This work has been funded and implemented by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Nordic Countries Project and the Stockholm Free World Forum. The publication has also been made possible thanks to support provided by Kulturfonden för Sverige och Finland.

Cover and type setting: Anders Meisner
Printing: Publit
ISBN: 978-91-7703-335-6

www.frivarld.se
www.kas.de

Authors:
Karlis Neretnieks
Minna Ålander
Ann-Sofie Dahl
Teija Tiilikainen
Stefan Forss
Andreas Østhagen
Patrik Oksanen
Robin Allers

Katarina Tracz ed.

Contents:

Foreword

On May 18, 2022, the Finnish and Swedish NATO ambassadors formally submitted their membership applications to the alliance. In doing so, they ended the countries' historical policies of neutrality followed by military non-alignment. These doctrines had guided their security policies for decades – in Sweden's case, centuries.

Even though both Finland and Sweden have been close partners to NATO since 1994 and have increasingly pursued policies of cooperation and overlapping security arrangements, applying for membership is a monumental step. Becoming full-fledged NATO members will have far-reaching implications for the two countries. This policy shift will not only be noticed in military planning and strategic assessments. Indeed, more elusive areas such as national self-perception and historical identity will be affected too.

As future allies, what can Finland and Sweden bring to NATO's collective defense? How will they contribute to the general burden sharing within the alliance, and more specifically to the defense of the Nordic-Baltic Region? How is their NATO accession perceived by other countries in the region, and by NATO more broadly?

These are some of the questions that are dealt with in this anthology. In the various chapters, experts from Finland, Sweden, and beyond explore how the new Nordic members will adapt to NATO and vice versa. For example, the following chapters focus on

how Finland and Sweden will contribute to burden sharing and specialization within NATO, what lessons can be drawn from past enlargements, and how Finland and Sweden can help the alliance deal with hybrid threats.

When Finland and Sweden become formal members of NATO, the demand for qualified knowledge about the two countries' security cultures, capabilities, and strategic thinking will increase dramatically. In this anthology, Stockholm Free World Forum (Frivärld) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Nordic Countries Project strive to contribute to this body of knowledge. We hope that our contribution stimulates a discussion on Finland and Sweden's future role in the alliance that needs to take place not only in these two countries, but also in a broader context in NATO, Europe, and across the Atlantic.

Katarina Tracz
Director
Stockholm Free World Forum

Gabriele Baumann
Head of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Nordic Countries Project

Stockholm, October 2022

BURDEN SHARING AND SPECIALIZATION AFTER SWEDEN AND FINLAND'S NATO ACCESSION

BY KARLIS NERETNIEKS

What has changed?
Sweden and Finland joining NATO will increase security and stability in the Nordic-Baltic region. The Nordics, the Baltic Sea and the Baltic states must be considered as one area of operations. An attack against any of the countries will affect the territories of the others. Now, with all countries in the region soon to be members of NATO, it is possible to coordinate operational planning, create a common command environment and develop national force structures that complement each other.

THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE region, except Russia, will consist of NATO members does not change the overall threat picture. Russia's interests will essentially be the same. To protect its SSBNs (Ballistic Nuclear Submarine) and its Northern fleet is of utmost strategic importance to Russia. The desire to increase the safety zone around the bases on the Kola Peninsula in case of a crisis or war will therefore remain. The wish to influence its "near abroad", primarily the Baltic states but also the Nordics, will not disappear. The ambition to weaken NATO and the EU will continue to be on the agenda. The resurgence of Russian imperial ambitions cannot be ignored either.

Major General (ret.) Karlis Neretnieks is a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of War Sciences and was previously President of the Swedish National Defence College.

The frontline states will remain the same, and the threats similar to those of today. Norway will still need to pay close attention to the defense of its northern parts and the Norwegian Sea. Finland will still have a long border with Russia. Finnish Lapland, with its proximity to the Russian bases on the Kola Peninsula, will continue to pose a special problem. All the Baltic states will remain vulnerable. For these countries, the main question will be: how can the defense problems we already have today be solved in a better way when put in a Nordic-Baltic NATO context?

On the other hand, one country will need to radically reconsider its military planning and defense posture: Sweden. In addition to countering an attack through northern Finland, the need for Swedish military capabilities has, until now, been linked to a possible threat to the Baltic states. By taking parts of Swedish territory, Russia would be able to largely isolate the Baltic states from the outside world, cutting off shipping and air traffic across the Baltic Sea. That is a threat that still has to be taken into consideration, but now Sweden will also have an opportunity – and an obligation – to support the frontline states in its defense efforts. It will no longer just be a question of defending its own territory.

By taking parts of Swedish territory, Russia would be able to largely isolate the Baltic states from the outside world.

What are the implications of Sweden again having the Karelian Isthmus or Narva as its first line of defense? The last time it was a part of Swedish war-planning was before 1809, when Russia conquered Finland, which had until then been a part of Sweden. The defense of Norway will also become a clear Swedish concern. What does it mean that the Baltic Sea, from having been a moat protecting Sweden, will now be a NATO Mare Nostrum tying the alliance together? Apart from Sweden's new role, what kind of synergies can be achieved by pooling resources and coordinating military activities in a Nordic context? This short chapter will not give all the answers, just point at some areas where Finland and Sweden joining NATO could lead to substantially increased common Nordic capabilities, and increased security for the Baltic states.

Regarding possible Swedish measures, the suggestions below are based on possibilities if the defense budget was increased from the present planning level of 1.5 percent of GDP (to be reached in 2025) to 2 percent of GDP. This is a level all political parties have agreed on, but there is no decision on when it should be reached. Norway, Finland, Poland and the Baltic states are already spending 2 percent of GDP or more. Very roughly, this means that only Sweden has money not yet allocated to specific projects that could be used to develop capabilities to fulfil specific NATO needs. This opportunity should not be wasted.

Despite NATO's aim to create a high-readiness force of 300,000 personnel prepared to deploy within ten to thirty days – as presented at the Madrid summit in June 2022 – there will always be an uncertainty regarding how much can be allocated to the Nordic area, and when help can be in place. In war, unforeseen events are a common occurrence.

Although help might be forthcoming from larger and more powerful allies, these uncertainties make a strong argument to organize matters in a way to ensure a decent fight before the cavalry arrives. Let us call it Article 3 in the North Atlantic Treaty (the obligation of all members to defend their own territory) in a Nordic context, instead of binding it to purely national capabilities. As already mentioned, Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO will not radically change the challenges the countries in the region are facing, except for Sweden.

Sweden will, to a large extent, become a hub or staging area from where resources from Sweden and other NATO members can be deployed in different directions to support neighboring countries. Sweden's defense structure should be optimized primarily to protect "hub functions", including infrastructure, lines of communication on land, sea and in the air, and generating assets that can be sent to the frontline states.

Possible Swedish support to the frontline states could be described either as indirect or direct, although the boundaries between the two categories will be fluid. Indirect support would primarily be measures ensuring the frontline states' resilience. Direct support would entail operations with Swedish units on other allies' territory.

The indirect support would, among other things, mean

keeping lines of communication open to neighboring countries, on land, sea and in the air. This task will place very high demands on Swedish air defense capabilities and the ability to protect shipping across the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia to Finland and the Baltic states. The number of ships in the Swedish Navy would have to be increased, especially in such areas as anti-submarine-warfare, air defense and mine countermeasures. Secure communications between Sweden's eastern neighbors and the outside world are crucial to keep their economies running and for them to receive military assistance from NATO allies.

Another form of indirect support could be to adapt some Swedish air bases to handle the F-35 system, as a joint Nordic project. This would not only create a more sustainable base system in the region, but also give greater freedom of action to utilize the different types of aircraft in the Nordic air forces when tackling different tasks. When looking at military operations in the Nordic region, one should keep in mind that the distances involved are very long in a European context. The distance, as the crow flies, between Nordkapp in northern Norway and Copenhagen is longer than the distance from London to Palermo on Sicily, 2,000 km. If you fly west–east, it is 1,000 km between Værnes (Norway's main base for their F-35s) to Riga. In addition, such an enhanced basing concept would make it easier for American air assets to quickly deploy to the Nordic area, which is probably the kind of support that could be expected to arrive earliest in a tense situation or in case of war.

What could, then, be a realistic ambition when it comes to direct support that would also make a difference? The greatest weakness regarding the defense of the Nordic-Baltic area is the lack of ground forces in the two most threatened directions, the High North and the Baltics. In both cases, Sweden could make substantial and important contributions.

Within the framework of the ongoing Swedish rearmament program, it would be realistic to create another brigade – in addition to the existing one – in northern Sweden. Together with Norwegian and Finnish units, this would form a credible deterrence in the High North when it comes to capabilities on the ground.

The lack of sufficient ground forces is an even more acute problem in the Baltic states. The countries are small and

the possibility to exchange ground for time, something that exists in the North, is not an option here. An attacker must be stopped very early. In addition, the proximity to more resource-rich parts of Russia means that Russian possibilities of maintaining momentum in a military operation there are considerably greater. If it were possible to deploy one or both of the two Swedish brigades presently being formed in southern Sweden across the Baltic Sea at an early stage in a conflict – or preferably already before a crisis escalates to war – that would make a considerable difference when it comes to halt a Russian attack.

This option is especially interesting since Swedish units are likely to be the ones that can get to the Baltics first. There is a considerable difference between moving resources from, for example, the US or the UK, compared with moving them from Sweden. The distance from the ferry port Nynäshamn in Sweden to Ventspils in Latvia is less than 300 km, a distance that is easily covered in ten hours by the civilian car ferries that already travel the route.

> *The distance from the ferry port Nynäshamn in Sweden to Ventspils in Latvia is less than 300 km.*

Perhaps Finland, despite being a frontline state, should also consider the possibility of contributing ground forces to the defense of Estonia. In this context, it would also be natural for Sweden and Finland to participate in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence scheme in the Baltics.

This way to reorientate Swedish (and Finnish) defense planning is underscored by NATO's new, or rather revived, concept of "forward defense" with the aim to stop a Russian attack early on. The strategy of creating a tripwire with limited forces and then retake lost ground with follow-on forces is no longer relevant.

Overall, Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO offers several options to develop mutually supporting structures in the region. Making the most of it may be primarily a mental process rather than overcoming practical problems.

Within a Nordic framework, there is one fundamental weakness for which the Nordics require immediate and substantial support from larger allies: the protection of sea lanes

to the Scandinavian Peninsula. This is a prerequisite for receiving seaborne reinforcements, as well as importing various commodities.

Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast is the most important port in Scandinavia. It does not just serve Sweden; it is also Norway's most important importing centre. In case of hostilities affecting the Baltic Sea and large-scale shipping, Gothenburg would serve as a reserve facility for moving assets over land to Finland, or across the Gulf of Bothnia between northern Sweden and Finland. Should the sea lanes to Scandinavia be cut off, the Baltic states would also be affected. Or to put it another way, without open sea lanes to Scandinavia it will be very difficult – if not impossible – to move large reinforcements to the Nordic-Baltic area. Necessary imports and exports to continue most industries, including agriculture, would also be seriously affected.

> Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast is the most important port in Scandinavia.

This means that it is critical to look beyond the region for burden-sharing arrangements that must come into play at very short notice in case of a conflict.

To keep sea lanes open across the North Sea to Scandinavia will require advanced, large ships – frigates. Sweden, Norway and Denmark cannot afford a sufficient number of such ships dedicated to tasks in the North Sea, not even if the countries pooled their resources. Norway needs its frigates in the High North, Denmark must take care of the Baltic approaches and Sweden's main naval tasks are in the Baltic Sea. Neither of the Nordics can afford to substantially increase their blue-water capabilities. Large investments will be needed simply to handle present tasks.

One solution could be to involve Germany in the Nordic burden-sharing scheme, since it is the only country in Europe that has limited naval obligations elsewhere while also having the economic resources to build and maintain the necessary number of ships. The concept would then entail Sweden (and to some extent Poland and Finland) taking care of the Baltic Sea, and in exchange Germany would carry the main burden of keeping sea lanes to Scandinavia open.

Pooling Nordic assets

THE US IS THE BACKBONE OF NATO. However, the increasing challenge that China poses in the Pacific region reduces US possibilities to quickly deploy large resources to Europe. This, in turn, increases the demand for perseverance and self-sufficiency of the alliance's European members. There could be a Nordic dimension, at least in part, on how to handle that problem.

