the other) based on official government-level agreements could be an alternative pattern for deeper cooperation. Bilateral cooperation would indicate 1+1 arrangements, which could be simpler than with two partners plus NATO, making it three altogether. In practice, the two partners would firstly agree on the content between themselves, and then make a proposal to NATO.

27 Counting the number of exercises is complicated due to various definitions and varying national structures. By way of a long-term average, Finland participates in more than 50 international exercises annually. Petra Ristola, 'Merivoimat pitää sotaharjoituksen isännöimistä luottamuksenosoituksena – mielenosoittajat toista mieltä', *YLE Uutiset, Kotimaa*, 26.4.2016, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/merivoimat\\_pitaa\\_sotaharjoituksen\\_isannoimista\\_luottamuksenosoituksena\\_-\\_mielenosoittajat\\_toista\\_mielta/8838424?ref=leiki-uup](http://yle.fi/uutiset/merivoimat_pitaa_sotaharjoituksen_isannoimista_luottamuksenosoituksena_-_mielenosoittajat_toista_mielta/8838424?ref=leiki-uup), accessed 27 April 2016.

28 Sweden is not participating in cooperation on cyber issues with NATO, but there is an indication to join in 2016. Consequently, cyber is not compared in this report.

29 Lentoposti.fi, 'Puolustusministeri Haglund tutustuu IAM2014-harjoitukseen Islannissa', 7.2.2014, [http://www.lentoposti.fi/uutiset/puolustusministeri\\_haglund\\_tutustuu\\_iam2014\\_harjoitukseen\\_islannissa](http://www.lentoposti.fi/uutiset/puolustusministeri_haglund_tutustuu_iam2014_harjoitukseen_islannissa), accessed 27.6.2016.

For instance, two recently published ambitious Finnish-Swedish reports provide a plethora of examples for substantive binational cooperation. The process started in autumn 2013 with an exchange of views between the defence authorities on how to enhance cooperation in peacetime. In May 2014, the two armed forces presented their commonly agreed plan, including six cooperation areas: maritime, air force, army, secure communication, logistics and materiel.<sup>30</sup>

Pertaining to naval and air power, the defence forces will explore possibilities for enhancements on exercises, education and training, sea and air surveillance, common use of infrastructure, combined units, and on development of the capability to transfer operational control of units between the services. The end-state is to have a standing<sup>31</sup> binational Naval Task Group fully operational by 2023. It is to be prepared for the most demanding operations, which means protection of activities and areas, as well as upholding security and freedom of movement at sea and in the necessary land areas. Establishing sea control is also necessary as an implicit means of protection by denying an opponent the ability to use the seaway.

Moreover, the already well-established air-force cooperation would include commonly used air bases and air control systems. It is also foreseen that air forces could collaborate to establish a common air operation or a combined unit for international operations. The end-state would cover the full spectrum of air operation capabilities in order to achieve air supremacy, contribute to providing joint effects, and provide air support for land and maritime operations within an area of operation.

30 *Final reports on deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden.* Report by the Finnish Defence Forces and the Swedish Armed Forces. *Action plan for deepened defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland*, Helsinki, 6 May 2014. <http://www.regeringen.se/internationella-organisationer-och-samarbeten/forsvarssamarbetet-sverige-finland/>, accessed 11 April 2016. <http://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2015/05/statssekreteraren-undertecknade-uttalande-om-det-fordjupade-finsk-svenska-forsvarssamarbetet/>, accessed 11 April 2016. See also Ministers of Defence of both countries addressing the details of the activities in *Anförande tillsammans med Finlands försvarsminister Carl Haglund*, Rikskonferensen 2015 Folk och Försvars, Försvarsdepartementet, Sälen, 12 January 2015, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2015/01/anforande-tillsammans-med-finlands-forsvarsminister-carl-haglund-rikskonferensen-2015/>, accessed 25 May 2016.

31 'Standing' means that the Task Groups are fully trained and equipped and have promulgated and implemented all necessary plans, orders and SOPs in order to carry out the stated type of operation (in this case, Protection of Shipping Operation). 'Standing' does not specify a certain state of readiness; this will be decided later pending political and military ambitions.

Taking advantage of NATO's training and exercise programmes would support the effort to meet these air and maritime goals. Furthermore, utilizing some more selective arrangements (e.g. in the spirit of the PfP, and EUBG training concept) could bolster results. This would constitute enhanced opportunities for both Nordic partners and allies.