Around 2030, the joint Nordic air forces will have more than 200 of the world's most advanced fighter aircraft: the JAS 39E and F-35. A well-designed scheme for close cooperation between the Nordic air forces would greatly enhance their common sustainability and combat efficiency, compared with having four national air forces fighting their own battles. Having two types of planes, with different weapon suites, would also increase the possibilities to tailor sorties depending on the task.

Acquiring expensive weapons systems always poses a trade-off problem. They often run the risk of becoming a 'cuckoo in the nest'. Today, all the Nordic countries lack resources to carry out aerial refueling of their fighter aircraft. Aerial refueling aircraft have simply been too expensive to procure. A co-ownership of a Nordic air refueling pool, on the other hand, may be more affordable. This would increase the number of options when planning air operations anywhere in the Nordic-Baltic region. It would also increase the number of planes available for certain tasks by giving the planes "longer legs". Furthermore, this technology would be a readily available asset in the Nordic-Baltic area rather than a coordination between multiple countries, with different interests, when the need arises. This is not an insignificant risk when it comes to obtaining support from NATO MMF (Multinational Multi-Role Tanker and Transport Fleet).

Similarly, heavy transport aircraft and helicopters are currently missing in the Nordic armed forces. The ability to quickly move supplies and units is a crucial element in a common Nordic defense concept considering the vast distances in the region. The fact that Nordic air refueling and heavy transport capabilities would also help to facilitate efforts by

other allies in the Nordic-Baltic area does not make these capabilities less interesting, quite the opposite. The Swedish decision to acquire two early warning/command and control aircraft (GlobalEye) could also be the start of a joint Nordic resource. Although Sweden has an option for two more planes, even four such aircraft does not provide sufficient volume to cover the needs of all Nordic countries. Nor does it provide a margin for probable losses in war. Moreover, when it comes to land and sea operations, there are opportunities to create effect-enhancing synergies in a Nordic context – but that deserves a chapter on its own and cannot be covered here.

Command structures

THE CLEAR-CUT OPERATIONAL tasks of the Nordic-Baltic area and its geography provides good conditions and a strong motive to create a bespoke command structure for the region. The defense of the High North is dependent on facilities in the southern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland for logistics, basing of air assets, and reinforcements. The ground battle there will be conducted by three countries, and most likely across the territory of all of them. The defense of the Baltics depends on NATO using Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish territory on land, at sea, and in the air. All four air forces (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland) will conduct combat operations in the whole region. It will be the same ships that will protect sea lanes across the Baltic Sea or the Gulf of Bothnia. All these activities and resources must be managed and coordinated by experts well aware of how they fit into the overall picture across the region. In addition, most of the assets that will have to be coordinated are already in the area. A regional staff team will therefore have a good idea of the capabilities and limitations of subordinate units. This knowledge is invaluable, especially in the early stages of a conflict. Being well-acquainted with the different political environments in the Nordic countries will also make it easier to handle a crisis or run an efficient military campaign in the region.

One solution that should be considered is to revive AFNORTH (Headquarters Allied Forces Northern Europe), but with a considerably larger geographical area of responsibility ranging from Denmark in the south to Spitsbergen in the north. It should stretch from the Norwegian Sea in the west to, well, where should the eastern border be drawn? There are two options: the Baltic Sea or the Baltic countries' border with Russia. That the Baltic Sea should be part of a future AFNORTH is clear. The protection of sea and air transport across the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia will largely depend on forces provided by Sweden and Finland. Weapons systems on the Swedish island of Gotland will also play a key role. Much of what will be transported to the Baltics will also, in one way or another, pass through one of the Nordic countries. Weapons systems, such as cruise missiles, attack aircraft, naval assets, and others based in the Nordic countries may also be important means to support the Baltic countries in the early stages of a conflict.

The protection of sea and air transport across the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia will largely depend on forces provided by Sweden and Finland.

But what about moving AFNORTH's eastern border even further east to include the Baltic States as well? Should NATO defense planning be designed so that air support, reinforcements and logistics are based on resources provided from staging areas in the Nordic countries and substantial ground forces contributed by Sweden and Finland? In such a case, including the Baltics in the AFNORTH area of responsibility could be considered.

On the other hand, neither Sweden nor Finland will ever be able to contribute resources on a par with those Poland and Germany could deploy in the Baltics at a later stage of a conflict. The problem here is Kaliningrad. The Russian forces in the exclave will likely have to be eliminated before Polish and German help on the ground can have any major impact on operations in the Baltic States. This might take time. Before that, only forces that are either in place from the beginning or that can be moved in over the Baltic Sea, by sea or air, will have to carry the load. One more factor must also be

considered: the political significance of Poland and Germany being clearly singled out as responsible for bearing the main burden of defending the Baltic States on the ground, making it clear that some of the larger NATO members will be seriously engaged from the first shot. Although such a solution might not be optimal from a military point of view, at least not in the early stages of a conflict, it most likely has a greater deterrence value than an "AFNORTH solution".

Without going into all the details, there are some operational tasks that deserve their own command functions and should therefore be directly subordinate to AFNORTH. The most obvious need is to create a common air command for the entire Nordic area. It should coordinate the operations of the more than 200 state-of-the-art fighter aircraft (F-35 and JAS 39E) that the combined air forces of the Nordic countries will consist of, a "Nordic air force" similar in size to the Royal Air Force or the Luftwaffe. Apart from that, there is a need to coordinate air operations with ground-based air defense systems in the whole region, coordinate air transport movements both within the Nordic area and between the Baltics, regulate basing and logistics depending on losses, damage to infrastructure, and so on. Most likely, there will also be a need to coordinate Nordic air operations with operations by other allied air forces.

The combined air forces of the Nordic countries will consist of a "Nordic air force" similar in size to the Royal Air Force or the Luftwaffe.

Similarly, there ought to be a joint naval command for the Baltic Sea directly subordinate to AFNORTH. Here, too, there are several countries' armed forces, different systems and activities that must be coordinated. This includes submarines, surface combatants, mine clearing, air defense, escort activities and base operations. It requires its own command authority, which is familiar with the local challenges of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia, and has good knowledge of the naval capabilities and procedures of the coastal states.

The defense of the High North poses a particular problem as it involves the handling of forces from several countries and from all branches, both at the operational and tactical

level simultaneously. Although the forces involved will not be that large, in terms of numbers, they will require particular solutions. Neither AFNORTH nor, for example, a divisional staff with its focus on leading ground combat, will be an optimal solution. What is required is a hybrid that could be described as a small corps staff with enhanced capabilities to handle naval and air assets.

These proposals do not meet all command needs in the region. They only highlight three areas that should be given a command structure clearly designed for a defined task. There are additional problems that must be solved. How should territorial defense on the ground in Sweden, Finland and Norway be organized? Who should oversee the Baltic inlets and Denmark? Is it time to revive COMBALTAP? A lot of thinking remains to be done.

Conclusions

THERE ARE SEVERAL MEASURES that can and should be implemented in order to obtain the greatest possible effect out of Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO. What is being suggested here is in no way unrealistic from an economic point of view. It could quite easily be accommodated within defense budgets of between 2–3 percent of the countries' GDP. The biggest obstacle to overcome appears to be the transformation of the mindset in Sweden and Finland – perhaps mostly in Sweden – on how to build military security within an alliance.

This chapter has explored how the Nordic countries, through increased cooperation and some structural changes in their militaries, could strengthen the capabilities of NATO. The alliance in general, and its ability to reinforce the Nordic-Baltic region, is touched upon quite little. This is deliberate. Considering that it would take at least several days for air support to materialize, perhaps weeks for naval forces to appear in the Baltic Sea, and probably months for substantial ground forces to arrive, it would be speculative to include them in a basic set-up for Nordic military security. This, of

course, does not exclude well-prepared or ongoing operations, such as the joint Norwegian-British antisubmarine activities or flying in personnel to marry up with prepositioned equipment. Another reason to place great emphasis on Nordic co-operation is that, regardless of formal obligations within an alliance, cultural similarities and understanding of each other's ways of thinking is an important "force multiplier". This is a fact that also recommends itself to seek Nordic solutions, where possible, within the framework of NATO.

There is a danger that must be kept in mind when creating a structure with a heavy emphasis on Nordic capabilities. If the scheme is successful and creates an impression that the Nordics can fend for themselves (which they will never be able to), other members of the alliance might use it as an excuse not to plan for operations in the Nordic-Baltic area. However, this risk is worth taking. It would be a bit odd, and morally dubious, not to prepare oneself as well as possible with the resources available in the region. Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO creates great potential for increasing the alliance's deterrence in Northern Europe. Hopefully, national prestige and inter-service jealousy will not become obstacles that hinder new thinking and necessary adaptations to a changing security environment.

A NEW SECURITY LANDSCAPE IN EUROPE

NATO'S EMERGING NORDIC DIMENSION

BY MINNA ÅLANDER

Nothing unites like a common enemy. Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression in Ukraine upended the post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. The changes have been most profound and visible in the Nordic region: less than three months after Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Finland and Sweden decided to abandon their long-standing military non-alignment and applied for NATO membership on May 18, 2022. Russia's aggression against its neighbor Ukraine has a lasting impact on the whole neighborhood: it became clear once and for all that no amount of self-restraint can guarantee a country's security in Russia's direct vicinity. The post-Cold War emphasis on good neighborly relations and regional cooperation is now shifting towards a focus on deterrence.

Minna Ålander is a Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), and was previously affiliated with the research institute SWP Berlin.

ALTHOUGH THE THREAT THAT an aggressive Russia poses is more direct in Finland, which shares a 1,343 km long border with its eastern neighbor, Sweden is no stranger to Russia's intimidation tactics either. Both Finland and Sweden

have frequently been subject to provocations from the Russian side, such as airspace violations or Russian ships sailing too close to Finnish or Swedish waters – most notable is Gotland, a Swedish island in the southern Baltic Sea in a strategically crucial location only 330 km from the Russian exclave Kaliningrad where Russia's Baltic Sea fleet is headquartered and where there have been frequent airspace violations.

Furthermore, Finland and Sweden share a long history of wars with Russia. Finland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden for centuries until the Finnish War in 1808–1809, when Sweden lost Finland to Russia. Until then, the Kingdom of Sweden had been at war with different Russian state formations at least once every century since the Middle Ages. Although wars with Denmark were also frequent, Russia posed a more existential threat and frequently challenged Sweden's attempts at regional dominance. More recently, in the Winter War 1939–40, when the Soviet Union attempted to invade Finland and failed, thousands of Swedish volunteers came to fight alongside Finland. Thus, Finland and Sweden both share a threat perception of Russia that goes back centuries.

> *Ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, both Nordic countries started to prepare for worse to come.*

Ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, both Nordic countries started to prepare for worse to come. For Sweden, it was a particularly rude awakening after two decades of disarmament of its defense forces as a result of the "end of history" moment following the end of the Cold War. For Finland however – with its long border with Russia – history never ended, and it maintained a well-trained and well-equipped conscription army. Sweden reintroduced conscription in 2017 and re-established the Gotland regiment, which had been discontinued in 2004, in the process of rearming its defense forces following the annexation of Crimea. Finland and Sweden have also significantly deepened their bilateral defense cooperation since 2014,[1] as well as trilaterally with

1 Salonius-Pasternak and Vanhanen, "Finnish-Swedish Defence Cooperation."

Norway. Both countries became NATO's Enhanced Opportunity Partners in 2014, after having participated in the Partnership for Peace since 1994. Although the final trigger to apply for full membership was provided by Russia's invasion of Ukraine only in 2022, Finland and Sweden had both been working deliberately towards the closest possible cooperation and partnership with NATO for years, in order to be able to join quickly if necessary according to the Finnish 'NATO option' policy, or, in the Swedish (Social Democrats') case, trying to stay out of NATO while simultaneously improving cooperation. As a result of the efforts to increase the interoperability of Finnish and Swedish armed forces with NATO to the highest possible level outside the Alliance, the two new members will bring almost instant operational readiness to NATO once the ratification process is finalized.