Regarding the two armies, the level of ambition is more modest. It covers activities already familiar in NATO programmes, but also introduces common use of training facilities. As an indication of a higher level of ambition, a combined Finnish-Swedish Brigade Framework will be elaborated. This will include force integration and interoperability via a common exercise platform in order to prepare forces to be deployed, if so decided, for crisis management operations and national defence purposes. Many of these activities could benefit from practical-level cooperation within the NATO training and exercise programme (e.g. enhanced NRF and High Visibility Exercises).<sup>32</sup>

Logistics and procurement will explore, among other things, outsourcing and cooperation in maintenance and future capability development. Joint capabilities to be explored would cover secure communications at all appropriate levels and possibilities to contribute combined units to international exercises and operations. Also in this context, NATO already has arrangements to support exercises and operations that would be useful for Finnish-Swedish cooperation (e.g. NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) programmes).

According to the reports, binational cooperation as a whole is extremely worthwhile and sends a significant signal to the surrounding region. If implemented, generic benefits could include operational effects and improved quality rather than increased cost-efficiency and savings, at least in the short term. Current ideas for cooperation and planning could be extended to times of crisis and war, at least including territorial defence based on Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, commitments to defend one another constitute the most demanding requirement and there is currently no common understanding of how far the Nordic partners should proceed. Extra motivation could, however, stem from the growing common conviction that Nordic partners could not remain outside of a military crisis that erupts

32 The army projects are proceeding with the planning of a headquarters for the brigade consisting of some 3,000 soldiers. See Riina Kasurinen, 'Ruotsin ja Suomen maavoimien komentajat: Puolustusliittoon ei olla liukumassa', *Yle, Kotimaa*, 22.6.2016, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/ruotsin\\_ja\\_suomen\\_maavoimien\\_komentajat\\_puolustusliittoon\\_ei\\_olla\\_liukumassa/8976722?ref=leiki-uup](http://yle.fi/uutiset/ruotsin_ja_suomen_maavoimien_komentajat_puolustusliittoon_ei_olla_liukumassa/8976722?ref=leiki-uup), accessed 23 June 2016.

in the Baltic Sea region.<sup>33</sup> Seen from a regional perspective, it was quite encouraging that the Swedish and Danish Ministers of Defence followed the Finnish-Swedish example on enhanced and deepened bilateral defence cooperation in January 2016. This agreement also includes the ability to access each other's territory in peacetime.<sup>34</sup>

The political pressure and ambitions are higher than in previous projects of a similar nature (SHIRBRIG, NORDCAPS, NORDEFECO), and the capability to act together and with coordination would break new ground between the two partners. This could apply particularly to the focus areas whereby the navy and air force introduce the concepts of common units. Moreover, the initiative seems to cover the majority of maritime and air force units. In sum, and if the action plans are implemented, NATO could offer a well-functioning training and exercise environment for regional cooperation.

Deepening cooperation requires a solid defence posture combined with the necessary national structures and systems. Since 1991, almost every European state has taken full advantage of the peace dividend, resulting in modest defence capabilities. For Sweden, in the current situation with a set of crisis management capabilities commonly regarded as too meagre to defend the whole country, cooperation with NATO, and Finland, would be much more important than earlier.<sup>35</sup>

33 See *Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020*, Regeringens proposition (2014/15:109), pp. 23–24. For the recent Government's Foreign and Security Policy Report, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Press release 122/2016, 17.6.2016, see [http://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/valtioneuvoston-selonteko-korostaa-syveneavaa-yhteistyota-ja-aktiivista-ulko-ja-turvallisuuspolitiikkaa](http://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/valtioneuvoston-selonteko-korostaa-syveneavaa-yhteistyota-ja-aktiivista-ulko-ja-turvallisuuspolitiikkaa), accessed 28.6.2016. <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/266e64ec3a254a6087eb9e413806819/proposition-201415109-forsvarspolitisk-inriktning--sveriges-forsvar-2016-2020>, accessed 11 April 2016. Also Peter Hultqvist, Minister of Defence, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2014/12/anforande-krigsvetenskapsakademien/>, presentation at the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, accessed 5 April 2016. For the recent Kultaranta discussions on 19.6.2016, see Pia Johansson, 'Finsk-svensk säkerhetspolitik lockade höjdare till Gullranda', *YLE Nyheter, Inrikes*, <https://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2016/06/19/fnsk-svensk-sakerhetspolitik-lockade-hojdare-till-gullranda>, accessed 27.6.2016.

34 <http://www.government.se/articles/2016/01/sweden-and-denmark-sign-enhanced-defence-cooperation-agreement/>, accessed 1 May 2016.

35 For comparison, the defence reform planned a force of two brigades for the army. Frank Rosenius, 'Foreword' in Sven Christer Nilsson & Göran Larsbrink, *Swedish National Security beyond 2014*, p. 8. Mats Bergquist, NATO-frågan i Finland och Sverige, in *Nordisk Tidskrift 1/2016*, Tellogruppen AB, Söderköping, 2016, p. 66 – 67. Andrén, pp. 9–10. For further information on the functioning of the former Swedish total defence system, see Karlis Neretjeks, 'När kriget kommer', *Dagens Nyheter*, Tema/Axess nr 3 2016, pp. 46–49. His estimate is that it would take double the current defence budget and one decade to establish a credible and sufficient defence for Sweden.