Finland and Sweden: Same same but different

FINLAND AND SWEDEN ARE each other's closest international partners, and the countries cooperate in many policy fields, including foreign and security policy. The long-shared history and cultural similarities contribute to the feeling of proximity between the neighbors. Thus, Finland and Sweden often coordinate pivotal foreign policy decisions, such as on EU accession in 1995 and now on NATO membership. In a curious reversal of roles, however, it was Finland that led the process on the joint NATO bid; in 1995, Sweden decided to apply for EU membership without much coordination with Finland, and Finland subsequently hurried to submit its application at the same time. The swiftness and determination of Finnish decision-making took Sweden somewhat by surprise, and Stockholm had to accelerate the domestic process to keep up with the pace at which Finland was striding into NATO. Indeed, Finland hijacked the Swedish NATO debate to such an extent that in a televised debate on May 8, 2002 between the party leaders ahead of the September parliamentary elections in Sweden, the debate on NATO was

not so much about whether Sweden should join NATO, but whether Sweden should "go along with Finland to NATO".[2] In an historic headline, the Swedish newspaper Expressen declared Finland 'Sweden's big brother' and thanked Finland for "NATO help", stating that Sweden would never have made it without Finland – in Finnish.[3]

Since Finland and Sweden are both like-minded Nordic welfare states – and because the two frequently come as a pair in international politics – foreign observers and analysts often have a hard time distinguishing their national characteristics. The processes leading to the submitting of the Finnish and Swedish NATO membership applications are an illustrative case in point.

Finland has a pragmatic and largely non-ideological approach to security policy. Hence, both the long-term policy of staying outside of NATO and the decision to join the Alliance were made on essentially practical grounds. Until now, fully-fledged NATO membership was not considered necessary and was rather seen as a potential provocation towards Russia. Because of its long border and history with Russia, Finland was keen to maintain good relations with its eastern neighbor to avoid costly tensions at the border. Russia's invasion of Ukraine changed that calculation overnight, however. A remarkable aspect of the Finnish NATO process was its bottom-up nature: support for Finland's NATO membership had been at around 20-25 per cent for decades, but in a poll published only four days after the beginning of the invasion, more than half of Finns answered in favor of Finland joining NATO.[4][5] The swift and fundamental change in public opinion drove the political process: before February, only two parties had been advocating for NATO membership, but in the final vote in the Parliament on May, 17, 188 of 200 members (minus the speaker who does not participate) voted in favor of Finland's NATO bid.[6] In the last poll before submitting the membership application, public support for it had reached an overwhelming 76 per cent – and it has risen further since,

2 SVT, "Partiledardebatt".

3 Expressen, "Kiitos Nato-avusta".

4 YLE News, "2017 poll: Only a fifth of Finns back NATO membership".

5 YLE News, "For first time, YLE poll shows majority for NATO".

6 YLE News, "Finland's Parliament approves NATO application".

reaching 79 per cent by the end of June.[7] It was indicative of the central position security policy has in the Finnish public debate, as well as the high level of awareness of national security in society, that the opinion on the necessary course of action was so clear and the consensus so broad.

The remarkable swiftness of the change in both public opinion and Finland's long-standing non-alignment policy puzzled many outside of Finland. It even took the Swedes by surprise – for a long time, it looked more likely that Sweden rather than Finland would decide to join NATO. But in fact, the Finnish NATO bid did not come as out of the blue as it appeared. The NATO debate has been ongoing in varying intensities since the 1990s, and the somewhat peculiar policy called the 'NATO option' had been an integral part of Finnish security policy for decades. It implied that, while remaining outside of the Alliance, Finland would keep the option to join NATO should the security environment change. Such a change started to be evident already with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 but culminated in the latest Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, marking a point of no return. With its unprovoked attack on a neighbor, Russia crossed a red line for Finland. The NATO option had an important signal function toward Russia, as a reminder that Finland may change its mind about non-alignment if Russia goes too far. Russia, for its part, has regularly issued threats regarding possible consequences of Finnish NATO membership.

> *For Sweden, in contrast, the NATO decision was much more of an identity crisis.*

For Sweden, in contrast, the NATO decision was much more of an identity crisis.[8] Indeed, the narrative of more than 200 years of neutrality – or at least not being party to a war – and an emphasis on peace promotion and disarmament going back to the Cold War Social Democrat Prime Minister, Olof Palme, have shaped Sweden's foreign policy identity. In addition, not sharing a direct border with Russia and 200 years of

7 Huhtanen, "Enemmistö suomalaisista ei halua lainsäädäntöä tai luopua periaatteistaan Turkin vuoksi".

8 Kaljurand, "The Hem and Haw of Sweden's Relationship with NATO".

peace allowed Sweden to keep a bigger distance from security issues in the public debate. As a consequence, the Swedish NATO debate was much more strongly characterized by the domestic political cleavages instead of a clear focus on security policy and implications for national defense as in Finland. The support for Sweden's NATO membership is lower than in Finland at 62.5 per cent,[9] and the Left Party and the Green Party remain opposed to it – however, the two parties had only 43 of 349 seats in parliament.

Despite the official neutrality during the Cold War and the subsequent military non-alignment policy of the past three decades, Sweden nevertheless always maintained close relations with the US and even had secret security assurances from the Americans during the Cold War.[10] Without an official commitment, Sweden coordinated closely with NATO on defense matters: for example, in the 1960s, the Americans talked Sweden out of developing its own nuclear weapons while including the officially non-allied country in the US policy toward Scandinavia and extended its nuclear umbrella to Sweden.[11] After the Cold War, the focus changed towards peace-building operations, but the Swedish cooperation with NATO continued. Both the Swedish defense industry and the equipment of Swedish armed forces have been fully NATO interoperable for many decades already, in contrast to Finland which has partly also used Soviet equipment. Sweden is therefore a very natural member of the Western Alliance. Considering the long history of cooperating both "behind the scenes" with NATO and the US,[12] and officially participating in several NATO missions and operations, there is more continuity behind the Swedish decision to apply for membership than meets the unobservant eye.

9 Statistiska Centralbyrån SCB, "Väljare ger svar om Nato i Partisympatiundersökning".

10 Sveriges Radio SR, "Claims of secret NATO cooperation".

11 United States National Security Council (NSC), "300. National Security Council Report, NSC 6006/1, 1 April 1960".

12 Neuding, "The end of Nordic neutrality".

A game changer for Nordic and Baltic Sea security

FOR DECADES, the Baltic Sea security architecture remained fragmented along the lines of different alliance memberships of the Nordic countries. Finland and Sweden were EU members but not in NATO, Iceland and Norway are NATO members but not in the EU. Denmark is a member of both organizations but had an opt-out from the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – which was scrapped in a referendum in June 2022[13] – while Norway has an opt-in in the EU's CSDP. This is indicative of the fundamental nature of the changes underway that these two structural hurdles to defense cooperation in the Baltic Sea region have been overcome: Finland and Sweden decided to abandon their long-term non-alignment and the Danes voted in favor of abolishing their EU opt-out.

For NATO defense of the Baltic states, which are in a particularly vulnerable position sandwiched between Russia and the Baltic Sea, Finland and Sweden's membership in the alliance is a game changer. Finland and Sweden's NATO accessions come at a particularly crucial time, with the realization that the combination of enhanced Forward Presence (tripwire) and Defence in Depth (attempting to reclaim territory already seized) approach to Baltic defense is no longer an option, seeing how brutal Russian troops have treated occupied territories in Ukraine. Without Finland and Sweden in the alliance, the practical implementation of a strengthened forward defense "to defend every inch of Allied territory at all times",[14] as foreseen in the Madrid Summit Declaration on NATO's new Strategic Concept in late June 2022, would not be feasible. The Swedish navy can shift the geography of warfare in the Baltic Sea, forcing Russia to consider new angles of attack, and Finnish territory adds a whole new dimension of strategic risk to Russia, including to the crucial military capabilities (including nuclear) in the Kola Peninsula, as well as the defense of St. Petersburg and the Gulf of Finland. Finland

13 Schaart, "Denmark votes to scrap EU defense opt-out".

14 NATO, "Madrid Summit Declaration".

and Sweden's membership in the alliance will significantly simplify the defense of the Nordic-Baltic region by clarifying lines of communication, providing unified command and control of air, land and sea, and establishing a common operational picture and unified target sets.

Together, Finland and Sweden bring considerable defense capabilities into NATO. Finland has a wartime troop strength of 280,000 plus additional 870,000 reservists, one of Europe's largest artilleries with 1,500 systems,[15] and a well-equipped air force – the government's latest purchase was 64 F-35 fighter jets that will become operational from 2026 onwards (Ministry of Defence Finland, 2021), adding to the 52 Norwegian and 27 Danish F-35s and thus making the combined Nordic F-35 fleet 143 aircraft strong. Together with Sweden's home-produced Jas Gripen fighter jets, the Nordic countries boast a combined force of more than 200 aircraft. While the Swedish defense forces are significantly smaller in terms of troops (55,000 reserve included), Sweden has a notable national defense industry that is fully compatible with NATO standards. Furthermore, the combined strength of Finnish and Swedish maritime capabilities tilts the balance across the region in NATO's favor. For example, the Russian exclave Kaliningrad between Poland and Lithuania loses much of its strategic value as a launch pad for aggressive action and becomes a major vulnerability for all forces stationed there, as it can now be targeted by NATO from 360 degrees. With Russia identified as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" in NATO's new Strategic Concept, the decades-long experience of dealing with Russia and the special knowledge of regional security that Finland and Sweden will bring to the table are valued assets for NATO. Finland and Sweden's NATO membership thus significantly reduces the room for maneuver for Russia to intimidate the Nordic and Baltic States, and increases stability in the region.

Sweden has a notable national defense industry that is fully compatible with NATO standards.

15 Ossa and Koivula,"What would Finland bring to the table for NATO?".

A new era of Nordic cooperation

THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS leading to Finland and Sweden applying for NATO membership, the US has shown strong commitment to the Nordic countries' ambition to join the alliance. Frequent visits on very short notice at the highest level – such as Finnish President Sauli Niinistö's Washington visit on March 4, 2022, only a few days after the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and a joint visit of Niinistö and Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson on May 19 – are not everyday protocol for two remote and small countries in their relations with the US.[16] Several bipartisan groups of US senators also visited the Finnish and Swedish capitals in the months following the invasion, which demonstrated an acute understanding in Washington of what is currently at stake in Northern Europe. Furthermore, impressive US navy ships have visited both Sweden and Finland throughout the spring and summer. For example, in March the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Forrest Sherman arrived in Stockholm for a port visit, and later in the summer the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsage visited both Stockholm and Helsinki and conducted exercises with the Finnish and Swedish navies.[17] In early August, USS Arlington sailed to the Baltic Sea in connection with exercises.[18] US troops have participated in several military exercises with their Finnish and Swedish counterparts throughout the spring and summer, such as the long-planned Cold Response in Northern Norway with the participation of more than 30,000 troops from 27 NATO and partner countries.[19] Moreover, there have been smaller-scale bi- and trilateral exercises throughout the

16 President of Finland, "Niinistö in Washington: Security and defence cooperation with US will be deepened"; President of Finland, "Niinistö in Washington: Finland takes NATO step to strengthen own security and transatlantic security".

17 United States Navy, "USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) Arrives in Stockholm"; Cooper, "US Warship Arrives in Stockholm for Military Exercises, and as a Warning"; YLE News, "Amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge heads to Helsinki".

18 Försvarsmakten, "Amerikanskt fartyg besöker Stockholm".

19 NATO, "Exercise Cold Response 2022 – NATO and partner forces face the freeze in Norway".

summer, such as "Ryske", together with Norwegian troops in Finland in late June.[20] The joint exercises have a twofold function: to demonstrate NATO's presence and support before Finland and Sweden become fully-fledged NATO members covered by the Article 5 security guarantee, and to further increase interoperability with future allies in the special climatic and geographical conditions of Northern Europe. Finnish Defense Minister Antti Kaikkonen announced on May 27, eight new and 12 new or partly modified exercises with key NATO partners in 2022 alone.[21]

US support has been decisive in the process and the US remains by far the strongest – and thus most important – NATO ally. It was a strong sign of overwhelming bipartisan support that the US Senate ratified Finnish and Swedish NATO membership with 95-1 votes, after a series of speeches praising the two Nordic countries.[22] But the Trump years have shown that US support can be a fickle thing. The Nordic countries can rely on their American allies now, but will it remain so through thick and thin – i.e. changing US administrations in an era of increasing volatility and polarization in American politics?

What any American president, a Trumpian one including, would welcome is a strong Nordic region within NATO capable of defending itself. With the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), the five Nordic countries will bring a new phenomenon into NATO: for the first time, there will be a group of member states with a high degree of pre-existing regional integration. NORDEFCO's dynamic radically changed in 2014, when Russia's annexation of Crimea gave the Nordic countries both a new urgency to upgrade their cooperation from the previous buzzword "smart defense" to a format of serious strategic value.[23] A shared threat perception of Russia since 2014 has led the Nordic countries to

20 YLE News, "US soldiers train with Finnish forces in Helsinki"; Nilsen, "War games in boreal forest spotlights changing security architecture of the North".

21 Ministry of Defence of Finland, "Kaikkonen päätti kumppanimaiden kanssa koulutus- ja harjoitusyhteistyöstä".

22 Wise and Michaels, "U.S. Senate Ratifies Adding Finland and Sweden to NATO".

23 Dahl, "Back to the Future: Nordefco's First Decade and Prospects for the Next", pp. 172–182.

re-prioritize regional security and defense and to seek closer cooperation in the region.[24] The combined weight of the five Nordic countries is not to be underestimated; add the three Baltic States and eight of 32 NATO members, making up one fourth of the alliance, will have a direct stake in prioritizing Baltic Sea and Nordic security. This can lead to a shift of focus within the alliance, but more importantly it enables the Nordics to continue intensifying their defense cooperation on a hitherto unlocked level, once the structural hurdles of inconsistent alliance memberships have been removed. While the US is a natural and long-standing partner for the Nordic countries and the strong bipartisan support of Finland and Sweden's NATO membership is a good sign for the future, the Nordic countries – together with their Baltic neighbors – have a unique and ideal opportunity to strengthen their own defense capacities in a way that optimizes Nordic potential. The Nordic countries also already have the frameworks in place on which to continue building a strong Nordic NATO, as an essential part of the wider process of strengthening Europe's own defense capacities independently of the US. The Nordic countries can lead the way and show how robust defense cooperation can be built to mutual benefit.

24 Haugevik et al., "Nordic partnership choices in a fierier security environment: Towards more alignment".

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NEW

LESSONS FROM

IN

PREVIOUS ENLARGEMENTS

NATO

BY ANN-SOFIE DAHL

After adding his signature to the US ratification of NATO's next round of enlargement, President Joe Biden remarked:

"Our alliance is closer than ever. It is more united than ever. And when Finland and Sweden bring the number of allies to 32, we'll be stronger than ever."[1]

The 95-1 Senate vote in favor of bringing the two non-aligned Nordics into NATO – only Senator Josh Hawley (Mo.) was against, while his Kentucky colleague Rand Paul voted "present" – brought the number of ratifications to 23. French lawmakers had approved the Swedish and Finnish applications the day before.

Ann-Sofie Dahl is an Associate Professor of International Relations and is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council. She is the author of several books, most recently *NATO. Historien om en försvarsallians i förändring* (Lund: Historiska media, 2nd edition, 2022).

THE STRONG US SUPPORT was historic; previous NATO enlargements have met with considerably more debate and controversy in the US Congress, particularly those in the post-Cold War era.

1 Kanno-Youngs, "Biden signs measures giving U.S. approval to Sweden and Finland´s bid to join NATO".

But then, the entire process that we are now witnessing is indeed historic and unique in many ways. The enlargement to NATO allies 31 and 32 differs in several significant ways from previous expansions. As a matter of fact, the forthcoming round is unlike any other in over seven decades since NATO's founding.

Two new Nordics in NATO

PRIOR TO SPRING 2022, there were no expectations that the two long-time, non-aligned Nordics would ever become NATO allies, certainly not in the foreseeable future. Both countries were perfectly happy with their non-aligned status, combined with a close relationship to NATO as two privileged, "gold card" partners.That is, up until this year. The dramatic change of hearts and minds first in Helsinki and – more hesitantly and following the Finnish lead – in Stockholm is the work of one single person: the Russian president.

The list of demands that President Putin presented to the world at the end of 2021, including halting future NATO enlargements, and his subsequent full-scale war on Ukraine two months later were a brutal wake-up call for the West, and particularly for NATO's two Nordic partner countries. They had, in fact, already been exposed to Russian aggression for years, with various forms of provocations and multiple rounds of trespassing in their airspace and at sea. With yet another brutal Russian attack on a neighboring country on February 24, 2022, the threat perception grew imminent in the two non-aligned countries, located within striking distance from Kaliningrad and the Kola Peninsula.

The dire consequences of not being protected by NATO's Article 5 and the deterrence it provides dawned upon policymakers in both capitals, thereby confirming the observation that "(l)esser states seek alliances when their fundamental survival is at stake".[2] The result of Putin's policy has thus been

2 Davidson, America´s Entangling Alliances. 1778 to the Present, p. 14.

the exact opposite of what he set out to accomplish; an entirely unexpected, historic enlargement of NATO to Russia's close neighborhood in the strategically crucial Baltic Sea region.

The strategic impact of this round of enlargement on regional security will be profound. With all countries surrounding the Baltic Sea in NATO, it will in effect become a "NATO Sea", with a dramatically enhanced level of deterrence as well as of NATO's ability to defend the vulnerable Baltic allies. The likelihood of any successful Russian A2/AD scenarios in the region will be substantially reduced.[3] The implications will, however, go far beyond the Baltic Sea to the entire Nordic-Baltic region, which also covers the High North and the Arctic – and arguably even farther, as the geopolitical balance will tip in NATO's favor.

But the next round of NATO enlargement is exceptional to the two Nordics in other ways too. As President Biden noted when his Finnish colleague, Sauli Niinistö, and the Swedish Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson, visited the White House in May, 2022, their countries will meet every NATO requirement already from day one.[4] That is indeed unique; never before during the many previous rounds of enlargement has NATO been able to welcome two new members with such a high level of political and military preparedness for the tasks that await them as allies. This is particularly true for Finland, which shares a 1,300-kilometer-long border, as well as a history of war, with Russia. Finland has also never embarked on the general European path of post-Cold War disarmament. Today, Finland easily meets NATO's budgetary requirements of 2 per cent of GDP.

> *Finland has also never embarked on the general European path of post-Cold War disarmament.*

In the Swedish case, the long period of cuts in defense spending has finally come to an end, and the ambition is set to reach NATO's minimum requirement of 2 per cent as soon as possible. The Swedish defense industry compensates for

3 On security in the region, including an analysis on A2/AD scenarios by Mikkel Vedby-Rasmussen, see the chapters in Dahl (ed.), Strategic Challenges in the Baltic Sea Region. Russia, Deterrence and Reassurance.
4 Kanno-Youngs, "Biden signs measures giving U.S. approval to Sweden and Finland´s bid to join NATO".

some of the shortages in numbers and should be looking forward to a bright future ahead as the country's NATO membership opens up new markets on both sides of the Atlantic.

In addition, both militaries are highly sophisticated, with top-notch technologies and capabilities for a high level of interoperability with NATO standards. After having contributed to multiple NATO operations – from Bosnia to ISAF – and taken part in countless NATO exercises in the Baltic Sea and elsewhere, the Finnish and Swedish militaries are culturally and strategically as integrated with NATO as is possible for non-allies and enjoy a solid reputation as reliable *security* producers.

Add to this the fact that the two Nordics' political systems are founded on those very "principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law" that are outlined in the Preamble of the Washington Treaty. The political component of this enlargement, and the inclusion of two old democracies to the circle of allies, is as important as the military and strategic aspect. This, too, distinguishes the current round of enlargement from the previous post-Cold War ones. As old Western democracies with rock-solid institutions, interoperable militaries and strong economies, both partners will thus be exceptionally well-positioned to contribute to NATO right from the start.

The two Nordics are, however, unique in yet another aspect, as previously mentioned: contrary to all former candidate countries, they never harbored the ambition to join NATO. As a matter of fact, they were never even candidate countries prior to handing in their membership application forms to Secretary General Stoltenberg on May 18, 2022. Despite their privileged position within the partner community as two of merely six Enhanced Partners, the step to allied status was neither on their minds nor agendas. While they have long been militarily qualified to join the alliance, neither country was politically ready to proceed to the next level. Finland had of course formulated a "NATO option" as part of its security doctrine as early as the 1990s. This was a step resisted in Sweden – where nonalignment, and previously neutrality, was always more ideological than in the neighboring country – despite a majority in the Swedish parliament voting in favor of declaring such an option in 2020.

Once the national decisions to abandon the non-aligned

doctrine were reached in the two capitals, albeit at different times in Spring 2022, the process was exceptionally fast, taking only a fraction of the time it usually takes for aspiring partners. For previous candidates, the entire membership processes – from declaring their ambition to join NATO to actually gaining a seat at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) – have extended over several years, and in some cases even decades. In a similar fashion, while the Membership Action Plan (MAP) is usually a multi-year activity for candidate countries, it was a formality for Sweden and Finland, with the accession talks concluded in the course of only a day or two. After the Madrid summit at the end of June 2022, when the allies voted to invite the two non-aligned Nordics, the ratification process took off at record speed. A friendly dispute ensued between Denmark and Canada regarding which country had actually been the first to ratify the applications, within hours of the summit's conclusion. Others quickly followed suit. By early August, only seven out of 30 allies had not yet ratified. Had it not been for the objections raised by Turkey and the demands for concessions primarily regarding the Kurdish issue, the entire membership process would have been concluded at an even faster speed.

A friendly dispute ensued between Denmark and Canada regarding which country had actually been the first to ratify the applications.

But then again, Sweden and Finland were hardly strangers to the alliance. By the time their applications were handed in at HQ, they were already part of the extended NATO family. Since the mid-90s, the two Nordics have steadily developed a close working relationship with NATO, culminating in 2014 with the exclusive status as Enhanced Partners – NATO's "special, special partners", one of many endearing nicknames earned over the years. Another one, which alternated between the two (but also others, such as Australia in ISAF), was as NATO's "partner number one". In the Swedish case, it was because of the performance in the 2011 Operation Unified Protector over Libya, when the small contingent of JAS Gripen fighter jets provided NATO with an impressive 37 per cent of all surveillance reporting during the operation.

This record, along with an activist contribution to the Crisis Management Exercise (CMX) in the same year which had surprised – and in some cases irritated – allies, led to speculations as to whether a Swedish application form was about to land on then-Secretary General Fogh Rasmussen's table.[5] Up until early 2022, Finland and Sweden were however quite happy as merely partners. That they were actually the very first to sign up to join the partnership club in the summer of 1994 may therefore seem somewhat paradoxical.

Partnership and membership

WITHOUT ANY ASPIRATIONS to join NATO, Sweden and Finland may have seemed like the odd ones out in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) community. But contrary to a widely held belief, the PfP program that was launched in 1994 was not designed as a first step towards NATO membership. Instead, it was to be seen as a creative invention to circumvent the entire question of membership for which neither NATO nor the candidates were yet ready. NATO and the US were quite taken aback by the sudden rush to NATO HQ by a large number of East and Central European countries, eagerly seeking to shift sides to the former adversary in the West in search of protection and security guarantees against the unsettling prospect of a resurgent Russia.

The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was first introduced in 1991 in a first attempt to handle the overwhelming interest and intense knocking on NATO's door by the Central and East Europeans. While the NACC was viewed as a format primarily designed for the former Warsaw Pact countries in Stockholm, Finland was among its participants, quickly grabbing every available opening in the new window of opportunity to approach the West. The newly liberated Warsaw Pact countries and former Soviet republics that made up the bulk of the PfP program, which replaced the NACC in

5 More on this in Dahl, "Partner number one or NATO ally twenty-nine? Sweden and NATO post-Libya".

1994, were by no means ready to join NATO. By providing a broad package of political, military and legal guidance, the PfP provided NATO with an instrument to encourage these countries to reform their societies and to assist them on their path to democratization – and in the longer perspective thereby improving their chances for NATO membership in the future. PfP highlights the fundamental discrepancies between the Cold War enlargements and the ones during the post-Cold war era. While the three rounds of enlargements (with a total of four new members) during the Cold War years had had deterrence and defense as their prime purpose, the post-Cold War enlargements were early examples of NATO's new agenda to project stability to the surrounding world – or out of area, as is the NATO vocabulary. That was how the partnership processes from the late 1990s onwards were presented and packaged in Brussels and Washington, D.C. In the capitals of the candidate countries themselves, the argument was more reminiscent of the Cold War focus on defense and deterrence, with protection against a future new threat from Russia and Article 5 guarantees paramount on their agenda.