Consequently, the Swedish Defence Bill for the next four years (2016–2020) will increase the budget, while the level of readiness will be higher than before. More training exercises with higher quality and on a broader scale are also foreseen. The Bill also proposes much closer cooperation with Finland. This could include common operational planning and preparations for the potential use of civilian and military capabilities in various scenarios, such as violation of territorial integrity and the use of force based on Article 51 of the UN Charter. Two caveats are included, the first being that the planning is supposed to be complementary and separate from national duties. The second caveat emphasizes that no binding commitments are regarded as necessary. It is also assumed that if a crisis disrupts the region, both Finland and Sweden would probably be dragged into the conflict.<sup>36</sup> In short, there are profound arguments for effective military cooperation in the region.

In the context of deeper cooperation, the preparation of related legislation is of paramount importance. In June 2016, the Finnish parliament received the governmental proposals for updating, among other things, the current legislation on the Defence Forces, rules of engagement and conscript service in order to facilitate, again among other things, the delivery and reception of foreign military assistance based on the Lisbon Treaty. The aim of the proposals is to authorize and facilitate the Finnish authorities to take action properly when necessary.<sup>37</sup>

These authoritative documents could serve as a solid basis for binational cooperation, and even for a defence union in the long term, as has been mooted several times in both countries since 2009. In any event, the discrepancies are considerable with regard to the territorial defence of Finland versus the current crisis response capabilities of Sweden, or regarding a credible national defence versus a weak defensive threshold (*krigsavhållande tröskelförmåga*), respectively. In order to proceed, the national capacities of the defence systems should firstly be brought closer and made more complementary, after which

36 Regeringens proposition 2014/15:109, *Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020*, pp. 23–24. <http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/266e64ec3a254a6087eb9e413806819/proposition-201415109-forsvarspolitisk-inriktning--sveriges-forsvar-2016-2020>, accessed 11 April 2016. Peter Hultqvist, Minister of Defence, <http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2014/12/anforande-krigsvetenskapsakademien/>, presentation at the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, accessed 5 April 2016.

37 Puolustusministeriö, *Hallitus on antanut eduskunnalle esityksen laeiksi puolustusvoimista annetun lain, aluevalvontalain ja asevelvollisuuslain muuttamisesta*, Tiedote 2.6.2016, [http://www.defmin.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet?9\\_m=7846](http://www.defmin.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet?9_m=7846), accessed 8 June 2016.

time it would be easier to construct a detailed plan for a holistic binational system. Of course, all this calls for years of planning and strong continuous political pressure before an agreement is reached. Implementation, including cost-sharing, to mention just one factor, would be highly challenging.

#### FINDINGS FROM THE WARSAW SUMMIT IN JULY 2016

The most recent NATO Summit was organized in Warsaw from 8 to 9 July 2016. While finalizing this report only one week after the summit, some relevant findings can be touched upon even at this point.

Since the Wales Summit in 2014, NATO has focused on how best to meet emerging threats caused by Russia's use of force in Ukraine, and the re-emerging turmoil in the Middle East and Northern Africa. In February 2016, the Defence Ministers of the Alliance noted that NATO is on track regarding, among other things, the Readiness Action Plan and enhanced NRF as signs of an enhanced forward presence in the eastern region of the Alliance. Since February, air policing, maritime patrols, rotation of military units and a strengthened exercise programme supported by the necessary logistics and infrastructure have been most visible in the vicinity of Finland and Sweden. As a consequence of the refocus on a collective military response, less attention has been paid to partnerships, or cooperative security in general.

However, opportunities for military cooperation in the Baltic Sea region among the allies and with the Nordic partners have increased significantly. In September 2015, six NATO Force Integration Units in the eastern member states were declared ready to support planning, rapid deployment and training exercises in the eastern member states. NATO has also approved contingency plans and conducted extensive exercises in the related areas and elsewhere. In Warsaw, NATO decided to locate four battalion-sized battle groups in the Baltic states and Poland, led by the dedicated framework nations, namely the US, the UK, Germany and Canada. The US stated in early 2016 that one armoured brigade combat team would be rotated in these countries, and pre-positioned materiel would be located in Europe. All of these actions will provide numerous opportunities, inter alia, for common planning, improved situational awareness, as well as training and exercises in the region. In the Communiqué, NATO declared cooperation with Finland and Sweden as being mutually beneficial. Furthermore, reinforcing this cooperation will respond to common challenges in a

timely and effective manner. Of course, all this is pending approval by all parties. Interestingly, with all these new initiatives, the dividing line between the regular NATO programmes addressed in this report, and those based on additional decisions has become rather blurred, complicating the status of the Nordic partners, but also providing broader opportunities.<sup>38</sup>