NATO's very first enlargement took place only three years after the solemn ceremonies in Washington, D.C., had brought the original 12 member states together in a brand-new defense alliance. The inclusion of Turkey and Greece in 1952 was essentially a continuation of the Truman Doctrine and similarly focused on stopping Communist expansion in the geo-strategically significant eastern corner of the Mediterranean and the Dardanelles. Both countries had been associated with NATO's military planning since 1950. Three years later, West Germany was added to the group of allies as member 15; a complicated process and deeply controversial to those Europeans – France in particular – who were vehemently against the idea of a rearmed Germany and horrified by the thought of seeing Germans in uniform again. As the US president and others pointed out however, a neutralized West Germany would amount to a potential strategic disaster for Western Europe. And so, after long negotiations and after committing to never acquire nuclear arms, West Germany was welcomed as a new NATO ally in 1955.

No further new members were added until the 1980s, when Spain joined. Portugal was one of the 12 original members due to the strategic assets of the Azores – geographically

located halfway between Europe and the US and with a US air base on one of its islands – and had strongly argued in favor of including its Iberian neighbor at the time of NATO's founding. But to no avail; the European allies refused to accept Spain under the Franco regime. Only after the death of the generalísimo in 1975 was Spanish membership a possibility. However, Spain had entered into a bilateral defense pact with the US in the early 1950s, but it still aspired to gain both a voice in NATO's decision-making and proper security guarantees. Once the Spanish application was filed, the process was quite fast, and the new democracy became member 16 in 1982, as NATO's last and final Cold War enlargement.

The merger of East and West Germany into one, reunited country within NATO in 1990 was a demanding diplomatic task, with the daunting prospect of German neutrality again looming large. Apart from that somewhat special case, it took a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall until NATO enlarged again; thus, hardly the rushed or forced "expansion" that some have liked to portray it as. It took quite some time before the idea took hold, or for that matter, before the reform processes pursued within the PfP framework had reached a point where any serious candidates materialized. Or, for that matter, before NATO in general and the US in particular embraced the idea of moving "out of area" – a two-fold process with enlargement to the Central and Eastern countries and military intervention to put an end to the brutal wars that had erupted in the Balkans. The alternative, as Senator Richard Lugar put it, was for NATO to go "out of business" – a path not excluded in the heated debate on NATO's future in the new, unipolar order.

1999 was a historic year in several ways. It marked the 50th anniversary since NATO's founding, which was commemorated in Washington, D.C., where it had started in 1949, against the backdrop of NATO airstrikes to end the Serbian campaign for ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Furthermore, three new member states took their seats at the NAC, after symbolically signing the Washington Treaty at the Harry S. Truman Library in the president's hometown of Independence, Missouri: Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The three new democracies constituted a vanguard within the partnership community and had also been at the forefront of breaking up the Soviet bloc from within. Slovakia was

excluded from the round because of the democratic deficit of the Meciar regime.

The leaders of the three Visegrad countries, with front figures Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel, achieved rock-star status as they traveled the world. Coincidentally, the three countries also had strong domestic constituencies in the US, which put additional pressure on President Clinton regarding the urgency of enlargement. Their main advocate in NATO was, however, Germany; for Berlin, the main strategic interest was to move the alliance's border further east by including Poland.

While Germany was an active proponent for the first round of enlargement, particularly to neighboring Poland, the prospect of another wave of new members joining NATO was met with very limited enthusiasm in Berlin. Nevertheless, NATO was enlarged again in 2004, with a record number of seven new members from the former Eastern bloc, three of them even former Soviet republics. These were the small and vulnerable Baltic states, whose inclusion in NATO proved the most difficult and controversial memberships, by far. Located on former Soviet territory and at one point dismissed by sources at the Pentagon as "indefensible", the membership aspirations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania provoked much more debate than the rest of the group and was by some viewed as too provocative to Russia. Various models and ideas as to whom to invite and when were discussed at length before settling on Slovenia, Slovakia – now with a new government – Bulgaria and Romania, apart from the Baltic states.[6] Denmark was long the sole advocate for the Baltics' NATO membership. In Washington, D.C., support for Baltic membership started in the think-tank community and gradually expanded to include members of Congress who, like the president, phrased the task in terms of a moral cause. After the terror attacks on 9/11 turned the strategic agenda upside down, President George W. Bush pushed for the historic "big bang". As an additional benefit, the countries in "new Europe"

6 Though published before the "big bang", Ron Asmus provides a detailed analysis of the enlargement process in Opening NATO´s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era. An account in Swedish is found in Dahl, NATO. Historien om en försvarsallians I förändring. For an English version, with special focus on the enlargement to the Baltic countries, see Dahl, US Policy in the Nordic-Baltic Region. During the Cold War and after.

were in general strongly pro-American, which had become obvious during the prelude to the Iraq War in 2003.

The inclusion of a grand total of ten new members from Central and Eastern Europe also resulted in a massive boost of anti-Russian sentiments in the alliance. Though many were solid contributors to NATO's operations, in particular ISAF, as true "Article 5ers" they never for a moment doubted that the main threat to Europe's security still emanated from Moscow.

The "big bang" was exceptional in terms of the sheer number of newcomers that were welcomed to the alliance. To accommodate such a massive influx of new members with very different backgrounds, cultures and experiences to the 16 Cold War allies was not an uncomplicated task. As a matter of fact, in many ways it profoundly changed NATO.

Nevertheless, five years later, two more members were added to the alliance with Albania and Croatia invited to join in 2009 in an effort to stabilize the Balkans (thus very much in line with the original PfP agenda to project stability), which brought the number of allies to 28. By then, Russia had already intervened in Georgia the previous year, but only with the first invasion of Ukraine in 2014 did NATO – and the West – change course, making a U-turn back to Article 5 and the core tasks of defense and deterrence. Before the enlargement to the next member, Montenegro – which helped fill the missing piece in the "NATO coastline" along the Adriatic Sea – was concluded in 2017, an attempted coup had been staged and orchestrated by Russian GRU agents.

Lastly, member 30 was accepted in 2020 after a record-long process, lasting 25 years from PfP partnership to membership. Because of a Greek province with the name Macedonia, Greece blocked the entrance for years until the candidate country in question had changed its name to North Macedonia. The forthcoming enlargement to NATO with members 31 and 32 –both neighboring Russia – will further strengthen the alliance's return to "basics". The alliance will also greatly benefit from the knowledge of Russia that the two new members will bring, particularly the valuable expertise that Finland possesses on its giant neighbor.

NATO members 31 and 32

THOUGH THE PRECEDING ROUNDS of enlargement display wide varieties, the forthcoming addition of Finland and Sweden stand out: it is the first time that NATO has enlarged to include two old Western democracies. The integration of the new members therefore promises to be rather smooth. Sweden and Finland have already enjoyed a crash course on life as allies, after a spring and summer filled with top-level meetings with dignitaries from all parts of the alliance. As the two new allies take their seats at the NAC, they will quickly find that their voice will be heard like never before. Moreover, the influence and impact they will be able to exercise on security in the region – and beyond – will be substantial. Occasional seats on the United Nation's Security Council fade in comparison.

> *As the two new allies take their seats at the NAC, they will quickly find that their voice will be heard like never before.*

Nevertheless, though exceptionally qualified and well-known, and after decades of much appreciated contributions to NATO operations and exercises, Finland and Sweden will still be newcomers in a club where the founding members have worked together for more than 73 years. That calls for a dose of humility, a recommendation that especially concerns Sweden, known for its high profile on the international scene. Now is definitely the time to finally shelf the self-perception as a "moral superpower" and to resist any temptations at lecturing, be it on nuclear disarmament, feminist foreign policy or other issues. Instead, the focus of the new allies should be firmly on the two Cs: capabilities and contributions. The latter should extend also to operations and missions in the South; the work in NATO is based on solidarity with all allies, regardless of location. However, the greatest impact will of course be in the Nordic-Baltic region. With members 31 and 32, the entire Northern flank will be substantially strengthened, militarily

as well as politically, within NATO. This will be crucial when the US directs its superpower resources and attention elsewhere in the world. When the final ratification protocol has been signed and the two Nordic countries become members, NATO will indeed be "stronger than ever".

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FINNISH AND SWEDISH SECURITY POLICY IDENTITIES

SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT

MEMBERS OF NATO?

BY TEIJA TIILIKAINEN

There are many common elements in the post-Cold War security policies of Finland and Sweden. The two countries joined the EU together in 1995 and became strong advocates of the union's role in the Baltic Sea region. As countries with a strong tradition of international peacekeeping and crisis management, they have shown a firm interest in strengthening the EU's role in this realm. Hand-in-hand they deepened their cooperation with NATO by joining the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and developing their military interoperability with NATO. Due to their significantly intensified bilateral defense cooperation, the Nordic neighbors are generally argued to be closer to each other than ever.

Teija Tiilikainen is the Director of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats. Previously, she was the Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (2010–2019) and she has also served as Secretary of State at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

FINLAND AND SWEDEN, however, are two countries with essentially different foreign policy traditions and identities. Despite their similar outlooks, their Cold War neutrality policies had very different roots. These differences have also been reflected in Finnish and Swedish EU policies, including their approaches to the EU's defense policy. How can these differences be expected to affect Finland and Sweden's policies

on NATO? To what extent does a common neighborhood and a strong bilateral relationship tie the two countries together while different political traditions are driving them apart? Is the emergence of a Nordic coalition more likely in NATO than it has been in the EU? This chapter will focus on Finnish and Swedish foreign and security policy traditions and identities, and their impact on the two countries' memberships in NATO. What kind of allies can the two new Nordic countries be expected to become, and how tight will their mutual relationship in NATO be?

The impact of historical identities

AS PARTS OF THE PROTESTANT cultural realm, both Finland and Sweden share a strong state-centric political tradition. In the long run, this common heritage has led to similarities in their notions of security as well as in their very basic approach to the idea of European unity in the 1990s. The lack of connections to federalist thinking in continental Europe and the political movements representing it became obvious in this context.[1]

However, for Finland this state-centric political culture has always been linked with ideas of small-statehood and territorial exposedness. During earlier centuries, Finland was a border area between two hostile empires – Sweden and Russia, which fought several times over Finnish territories. For centuries, Finland formed the borderland between the two main forms of Christianity, Roman Catholic and Orthodox. During the Cold War era, Finland's eastern border became the frontier between the two antagonistic blocs, the East and the West. Finland occupied a strange position between the blocs through its commitment to military neutrality, with a specific Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union requiring wartime military cooperation, while at the same time belonging to the West

1 Brent, Nelsen and Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union. Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration*, pp. 236–44.

with respect to the political and economic bases of Finnish society. The borderland tradition has emphasized the border lines of the Finnish territory and its insecure location.

Finland's history and geopolitics have also given cause to the emergence of a strong small-state identity. In the course of history, this has been fueled by a big, unpredictable neighbor – the Soviet Union or Russia – and a need to wage war against it to safeguard Finnish sovereignty. All in all, Finland's heritage has led to state security and political integrity taking a prominent role in the country's policies. They have been understood to be best promoted by means of a pragmatic security policy and a broad societal consensus ensured for major security policy choices. The value of international cooperation with likeminded countries, and of a rules-based international order in general, have always been high for Finland.

> *Sweden, for its part, does not share a similar small-state identity or culture of exposedness as Finland.*

Sweden, for its part, does not share a similar small-state identity or culture of exposedness as Finland. With its great power history and ability to avoid involvement in wars for the past two centuries, Sweden's self-perception differs clearly from Finland's. While Finland's Cold War neutrality was a pragmatic solution aiming at extending its international room for maneuver, Swedish neutrality had clearer ideological origins on the one hand. But on the other, it reflected Swedish great power ambitions, as it was seen to serve as a key instrument for the Swedish mission in support of global peace and justice. Finnish and Swedish security policy positions have been summarized as those of an exposed country and a protected one.[2] The success of neutrality policy in general is not viewed as positively in Finland as in Sweden, where its neutrality policy is widely seen to have protected the country from being involved in wars for two centuries.

2 Wahlbäck, "*Det hotade landet och det skyddade. Ett perspektiv på förhållandet Finland-Sverige från februarimanifestet till Vinterkriget, 1899-1939*" in Suominen & Björnsson (eds), *Det hotade landet och det skyddade. Sverige och Finland från 1500-talet till våra dagar*, pp. 121–46.