In Warsaw, further guidance on capability and capacity development was provided to facilitate updating the deterrence towards a concept of *deterrence by punishment*. The objective is to pre-empt any military aggression through a defence that would make it far too expensive for Russia to initiate any type of offensive. In practice, this kind of defence posture requires a highly visible military presence in the region. In other words, a lot more military capabilities, exercises and further cooperation are necessary in order for NATO to ensure a functioning deterrence.

Taken together, the geography, increased activity level and updated concept all add to the overall importance of Finland and Sweden for the Alliance. Seen from this viewpoint, it is understandable that NATO emphasized its dedication to strengthening cooperation, including regular political consultations, shared situational awareness, and joint exercises with the Nordic partners.<sup>39</sup> To date, Finland and Sweden have been involved in some of the exercises and events organized as a part of the enhanced programmes. Obviously, more opportunities will be offered with a view to responding to common challenges in the region.

Some potential activities to enhance cooperation were already listed above. What else might be expected based on the decisions and discussions in Warsaw? First, the declared strategic partnership with the EU has the greatest potential for advanced cooperation in many areas, such as countering hybrid threats, fostering resilience, defence capacity-building, and enhancing maritime security. In particular, security-related cooperation with the EU would add to

38 NATO SACEUR's statement was published in various media. See e.g. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/04/06/world-order-reshaped-by-vladimir-putin-s-ambition/>, accessed 8 April 2016. The NATO Integrated Force Unit is a small staff of around 40 personnel that assist in the rapid deployment of allied forces to the Eastern part of the Alliance if necessary. They also support collective defence planning and help coordinate training and exercises. There will be eight such staffs altogether. For all NATO reassurance and adaptation measures, see paragraph 37 of the NATO Warsaw Communiqué.

39 NATO Warsaw Communiqué, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8–9 July 2016, Press Release (2016) 100, 09 Jul. 2016, paragraph 23, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm), accessed 10 July 2016.

the security of EU members Finland and Sweden because, as partners, there are no security guarantees, apart from the vague and untested solidarity clauses. There is also an important caveat attached, namely that mutual benefits for NATO and the EU would be substantial only if plans were implemented. Second, at the Warsaw Summit, NATO adopted a comprehensive policy on the Protection of Civilians,<sup>40</sup> which is an area where Sweden has reached a state-of-the-art level. Both partners have supported previous efforts by NATO to promote related issues, but with a comprehensive policy, this could be even more productive. Third, within NATO itself, numerous programmes and initiatives are already being implemented by varying groupings of allied nations. Many of these actually concern training and exercises, and thus, a more organized exchange of expertise would help allies and the Nordic partners alike.

Fourth, as EO partners, progress made since the Wales Summit was well recognized by NATO based on the track record of each individual partner and, in all likelihood, the five EO partners will receive an extension to their three-year term, which is due to end in 2017. However, beneficial opportunities to contribute and learn more will be included in the NATO programmes for 2017–2019, especially for Finland and Sweden. Taking full advantage of NATO offers, such as the 2018 High Visibility Exercise hosted by Norway, will call for proper funding and preparations. Fifth, with a more technical development approach, joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, together with ground surveillance capability, are among the most relevant for NATO to be able to operate efficiently in the Baltic Sea region, but also very interesting for the Nordic partners to take part in. Many of these could not only resemble, but could also

40 The policy has been developed together with NATO partners and in consultation with the United Nations and relevant international organizations. It complements NATO's existing efforts in areas such as Children and Armed Conflict, Women Peace and Security, and Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence. See NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians, Endorsed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8–9 July 2016, Press Release (2016) 135.

be linked to the partnership goals and would benefit from deeper and closer cooperation with individual allied nations or groupings.<sup>41</sup>

The binational political framework arrangements (agreements) have increased in number recently. Sweden has already signed its arrangement with the UK and the US, Finland approved its arrangements with the UK in Warsaw, and the agreement with the US is under preparation. Together with the other framework arrangements, such as the PfF Status of Forces Agreement and Host Nation Support, they pave the way for more standardized and regular cooperation in peace, crisis and war. This would add to the efficiency of activities regardless of the context, but also circumscribe freedom of action. In any case, proceeding simultaneously, this adds to the overall similarity of the Nordic partners once again.<sup>42</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Since the 2014 Wales Summit, both Finland and Sweden have taken several steps to deepen their cooperation with NATO. With the EO status, NATO has welcomed both Nordic partners to closer, and also earlier, planning of more demanding exercises (e.g. enhanced NRF) and related preparations (e.g. HNS). In terms of reciprocity, and in addition to more regular contributions, the Nordic partners have been involved in an evaluation of the Baltic Sea security issues based on deeper information exchange. In sum, more practical cooperation is recognized as a necessity due to the shared geopolitical situation in the region. Through these contributions, Finland and Sweden are, in all likelihood, fulfilling NATO's expectations as EO partners.

Three security trends, as described above, influence all allies and partners in the region, and partially support the congruence of their

41 In NATO Warsaw Communiqué, for the EU see paragraph 121–122. The allied nations' projects in paragraph 79 include the following projects: the Transatlantic Capability Enhancement and Training Initiative (TACET), the Combined Joint Enhanced Training Initiative (CJET), the United Kingdom-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the UK–France Combined Joint Expeditionary Force. According to paragraph 101, EO partners are now pre-approved for a range of NATO exercises, engaged in NATO defence capacity-building work, participating in the enhanced NRF and developing joint threat assessments.

42 The framework arrangement, which is a policy document on military cooperation with the UK, was signed by Sweden in 2014 and with Finland at the Warsaw Summit in 2016. For the latest framework agreement between the UK and Finland, see [www.defmin.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/suomen\\_ja\\_iso-britannian\\_puolustusministerit\\_allekirjoittivat\\_puiteasiakirjan.7908.news](http://www.defmin.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/suomen_ja_iso-britannian_puolustusministerit_allekirjoittivat_puiteasiakirjan.7908.news), accessed 7.7.2016.

defence postures. The dividing line between membership and the PfP partnership has become more blurred because of increased privileges and responsibilities. Following the *linear development approach*, namely 'more of the same', more quality as well as quantity can be delivered in the future as well, as numerous proposals suggest. The alternative way forward, the *non-linear development approach*, could be based on a regional grouping of partners focusing on shared interests with NATO. To start with, using the EUBG concept could serve as a functioning model. A good example of an ambitious and contentious programme for future cooperation is introduced in the Finnish-Swedish final reports and action plans.<sup>43</sup> The level of ambition is high enough and details are under preparation in the respective armed forces.

Discrepancies exist between the territorial defence capabilities of Finland and the crisis response capabilities of Sweden, which could be alleviated by defining core policies and procedures for deeper cooperation. Relevant national capacities and capabilities could then be streamlined and made more complementary in necessary areas and functions. Finally, and as indicated by the respective defence authorities, a detailed plan for a holistic binational system, serving the core of deeper cooperation, would be more feasible to construct, at least on paper.

Tentative findings from the Warsaw Summit confirm that there is more extensive and deeper cooperation available for the Nordic partners to utilize, reciprocally of course. In general, the capability development will be accelerated not only in magnitude, but also by focusing more precisely on collective defence instead of crisis response operations. This, in turn, requires enhanced cooperation pertaining to situational analysis and operational planning, which, among other things, will indicate what type of capabilities will be needed in the future.

As anticipated, partnerships were not a focal point in Warsaw. However, the security situation in the Baltic Sea region is among the common interests of NATO, Finland and Sweden. These common interests will not fade away, but stay on the agenda for the foreseeable future. This reinforces the importance of the two Nordic partners in the eyes of NATO and allied nations. Similarly, NATO will

43 *Final reports on deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden. Report by the Finnish Defence Forces and the Swedish Armed Forces. Action plan for deepened defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland*, Helsinki, 6 May 2014. See e.g. <http://www.regeringen.se/internationella-organisationer-och-samarbeten/forsvarssamarbetet-sverige-finland/>, accessed 11 April 2016.

remain of paramount importance for the two partners, situated as they are in the middle of the region. The key issue is to consider both Nordic partners together.

6



## 6. Adapting to the new cooperation environment

TRANSITION FROM ONE CORNER  
TO ANOTHER – EVEN MORE SIMILAR!

The final comparison provides an answer as to whether Finland and Sweden are more similar or different in their relationship with NATO. The similarities will be elaborated first, followed by the differences, firstly at the political level followed by a military-level comparison.

An illustration of the Nordic partners' capability development is presented in Figure 1 below.