A stronger internationalist approach, as well as responsibility for regional security, have been visible elements distinguishing the Swedish security policy from the Finnish one. However, with its more accentuated small-state identity, Finland adjusted itself more easier than Sweden to the EU's supranational framework. From the early years of its EU membership, Finland has prioritized EU unity and capacity to act and has shown flexibility regarding its own national interests. Finland has also been more willing than Sweden to develop an EU defense policy addressing the whole range of threats, including territorial and border security, while Sweden has been protecting its neutrality as well as its special interests towards NATO and the US.[3]

Emerging relationships with NATO

Despite their similar outlooks, the Finnish and Swedish paths to full NATO membership have been inherently different. In Finland, a highly pragmatic approach to NATO emerged after the initial years of PfP and participation in the first NATO-led crisis management operations in the Balkans. The key milestones with a deepening partnership led to some partisan controversies, which were quickly resolved. Instead, a broad societal consensus emerged about the advantages of a deepening partnership with NATO. In the early 2000s, the so-called "NATO option" was formulated, aiming originally at appeasing those constituencies that were most in favor of accession to NATO.[4] According to the option, Finland maintained a national room for maneuver in its security policy and retained the option of joining a military alliance and applying for NATO membership. Later on, this option received broad political recognition and kept the interests to promote full membership at bay. Only two center-right parties, the

3 Håkansson, "Finding its way in EU security and defence cooperation: the case from Sweden."

4 Prime Minister's Office Publications 13/2009, "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009".

National Coalition Party and the minor Swedish People's party, had adopted a positive decision on NATO membership, but did not make it a major topic in their election campaigns. Finland's NATO option also included a message to countries such as Russia about the lack of political constraints for a policy of alignment with NATO.

Until Russia started its war against Ukraine, Finland seemed to be pleased with its policy, thus lacking any major need to activate the NATO option. Deepening its defense cooperation bilaterally with major NATO allies and with Sweden – alongside an enhanced NATO partnership – seemed to be a sufficient tool in an increasingly unstable security environment. Finland's long-term efforts to strengthen the EU's role in defense policy also started to bear fruit as the EU had begun to move from international crisis management tasks towards the field of territorial defense by gradually harmonizing its threat assessment and moving on with common capability development.[5]

The Swedish path to full NATO membership is more complicated in terms of its domestic political background. Sweden lacks a Finnish type of consensus culture in foreign policy and the NATO issue was thus more politicized over the years. The party field was strongly polarized on the question of NATO membership, with center-right parties starting to support accession to NATO one by one. This was reflected in Swedish public opinion, which during the past decade showed stronger levels of support to NATO membership (30–40 percent in favor of accession) than public opinion in Finland (20–30 percent). Individual topics in relation to the deepened partnership, such as the Host Nation Support Agreement with NATO, thus tended to be more heavily politicized than in Finland. At the same time, a final change of policy seemed to be firmly blocked by the Social Democrats' ideological attachment to the notion of neutrality or military non-alignment.

Differences between political cultures and identities also affected modes of change from partnership in favor of full membership in NATO taking place in the two countries

5 The two key policy documents that have paved the way to this direction are Shared Vision, Common Action, A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016) and A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022).

during Spring 2022. The change was more sudden in Finland, for which full membership had stayed more distant in terms of public and party opinion. Political pragmatism made visible again in the fast and smooth way in which a broad political consensus emerged around a full change of policy in favor of NATO membership. This time, policy formulation among political elites was, however, significantly facilitated by a rapid change of public opinion taking place as soon as the Russian war against Ukraine had started.

While Finnish public support of NATO membership had been around 30 percent in January, it rose to around 50 percent after the outbreak of the war and then finally to over 70 percent later in the Spring. When the final decision on the application was taken in May, it was supported by a clear majority of voters of all political parties represented in parliament. Throughout the national process, it appeared as if Finland would go its own way in case the Swedish accession process would be blocked by domestic hurdles. It was, however, obvious that the political elites in Finland did everything they could to make sure that the two countries could enter NATO hand-in-hand.

The change in Swedish policy was somewhat different. Given that the center-right parties, except for the Sweden Democrats who changed their position in late April,[6] had already started to support accession to NATO, the change largely revolved around the position of the ruling Social Democratic Party. Until late Spring 2022, the government party opposed Swedish NATO accession. In early March, Swedish Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson, even stated that she considered a Swedish NATO accession to be a destabilizing factor for European security.[7] The center-right parties in the opposition exerted heavy pressure on the government with less support from public opinion than in the Finnish case.

Swedish public opinion, which earlier had indicated a stronger support to NATO membership than the Finnish one, this time showed more varying trends and put less pressure on governmental decision-making than in Finland. The fast Finnish process towards NATO membership again seemed to

6 See, for example, SVT, "SD svänger om Nato: "Vi behöver gå hand i hand med Finland".

7 SVT, "Andersson står fast vid Natouttalande".

put pressure on the Social Democratic Swedish government, whose close cooperation with the Finnish political leadership did not go unnoticed. The role of active trilateral diplomacy, with joint visits of the Finnish and Swedish leaderships to leading NATO countries, was another visible element of national policy formulation.[8] The Swedish Social Democratic Party, however, remained divided on the membership issue, but finally decided to support Swedish NATO accession at a party board meeting in mid-May. This enabled Finland and Sweden to file their membership applications together on May 18, 2022.

Comparable NATO members?

Both short-term political interests and long-term traditions and identities will affect future Finnish and Swedish membership policies in NATO. It is obvious that, irrespective of their decades-long close partnerships with NATO, the change to full membership will have significant political and strategic consequences for the two countries. For Sweden, membership in NATO will end the policy of non-alignment, which according to the Swedish doctrine has protected the country from getting involved in military conflicts. This policy of non-alignment has survived despite Sweden's accession to the EU and commitment to the obligation (TEU, art. 42.7) on mutual assistance.[9]

For Finland, the change is much smaller in this respect due to the more pragmatic and less ideological approach to earlier neutrality and their later policy of non-alignment. In the Finnish case, non-alignment is already understood to have lost a lot of its content due to commitment to the EU's

8 Together with the Finnish President, Sauli Niinistö, the Swedish Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson, paid a visit to the Whitehouse twice during the critical stages of the NATO process: the first visit to President Joe Biden took place on March 4, 2022 just a week after the war against Ukraine had started and the second on May 18 following the national decisions to apply for NATO membership.

9 Sverige, NATO och säkerheten. Betänkade av Natoutredningen, p. 33.

obligations and policies. Therefore, the core emphasis of the change will be strategic and linked with the new role of the Finnish border as a border between NATO and Russia.

The grounds given for the Finnish and Swedish decisions to apply for NATO membership included many common elements.[10] The key reason for both countries was linked with the Russian attack against Ukraine and its serious implications for Finland and Sweden's security. Membership in NATO was, under these circumstances, seen to provide the best support for the countries, which both stressed the preventive and deterring impact of NATO's Article 5. The possibilities that NATO membership would provide for enhanced Nordic defense cooperation, in addition to bilateral Finnish-Swedish cooperation, were also emphasized.

Geopolitical needs and interests are obviously one field where Finland and Sweden will continue to have a lot in common.

Geopolitical needs and interests are obviously one field where Finland and Sweden will continue to have a lot in common as future members of NATO. Growing tensions in the Baltic Sea region and in the Arctic will form real security policy concerns for the two countries and they will likely seek to enhance NATO's role in these regions politically as well as militarily. NATO will provide a natural framework to enhance the already existing defense cooperation among the Nordic countries but also with the UK, with whom Finland and Sweden have recently strengthened cooperation both bilaterally and in the JEF framework.[11] When it comes to NATO's tasks, as countries with strong peacekeeping traditions and long experience of NATO-led crisis management operations, Finland and Sweden most likely will

10 Report on Finland's Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 15.5.2022. Ett försämrat säkerhetspolitisskt läge – konsekvenser för Sverige, Regeringskansliet, Ds 2022:7.

11 Launched at NATO's Wales summit in 2014, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) is a UK-led task group consisting of armed forces from the UK and eight partner nations: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. JEF consists of high-readiness forces of its participating states aiming at strengthening security in the north of Europe.

continue to invest in NATO's role in crisis management – but not at the expense of its tasks in collective defense. The origins of their memberships are apt to drive both countries to focus strongly on NATO's capabilities and credibility in its Article 5 tasks. Sweden has been more openly looking for concrete protection from NATO's collective defense, as it is in the process of reconstructing its national defense after having dismantled major parts of it after the Cold War. Finland, which did not make corresponding major changes to its territorial defense, has stressed the role of national defense and preparedness to defend its own territory as a starting point for its NATO policy.

Finland and Sweden can also be expected to show a growing interest in NATO's capabilities in countering other types of threats than the traditional military ones. Hybrid threat operations of different sorts have made themselves highly visible in the transatlantic realm, and both the EU and NATO have launched many new policies in support of their member states to counter them. As hybrid threats do not fade away along with the on-going war but can instead be seen to intensify due to the deepened confrontation between Russia and the West, there will be a growing need for NATO to further develop its capabilities in this realm. This will be another field where Finnish and Swedish interests and security policy traditions will converge.

Different political cultures and identities will likely steer Finland and Sweden towards somewhat different membership profiles. Finland decided not to raise any major reservations or conditions for its membership. Like its EU membership, Finland's policy to NATO will probably be characterized by an engaged and constructive approach. Finland's small-state identity will drive it to a position of an internal mediator seeking to keep the organization together and abstain from taking part in internal blocs or rivalries. Finland most likely will not face any domestic constraints to giving full military contribution to NATO's joint operations, such as the air policing mission in the Baltic States or Iceland. Bilateral defense agreements conducted with major NATO allies will help Finland to carry out its NATO responsibilities.

The Swedish NATO policy will be more affected by domestic ideological dividing lines and a less consensual culture in foreign policy. When approving NATO accession, the Swedish

Social Democratic Party included a ban on the placement of nuclear arms or foreign permanent bases in its decision.[12] On the other hand, Sweden's NATO policy will be affected by its historically close bilateral relationship with the US, which might drive Sweden to seek a common understanding with the leading NATO country on major strategic decisions within the alliance. By contrast, Finland is more inclined to seek broader multilateral solutions even within NATO.

The impact of NATO membership on the EU policies of the two countries is another field where differences rather than similarities are likely to occur. Finland can be seen to be more at pains in conciliating its usual strong commitment to deepen the EU's defense policy with an emerging new transatlantic defense identity. Adopting an equal commitment to both frameworks might be successful in many cases. An example is the context of external operations, hybrid or cyber threats, where the two organizations clearly have different toolboxes but would benefit from close mutual cooperation.

However, when it comes to the discussion about the EU's strategic autonomy in defense, development of its operational capabilities separately from NATO or enhancing preparedness for the implementation of the EU's own mutual defense obligation (TEU art. 42.7), much more careful balancing will be needed to conciliate the two identities. Having a constructive approach towards the EU's defense policy is an integral part of Finland's generally positive attitude to the deepening of European integration. It goes back to the firm security policy role taken by the EU in Finnish political thinking. This approach is not likely to change along with NATO membership, which does not necessarily mean that NATO membership would be seen as a less valuable alliance for Finland. The Finnish policy might be developed to have clear similarities with the German approach, where European defense cooperation could rather be seen to be enhanced in the context of NATO than in parallel with it.

For Sweden, the balancing of policies may be easier due to a less enthusiastic approach adopted to the EU's defense

12 For the decision of the governing body of the Swedish Social Democrat Party, see https://www.socialdemokraterna.se/nyheter/nyheter/2022-05-15-partistyrelsens-beslut-om-socialdemokraternas-sakerhetspolitiska-linje, September, 5, 2022.

policy. Sweden's Atlantic identity could more easily rely both on history and direct proximity with the Nordic Atlanticist neighbors, Denmark and Norway. It is easier to see Sweden seek a leadership position speaking in favor of common Nordic interests in the transatlantic framework.

Conclusions

FINLAND AND SWEDEN WILL JOIN NATO hand-in-hand, but with significantly different starting points in terms of political identities and domestic constraints for security policy. The two countries are, however, tightly bound by common geopolitical interests in an ever-worsening regional security environment. The depth of their mutual defense cooperation is a sign of this, and it is likely to be further enhanced in the NATO framework. The same can be said about the all-Nordic defense cooperation, NORDEFCO, which thus far has been constrained by diverging Nordic alignment policies.

Apart from their concrete need to safeguard the functioning and credibility of NATO's collective defense, the two new Nordic NATO allies will be interested in developing NATO's assets in countering hybrid threats. NATO's cooperation with the EU from their point of view is essential in a situation where the EU is also increasingly becoming an actor in great power politics and a target for hostile operations conducted by authoritarian states.

Regarding the broader policies of Finland and Sweden in NATO, we will not be seeing two similar countries joining the transatlantic alliance. They are a small state and a former great power, respectively – a pragmatist and an ideologist. Both Finland and Sweden have to learn to see themselves as militarily aligned countries, with all the repercussions this might have for their broader foreign and security policy.

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NUCLEAR POLICY IN NATO

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM FINLAND AND SWEDEN?

BY STEFAN FORSS

As new members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Finland and Sweden will have to adapt and perhaps revise their traditional nuclear policies. Their positions on nuclear arms control are not likely to change much, if at all. However, their positions regarding NATO's nuclear deterrence, a topic that has been largely avoided in domestic debate, will have to be clarified.

AS MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Finland and Sweden remain firmly committed to the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons. There is also a prudent recognition of realities among Finnish and Swedish decision-makers that there are no short-cuts to achieve that long-standing goal. On the contrary, Russia's unprovoked and illegitimate war against Ukraine and its loud rhetoric and blatant threats of nuclear use now define a very different and dangerous playing field demanding robust response and solutions. Therefore, Finland and Sweden are prepared to participate constructively in the development of NATO's nuclear deterrent posture without national reservations.

Stefan Forss is a professor, retired physicist, and Adjunct Professor at the Finnish National Defence University. He has served as Chief Scientist at the Technical Research Centre of Finland and Senior Scientist at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focusing on nuclear weapons issues, arms control and security policy.

General overview

> "The most spectacular event of the past half century is one that did not occur. We have enjoyed sixty years without nuclear weapons exploded in anger. What a stunning achievement – or, if not achievement, what stunning good fortune."

So began Professor Thomas C. Schelling his Nobel Prize lecture in December 2005.[1] Schelling was awarded the economics prize, but his lecture dealt entirely with nuclear matters and the legacy of Hiroshima.

Schelling's mention of "stunning good fortune" refers primarily to the early nuclear decades, when nuclear war was a real possibility on several occasions, not to mention the erroneous Soviet interpretation of the NATO exercise Able Archer in 1983. A few years later, presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev agreed that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and an era of unprecedented, massive nuclear arms reductions began. The political leaders in the US and Soviet Union/Russia truly shared a vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world. The military and defense communities in both countries were skeptical.

Against this backdrop, Russian Colonel General Leonid Ivashov surprised the audience at the Finnish National Defence University in September 2000, when he claimed that the world had never been closer to nuclear war than the year before, during NATO's bombing campaign against Serbia during the Kosovo War. The general's signal was hardly registered. What he subtly indicated was that Russia was in the process of altering its basic nuclear posture in a way that seemed to pave the way for using nuclear weapons particularly for political intimidation and coercion. President Vladimir Putin has proceeded along this course with determination, especially after Russia's massive invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. At the end, President Gorbachev saw his life's work being destroyed.

Unfortunately, the prospects for further negotiated nuclear reductions between Russia and the US don't look promising, as the INF treaty is dead and the relevance of the only

remaining bilateral treaty – the New START Treaty – is under threat as Russia unilaterally abrogated its on-site verification regime in August 2022. The treaty is due to expire in February 2026.

History doesn't repeat itself, but some current nuclear parameters concerning NATO's extended deterrence resemble those from the mid-1970s, when the Soviet Union was building up its medium-range nuclear forces with the RSD-10 Pioneer (SS-20 Saber) missile as its core weapons system. German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's courageous leadership and initiative to promote and adopt NATO's so called "double-track decision" was decisive.[2] It was a demand that the Soviet Union would refrain from further sub-strategic nuclear build-up while NATO would introduce medium-range missile systems to offset the imbalance as a prerequisite for further arms limitations talks. Negotiations would be futile unless they took place from a position of strength. NATO adopted the "double-track" decision on December 12, 1979.

> *Meaningful nuclear discussions now seem impossible with the current Russian leadership.*

Then, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and Schmidt "immediately knew that his hopes of meaningful arms talks were going up in smoke."[3] The Soviet Union rejected NATO's proposal, and Pershing II missiles and cruise missiles were deployed in Europe. Years later, Schmidt's ground-breaking work bore fruit when the INF Treaty was signed in December 1987. A whole class of nuclear weaponry in Europe was eliminated in the early 1990s.

Meaningful nuclear discussions now seem impossible with the current Russian leadership. Navigating safely in the coming years will not be easy. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) – which formally entered into force on January 22, 2021 – is not acknowledged by any nuclear-weapon state. It omits the question of how to protect countries against nuclear threats and intimidation. This treaty is no substitute for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which for all its shortcomings remains the sole multilateral treaty regulating nuclear weapons matters. Finland and Sweden signed NPT in 1968 and became formal parties to the treaty in 1970.

Finnish and Swedish historical backgrounds

THE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS for Finland and Sweden differed completely in the spring of 1945. Finland was exhausted after having just barely been able to defend and secure its independence in the war against the Soviet Union. This came at a huge cost in terms of the numbers of killed or wounded, territorial loss of Karelia and big war reparations imposed by the aggressor. All efforts were made to recover from the war, rebuild and resettle the 400,000 Karelians who fled their homes. The implications of the powerful new weapons, which were demonstrated and used a few months later, hardly occupied the minds of Finnish leaders. Finland's initial response to nuclear issues can thus be described as reactive.

Only several years later, at the beginning of the Cold War, did Finnish decision-makers become aware of how nuclear weapons could expose Finland to new threats. For example, it was feared that the planned strike routes of U.S. strategic bombers attacking the Soviet Union would have overflown Finland. At worst, this could have triggered a response from the Soviet Union, insisting that Finland didn't live up to its commitments of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance signed by the countries in 1948.

For several decades, Finnish defense policy played only a secondary role in Finnish foreign policy. President Urho Kekkonen's leitmotif was to pursue an active foreign policy of neutrality, which was not always tolerated by Moscow. Cold nerves, cunning, and initiatives were needed. One such initiative was Kekkonen's proposal of a Nordic Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in 1963, which was not well-received in the West, where it was regarded as a reflection of Soviet interests. The president's advisor Ambassador Max Jakobson noted later that for Denmark and Norway, acceptance of the Kekkonen Plan would "have meant virtual exclusion from the NATO defense system [. . .] and embarrassment to their allies". The only rational conclusion is that this plan was never intended to be realized. Instead, it was rather to be seen in the context of Finnish-Soviet relations, as a confidence-building process aimed at bringing certain improvements in Finland's position and avoid the risks of military consultations.[4]

The series of huge Soviet atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in the early 1960s in the Arctic affected Finland directly. Radioactive fallout became a real concern, and therefore Finland wholeheartedly supported the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, which prohibited nuclear tests in the atmosphere, outer space and under water.

In the field of nuclear arms control, Finland offered the nuclear superpowers its services as opportunities permitted. The initial SALT negotiations took place in Helsinki in 1969. President George H.W. Bush met President Mikhail Gorbachev in Helsinki in 1990, and presidents Yeltsin and Clinton agreed on a framework for a START III treaty in Helsinki in 1997. The infamous summit between presidents Trump and Putin took place in Helsinki in July 2018.

If Finland's position on nuclear issues was reactive, Sweden's was quite the opposite. The Swedish Defence Forces' interest in nuclear weapons awoke shortly after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first nuclear weapons investigation began soon after these events. Nuclear weapons research was concentrated at the recently established Swedish National Defence Research Institute (FOA). The Swedish nuclear weapon – had it been realized – would have been based on implosion technology with plutonium as the raw material. Planning began for a new aircraft, which would have become the prime weapons carrier. Later, this new strike fighter became known as the Saab 37 Viggen.

> *The Swedish Defence Forces' interest in nuclear weapons awoke shortly after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*

The Swedish "atomic bomb" project was advanced. A 5–50 kiloton TNT equivalent variable yield fission bomb was planned, and the Swedish R&D community was convinced that it would have worked without actual nuclear weapon tests.[5] The last implosion tests were performed at FOA's Grindsjön station in 1972, two years after Sweden had joined the NPT Treaty.

The political dimension of the Swedish nuclear weapon project is complex. It is difficult to establish an exact time when it was decided that the project would be terminated.

Prime Minister Tage Erlander most likely came to this conclusion in the early 1960s.[6] Sweden going nuclear was definitely ruled out in the Swedish defense White Paper in 1968 and when the country signed the NPT. Despite this, bizarre, unfounded claims were occasionally made that Sweden had quietly preserved its option to go nuclear.[7]

The U.S. position on the Swedish nuclear bomb project turned from indifference in the 1950s to strong opposition in the early 1960s. Proliferation of nuclear weapons became an issue of great concern and had to be thwarted. Sweden's decision to forego nuclear weapons is closely linked to the benefits it could obtain from the US in return for staying non-nuclear.

These questions, including neutral Sweden's position as a possible unofficial NATO member state, were dealt with in detail in the Swedish Neutrality Policy Commission's report "Om kriget kommit . . . - Förberedelser för mottagande av militärt bistånd 1949–1969" in 1994.[8] A key document cited in this report is the U.S. National Security Council's paper on NSC 6006/1 ("U.S. Policy toward Scandinavia") on April 6, 1960.

Sweden may perhaps have interpreted the U.S. security commitments more positively than was warranted.[9] However, Sweden initiated unilateral actions to provide for U.S. support. Ambassador Krister Wahlbäck summarized:

> The earlier the Soviet invasion forces on the other side of the Baltic Sea were engaged, the more likely it was that the attack against Sweden would fail or be made impossible.
> The Swedish preparations to receive this indirect support had several elements: measures to be able to identify Western aircraft on the Swedish radar screens, the extension of certain runways, the establishment of certain secure telecommunications connections to the West, and the planning of military cooperation groups to be sent out to Western command centers before a war.[10]

It was understood that the Soviet invasion forces were to be engaged either with or without nuclear weapons. This evidently included the possibility that U.S. bombers or strike aircraft using Swedish air bases or transiting Swedish airspace

would carry nuclear weapons. This is also a future possibility with Finland and Sweden in NATO.

Sweden and the US engaged in very significant military-technical cooperation in the early 1960s. It led to large-scale licensed production of state-of-the-art radar and infrared homing air-to-air missiles for the Swedish Air Force at Saab's Linköping facilities.[11] These missiles were not available even for close U.S. allies and partners at the time.

In these circumstances, abandoning the nuclear option was no doubt easier for Sweden. It was very favorably situated on the map and believed it could count on significant support from NATO countries, particularly the US. In addition, significant financial resources were freed for development of what would become Sweden's exceptionally strong conventional territorial defense force.

Russia's nuclear posture

THE STARTING POINT for a credible NATO nuclear policy is to understand how Russia's present nuclear posture has evolved, as Russia regards the US and NATO as its main adversaries. The Jamestown Foundation book "Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine" and the chapter on "Russian Nuclear Policy, Doctrine and Strategy" may be useful.[12] The latter draws heavily from the two-volume report "Soviet Intentions 1965–1985", which is based on thorough interviews in the early 1990s with key Soviet military officers and defense officials.[13]

Soviet strategists considered the nuclear balance between the Soviet Union and the United States to be unstable. The only truly stable nuclear situation was one in which one side had clear superiority over the other. The imbalance had to be in the Soviet Union's favor. This mindset still prevails in Russia, it seems.

A key source was Colonel General (ret.) Andrian Danilevich, who was deeply involved with operational and nuclear plans. In the early 1960s, it was thought that nuclear weapons made all other weapons superfluous. Gradually, realism returned,

together with the realization that the United States possessed large numbers of nuclear weapons capable of inflicting "unrecoverable losses." A clearer appreciation of the devastating consequences of a full-scale nuclear exchange began to emerge. In a 1972 nuclear exercise, Soviet leaders were presented with the results of a simulated US nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. They were horrified.[14]

Mathematical modeling of a nuclear war in Europe provided equally disturbing results to the Soviet military planners. Because of the generally prevailing eastward wind patterns in Europe, execution of the basic plan to hit all NATO airbases with nuclear strikes at the onset of the "counteroffensive" would have exposed the Warsaw Pact forces to massive radioactive fallout, effectively incapacitating them soon afterwards.[15] The Soviet Union needed a new operational military doctrine with stronger emphasis on conventional forces and capabilities and delayed nuclear use. When the reforms were implemented in the early 1980s the "Euromissiles" had assumed a key role – that of deterrence, not use.[16]

A defensive nuclear doctrine was adopted 5–6 years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. This doctrine, according to Danilevich, was based on the realization that a nuclear war could not be won. The INF Treaty ruined everything, the general claimed bitterly.