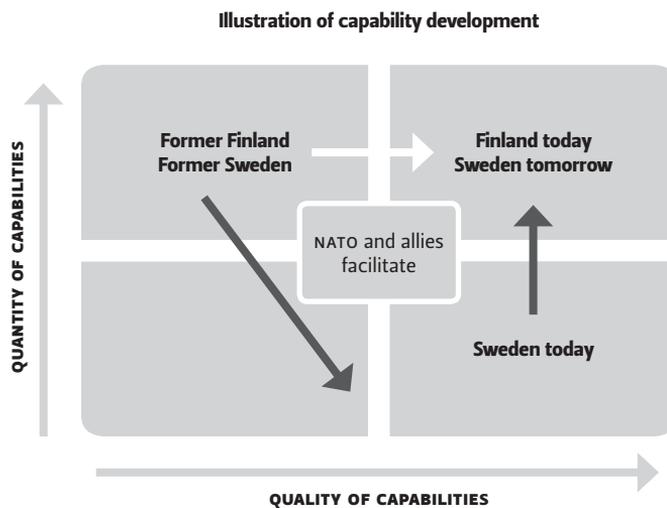


Figure 1:  
Transformation  
of Finnish and  
Swedish military  
capabilities  
(1994–2015).

The focus for comparison is military cooperation, which is a tool for improving military capabilities. Thus, progress in military capabilities, as illustrated in Figure 1, aptly depicts the development in cooperation, too. It is worth noting that there is no scale for measuring the levels of quality or quantity for each country. Of course, if preferred, one could count OCC-evaluated units as being emblematic of quality, and compare the maximum figures of the armed forces for quantitative purposes. Another note is related to the locations inside the Figure: armed forces situated in the same box do not indicate that the national capabilities are similar, but near enough. It goes without saying that neither partner is aiming for the same level of quantity achieved during the Cold War (as one could conclude according to the arrows).

However, the main conclusion is that, when compared, Finland's military cooperation with NATO has been very similar to Sweden's military cooperation with the Alliance. This was already the case when the two countries shared the same point of departure in 1994 as new PfP partners. The similarities in cooperation developed in tandem until, from the early 2000s onwards, Sweden refocussed its military efforts on international crisis management capabilities, while Finland continued along the traditional track with more modest modifications to its defence system. However, cooperation with NATO largely remained similar regardless of differences in the defence postures, as the target for cooperation was similar: qualified military capabilities. Differences exist between the two armies, but within the naval and air force capabilities, the similarities prevail. However, the similarities are most common between the respective armies as well, if we only compare the developed crisis management capabilities, and exclude the majority of Finland's national defence capabilities, which have no role in crisis management.

During the past two decades, NATO and the allied nations have played a part in facilitating the two Nordic partners' progress through programmes, processes and mechanisms – with considerable success, as demonstrated. Today, the Nordic partners are again aiming for a similar goal, albeit from different directions. This goal is a combination of a smaller set of high-quality capabilities fulfilling NATO's requirements and a larger set of capabilities, which will suffice for national defence purposes. In the end, their national defence concepts or capabilities will be dissimilar, but the use of NATO's cooperation programmes, processes and mechanisms to meet these goals will continue to be highly similar.

The evolving security environment since the collapse of the Soviet Union has had an immeasurable, and similar, impact on both Finland and Sweden in regard to NATO cooperation. Initially, both Finland and Sweden implemented a wait-and-see policy and gradually changed their security policy orientations from neutrality to military non-alignment, including an option to join the Alliance. These changes were more pronounced in Sweden, with the Swedes refocusing on expeditionary capabilities and utilizing the peace dividend more, while Finland focused on modernizing and downscaling its territorial defence. The concept of military non-alignment was regarded as useful for supporting foreign policy objectives, but also for receiving support from NATO for military capability development. For both countries, NATO provided tools for capability development at the earliest stage, and both utilized them according to national guidelines, but also by heeding what NATO wanted them to accomplish.

The frequency and magnitude of cooperation is surprisingly large. Similarly, for both countries, the number of exercises, training events and partnership goals marked a dramatic change from a neutral, Nordic self-sustained state into an interactive and proactive partner promoting its national interests cost-effectively. In terms of reciprocity, it seemed to be of paramount importance for both countries to fulfil NATO's requirements for force contributions to operations, as these contributions were the main vehicle for supporting foreign policy objectives and showcasing national defence capabilities. Sweden promoted its foreign policy objectives through active participation in operations, while Finland strengthened its credible national defence image by providing capable units for operations.

For NATO, the generic goal of the PfP was to assist willing partners to prepare themselves for membership, while simultaneously receiving capable force contributions to operations. NATO's policies, programmes and mechanisms served everybody's objectives well, which attests to the success of both the evolutionary set of tools and the flexibility of the cooperation. Via enhanced cooperation and development, the linkage between enhanced military interoperability, strengthening interdependency, and decreasing sovereignty is evident and unavoidable. This applies to NATO and its allies, as well as its partners.

When it comes to the potential to apply for NATO membership, both countries have reached the level of military interoperability that would constitute hardly any hindrance or delay in the potential

accession process. In this sort of situation, it would be crucial to have an interoperable national defence system and military capabilities that would convince the Alliance, and all 28 parliaments for the purposes of ratification, that admitting Finland or Sweden as a member would augment common security.

The major difference at the political level concerns history and its influence on national identity. Swedish foreign policy has been described as self-chosen neutrality, but for independent Finland, this luxury has never existed. However, both countries have transformed their sense of neutrality to military non-alliance in a rather similar fashion. The other long-lasting source of difference is geopolitics. Finland neighbours Russia, whereas Sweden neighbours the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad across the Baltic Sea, linking primarily to the Baltic states, Denmark, Germany and Poland. The difference is that for Russia, as well as for NATO, Southern Sweden is on its direct route to Europe, which is not the case with Finland. On the other hand, Russia's most important military concentration in the Kola Peninsula is neighbouring Northern Finland, not Sweden. This links Finland to Norway, Iceland, and the UK as well as to communications across the Atlantic Ocean. In short, NATO and the Nordic partners share a similar geopolitical situation. As we have seen, interoperability, and consequently interdependency, have been established in the context of NATO. Hence, it is only reasonable to organize training exercises and the related planning together, as a minimum, to add to the military capabilities and, consequently, to regional stability.

Given both the historical and the geostrategic considerations, the contemporary situation is inducing Finland to seek support from NATO for geopolitical reasons because of Russia's aggressive behaviour, and also to avoid isolation. Sweden's motivation for seeking support from NATO is likewise based on Russia's recent aggression, but is also due to drastic reductions in its national defence capacity. Of course, the country's two-century-long tradition of neutrality also plays a significant role. However, both countries have remained militarily non-allied, similarly searching for new avenues to proceed deeper into military cooperation with NATO and each other. Nonetheless, if a crisis erupts in the region, both Nordic partners will more than likely be dragged into the conflict. This must be taken into account when preparing for the future.

The Nordic partners have transformed their defence postures incrementally since the Cold War era. The Finnish reforms have had little significant impact on the country's cooperation with NATO. On the other hand, the Swedish defence reform in the early 2000s

counted on military cooperation and tangible military support from other nations, and thus created the need for cooperation with both NATO and its allies. Actually, NATO, along with most allied nations and Sweden, transformed towards managing new threats with enhanced capabilities applicable to expeditionary operations. Today, in a quite different security environment, both NATO and Sweden are refocusing their defence systems on a more territorially-oriented defence, bearing a resemblance to the Finnish defence posture. Again, the Nordic partners are aiming at a rather similar solution regarding their military capabilities, which could be strengthened with enriched joint planning on how to use these capabilities.

#### MILITARY-LEVEL COMPARISON

One way to address the similarities and differences is to compare overall magnitudes. The levels of activity in absolute figures are, of course, different for many reasons, such as the Swedish gross national product and population being double the size of Finland's. Surprisingly, reliable open source statistics on the activities of nations are not recorded systematically, be they members, partners, or NATO itself. In all probability, it is Sweden that has organized more training events, seminars, high-level visits and exercises. Verification of such data is still pending definitions and common statistics.

One of the similarities is that both nations simultaneously transferred their contributions from UN operations to more demanding NATO-led operations, with the result that a clear majority of the training sessions and exercises took place in the NATO context, instead of through the traditional Nordic cooperation in keeping with UN guidelines on peacekeeping. Hence, since the operations in the Western Balkans, a clear majority have been performed under the NATO flag. These also point to similarities regarding the outputs of the foreign policy objectives. As the national and international training events, exercises and materiel procurement observe NATO standards, the overall quality of contributed units has been raised from a lower technological level to a level approaching state-of-the-art. Most importantly, new Finnish and Swedish doctrines, concepts, planning processes and methodologies have much in common with those of NATO and allied nations, adding to the commonalities of all armed forces. This strongly attests to the usefulness of NATO tools for partners, all of which are received cost-effectively.

Other similarities include the fact that both nations have authorized military units to be led by NATO operational commanders, both have had allied units under their command in operations, both have participated in hundreds of NATO exercises abroad, and both have allowed numerous allied-nation units to conduct training exercises on their territory. Added to this, maritime and air situation pictures, as well as information exchange systems, are interlinked with Nordic and NATO systems for exercises, emergencies and accidents. Only one major difference remains for the time being: Sweden has participated in all NATO-led operations, whereas Finland missed one in Libya in 2011.

When comparing participation in exercises, the most significant change concerns the regularity and commonality of both armed forces in conducting exercises with allied units. The outcome is that neither Finland nor Sweden performs such exercises alone, but in the company of others. However, there is a major difference due to the Finnish conscript service training approximately 25,000 new soldiers for reserve formations every year. The army is responsible for most conscript training and hence, for further improvement, relevant lessons and innovations are worth transferring into national training programmes.

Traditionally, naval power has been the most interoperable service, and the Nordic naval units are no exception. For example, in the Baltic Sea region, the navies of both countries have participated in multinational maritime exercises regularly since the early 1990s. When it comes to air power, flight exercises take place once a fortnight on average in both countries, and often including Norway. Pertaining to the Swedish professional armed forces as well as to the Finnish navy and air force, all units are obliged to train and conduct exercises within an international context.

Naturally some differences also exist. There are two major activities, the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan and NATO's Operation Unified Protector in Libya, where Sweden has succeeded in making a highly visible difference in comparison to Finland. No such activities are currently in the pipeline where Finland could catch up with Sweden in this respect. However, it is worth pointing out that during the last twenty years, when either country has engaged in an activity individually, the other has often followed suit with a similar

activity within the space of a couple of years.<sup>1</sup> In any event, one can conclude with certainty that the similarities outweigh the differences.

#### ON THE WAY AHEAD

Both Nordic nations have made a similar journey from neutral country status, through numerous agreements with Western economic, political and military organizations, to their current status of militarily non-aligned nations. Both have moved closer to NATO through active participation in capability development programmes together with crisis management operations and various exercises at all levels, including highly demanding ones. Similarly, the Nordic partners are closer to the Alliance than ever before in its history.

This begs the all-important question of how far the two Nordic partners can proceed in cooperation with NATO without becoming members. In this report, arguments are provided from NATO's perspective, as well as from the Finnish and Swedish viewpoints. In addition, references to blurred membership borderlines, which could lead to unfortunate misinterpretations, are also elaborated.

Cooperation has lasted for more than two decades, with exceptional results for all parties. The major factor preventing the continuance of Finnish-Swedish cooperation with NATO is that one of the partners could opt for a diverging defence policy direction. One such scenario concerns one partner achieving such a high level of cooperation that would be politically unacceptable to the other. Another scenario is the case whereby one country joins the Alliance and the other does not. As a consequence, Finnish-Swedish cooperation would become much less beneficial in comparison to cooperation with the other allied nations. This would obviously be worse for the partner staying outside of NATO, simply because it would lose the most natural, geographically close and productive relationship without any immediate cooperation partner to turn to (and start from scratch with).

If neither country joined NATO, cooperation would proceed as before, but would be enhanced. Of course, the unresolved question would still be why and when to join the Alliance proper.

1 An example of following suit was the NAC approval of FINCENT as head of the peace support, education and training (MC2PS) of its partnership countries in December 2015. The Swedish counterpart, SWEDINT, acquired a similar status in 2013. The Host Nation Support, together with the framework arrangements for military cooperation with the UK and the US, constitute a similar trend.

In the event that both countries joined NATO, Nordic cooperation traditions would be worth transferring into the NATO context. This would be stimulating for NATO and its allies, with all the concomitant benefits in the political, military, economic and cultural realms. Nordic defence cooperation at large could become much more intensive and cost-effective with all five Nordic countries belonging to the same defence alliance. The potentially negative consequence is an adverse Russian reaction, of course.

This sort of speculation about NATO membership underlines the need for a profound analysis at the military level to identify the potential for deeper and wider cooperation among the Baltic Sea NATO nations and the Nordic partners. The ongoing dynamic debate in the region reveals the challenges, but also the tremendous potential that already exists – coupled with all the above-described similarities.

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# Nordic Partners of NATO

*How similar are Finland and Sweden  
within NATO cooperation?*

Juha Pyykönen

Since the establishment of the Partnership for Peace in 1994, Finland and Sweden have shared the role of the most active partners of NATO. At the military level, the ultimate goals of the NATO partnership programmes are to support partners in their efforts to reform their national defence structures and to assist them in developing their national capabilities according to NATO standards. These goals are subject to two prerequisites: well-prepared and stand-out applicants for membership, and qualified military capabilities for operations. Finland and Sweden have met every expectation pertaining to capabilities, but have refrained from becoming members of the Alliance.

However, both the Alliance and the partnerships have transformed since the 1990s. Twelve former partners are now members of the Alliance, and the remaining partners differ from each other regarding their background as well as political and military ambitions.

This FIIA Report describes and compares the two Nordic partners, Finland and Sweden, within the context of their military cooperation with NATO. The emerging trend in the Baltic Sea region is defending one's territory, and with increasingly similar perspectives on threats, and more cooperative ways to respond to them, the Nordic partners could gravitate closer towards each other, and towards NATO. This vision of a commonly shared defence paradigm of 'adequate' defence capabilities would lower the threshold for deeper defence cooperation between the two Nordic partners and NATO.