Russia's nuclear forces faced formidable difficulties in the 1990s. Russia's position as a lasting nuclear superpower seemed doubtful. US–Soviet/Russian arms control agreements and unilateral reductions followed by a decision to undertake a massive, comprehensive restoration of Russia's nuclear forces in April 1999 turned the trend. Vladimir Putin chaired the meeting of Russia's National Security Council when the decisions were taken. Non-strategic nuclear weapons with variable and very low-yield nuclear warheads were included in the package.[17]

One of the first measures implemented was to silently abandon President Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's commitments, which largely corresponded to President George H.W. Bush's unilateral declarations of non-strategic nuclear weapons reductions in 1991–1992.[18] Massive stocks of obsolete nuclear weapons were dismantled, but much was retained. Unlike the US, all Russian services were certified to employ non-strategic nuclear weapons.

The Russian ground forces are a case in point. The following is a direct quote from the website of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation:

> The Missile Troops and Artillery (MT & A) is an Arm of the Land Force, which is the primary means of fire and *nuclear destruction* [italics added] of the enemy during conduct of combined-arms operations (combat actions).[19]

The other major measure was Russia's determined effort to nullify the INF Treaty, which was widely regarded as an ignominious surrender. Russia began to clandestinely restore capabilities lost through the INF in the early 2010s.[20] Not until December 2018 did NATO, however, accuse Russia of INF treaty breach.[21] Finally, the political blame for killing INF went to President Trump.

> *Russia began to clandestinely restore capabilities lost through the INF in the early 2010s.*

The current list of identified Russian non-strategic weapons types certified within the services is indeed impressive.

Equally important as the nuclear military hardware is the development of doctrine and strategic thinking. Russia's "escalate to de-escalate" doctrine, developed in the 1990s, is well-known. The idea is that Russia could use nuclear weapons selectively, convinced that the adversary surrenders on terms favorable to Russia once nuclear weapons were used. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis refers to it as an "escalate to victory" doctrine.[22]

This is an area where Russia may sense superiority, as research in this area has been dwindling in the US. STRATCOM Chief Admiral Chas Roberts admitted this openly in August 2022: "America's expertise is just not what it was at the end of the Cold War", the Admiral warned.[23]

Issues for the U.S. and NATO

AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, U.S. and NATO reliance on nuclear weapons diminished dramatically. The US adapted to new realities with bilateral nuclear arms reduction agreements (INF and START) as well as unilateral measures. Russia's drastic nuclear build-up and roll-back of agreed treaties and agreements were not taken very seriously. The US has stayed on course to this day. "The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review underscores our commitment to take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons and reestablish our leadership in arms control."[24]

The difference in U.S. and Russian behavior is most clearly seen in the sub-strategic field. In September 1991, United States announced that it would withdraw all land-based tactical nuclear weapons from overseas bases and all sea-based tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. surface ships, submarines, and naval aircraft. The Navy withdrew the nuclear version of the Tomahawk and-attack cruise missiles by mid-1992.[25] Their warheads were dismantled by 2011.

The result is that U.S. Army and U.S. Marines are entirely non-nuclear services; only the U.S. Air Force has employed sub-strategic nuclear weapons for a generation. Except for the possible but unlikely U.S. re-introduction of sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles in the near term, this situation will remain. The contrast to Russia, which has nuclear-certified units in all services, is obvious. The fact that sub-strategic nuclear warheads are mostly stored in central storage facilities is no reason to treat Russia's ground forces as non-nuclear. Russia's numerical advantage in sub-strategic nuclear weapons in relation to the US is approximately tenfold, about 2,000 to 200.[26]

While Russia has developed a vast variety of different sub-strategic nuclear weapons for its services, the United States has completed development of just one single weapon, the B61-12 nuclear bomb. Is that enough to convince Russia that President Reagan's famous line from his State of the Union Address in 1984, "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought", is still valid? It is worth noting that the

recognized five nuclear-weapon states (P5) affirmed this core position as late as early January 2022.[27]

Opinions differ, however, about the need for the US and NATO to have a more varied and robust sub-strategic arsenal to match Russia's. The Biden administration is content with B61-12 in its role as the sole "non-strategic" nuclear weapon. U.S. Congress, supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wants a new nuclear sea-launched cruise missile.

"If we're serious, yes. We need variable yield warheads", IISS expert and former senior NATO official William Alberque opined.[28] "I think we should consider the French model – air-launched nuclear cruise missiles. That's a far more serious capability than B-61s." Nuclear cruise missiles on F-35 strike fighters would seriously complicate the calculations of the Russian General Staff. At present, Pentagon and USAF has no such plans.

Discussing NATO's F-35/B61-12 issue in isolation may, however, lead astray. It omits a key factor: US strategic capabilities. The US has for years claimed that all nuclear use is strategic, and Russia will not disregard that US strategic forces have a capability to provide extended deterrence for allies in "theater missions". The downside from the perspective of European members of the alliance is that such an arrangement is outside NATO's political domain and jurisdiction. One should not forget, though, that no NATO designated nuclear bomb will be used in anger unless it is approved by the President of the United States.

The strategic capabilities at US disposal for extended deterrence will consist of B-21 Raider and refurbished B-52 bombers, which will carry a new long-range standoff weapon (ALCM-N) similar to the proposed submarine-launched SLCM-N.[29] Russia cannot rule out that extended deterrence would be a cooperative effort of US Strategic Command, US European Command and NATO, with US Strategic Command in a leading role.

If, however, the present difficult security situation in Europe will continue for long or worsen, NATO may conclude that nuclear deterrence needs to be strengthened. A possible choice would then be to opt for air-launched nuclear cruise missiles on the F-35s.

Russia regards its exceptionally wide spectrum of nuclear weaponry, ranging from the explosive power of big car bombs

to Tsar Bomba-size 100 megaton doomsday weapons, as a unique political asset. The importance of yield therefore needs to be assessed. Are the US and NATO at such a disadvantage against Russia as sheer numbers would indicate?

"Absolutely not", says French veteran nuclear expert Dr. Bruno Tertrais.[30] "Yields don't mean anything in themselves. What matters is damage and collateral damage expectancies, which are functions of a much bigger set of parameters. What remains needed is the ability to tell Russia that NATO could respond to a limited strike with a limited strike, we can respond in kind, escalate, or de-escalate. NATO can already do that. The question is whether NATO needs to visibly alter its nuclear posture (basing/hosting, sharing)", the French professional says. One could add that the credibility of NATO responding in kind is contingent upon consensus of the governments of the Alliance member states.

Decreasing yield should not be technically difficult. It is proven technology. If Russia believes it has escalation dominance because there are no corresponding very low-yield nuclear weapons in the U.S. inventory, Russia is probably mistaken.

Finland, Sweden and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

FINLAND'S AND SWEDEN'S SUPPORT for a world free of nuclear weapons was established as the countries joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear member states. Finland remained firmly on this track when various campaigns to move forward came about, for example the Global Zero Campaign, initiated in 2008 and endorsed by many high-profile Western politicians, including President Barack Obama in 2009. Global Zero was not well received by Russia or by peace movement NGOs, which rather rallied for a different campaign: ICAN.

Finland didn't get involved in ICAN or the negotiations

in the United Nations leading up to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Sweden took a different course and participated in the negotiation of the TPNW at the United Nations in New York in 2017 and voted in favor of its adoption.

In explaining its vote, it said: "We warmly welcome the fact that at last we have a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, the only weapon of mass destruction not prohibited until now. Though nuclear weapons are not likely to disappear soon, we are convinced that the norm against the use and possession of nuclear weapons will be strengthened by this treaty."[31]

US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis issued a warning to Sweden that signing TPNW would have adverse effects on US–Swedish defense cooperation. As this issue was highly polarizing, Foreign Minister Margot Wallström decided in October 2017 that Ambassador Lars-Erik Lundin be given the task to perform an "Inquiry into the Consequences of a Swedish Accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". Lundin delivered his report in January 2019.[32] Of particular interest now is the inquiry's statement on TPNW and its implications for a possible future NATO membership:

"Unless the Treaty text is amended, the accession of Sweden to the TPNW would without any doubt prevent a possible future Swedish NATO membership. This situation would remain the same as long as NATO remained a nuclear alliance." […] *The overall assessment of the implications for Sweden […] leads to the conclusion that Sweden should neither accede to nor sign the Treaty in its present form* [Italics in original]."

Finland and Sweden indicate their likely course

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE WAS NEVER a real topic in Finnish public debate. The benefits of U.S. and NATO deterrence policy for Finland were not mentioned either. The horrendous consequences of nuclear war were, however, recognized. Former Finnish Chief-of-Defence Admiral Jan Klenberg,

a devoted pupil of U.S. strategist Thomas C. Schelling, understood that except for protection against blast and nuclear radiation, defense planning for a nuclear war environment was futile. There was no basis to assess or predict such an environment. Therefore, the only prudent defense planning was to deal with situations below the nuclear threshold.[33]

After the end of the Cold War, Finnish governments (like many others) held a strong belief that interdependence and mutual interests were key factors that would ensure security with Russia, which was supposed to act rationally. The last remnants of that thinking were shattered on February 24, 2022. "There is not much left of our earlier relationship with Russia. The trust is gone, and there is nothing in sight on which to base a new beginning", President Sauli Niinistö said in August 2022.[34] Cooperation as a policy is gone and then there is only deterrence left, including nuclear deterrence, according to Niinistö:

> When Finland eventually becomes a member of NATO, it is precisely the preventive effect of the joint deterrent that is the most significant addition to our security. As a NATO member, Finland will participate in the planning and building of the deterrent maintained by the alliance. It will provide the kind of protection we would not have outside NATO.[35]

This is an entirely new Finnish position, which signals that Finland will participate in NATO's "Nuclear Sharing" policy as well as in the work in the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). There will be no reservations like Norway's and Denmark's on nuclear policy and possible hosting of U.S. nuclear weapons on Finnish soil.[36] The content of Finnish and Swedish participation in NATO's Nuclear Sharing program remains to be worked out when both countries are formally member states.

Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde presented Sweden's position in a letter to NATO SG Jens Stoltenberg on July 5, 2022:

> Sweden accepts NATO's approach to security and defence, including the essential role of nuclear weapons, intends to participate fully in NATO's

> military structure and collective defence planning processes and is willing to commit forces and capabilities for the full range of Alliance missions.[37]

Finland and Sweden proceed side by side. A likely outcome is that both countries will probably participate with non-nuclear aircraft in NATO's annual nuclear Steadfast Noon exercises. It is interesting, that the name of the exercise was to be avoided not too long ago. These are held under the so-called SNOWCAT (Support of Nuclear Operations with Conventional Air Tactics) program, which is used to enable military assets from non-nuclear countries to support the nuclear strike mission without being formally part of it.

Finland's decision to purchase U.S. Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II fighters, certified to carry the U.S. B61-12 nuclear bomb, triggered a debate about these planes possibly getting a nuclear role. That option remains open, but it is very theoretical. Of the circa 100 B61 bombs stored in five European countries, about 60 are earmarked for use by NATO aircraft.[38] Storing a few U.S. nuclear bombs on Finnish soil under sovereign U.S. custody in peacetime, within striking range of Russian Iskander missiles and rather close to Russia's crucially important installations on the Kola, doesn't make sense. In Moscow, it would undoubtedly be interpreted as a new escalated threat.

The F-35s are often described as flying computers. It is safe to conclude that the nuclear software needed to enable Finnish F-35s or other allied fighters to carry and drop B61-12 nuclear bombs would not be provided for safety reasons until a NATO nuclear response had been decided.

For Sweden, this discussion is theoretical as Jas 39 Gripen will remain a conventional weapons platform unless the Swedish government decides that Gripen needs to be nuclear capable. That too doesn't seem likely.

One feature of Russia's nuclear posturing in the Nordic-Baltic region is the occasional but not in-frequent flights with strategic bombers in the adjacent airspace. Perhaps unrelated to this there is reason to point out that US B-52 strategic bombers have increased their presence and exercises in the region. Here there is a clear connection to extended deterrence.

For Sweden, the significance of B-52s flying in Swedish airspace, escorted by Jas 39 Gripen fighters has been an important signal of US defense support and assurance. Similar flights with US strategic bombers in Finnish airspace have, however, not yet taken place. Reasons for this have not been explained, but there seems to be a mutual understanding: the US doesn't want to unnecessarily provoke Russia and Finland doesn't need such assurances.

What could Finland and Sweden do in the Nuclear Planning Group? Simply put, they could promote discussion of nuclear matters. "Just a few years ago a former NATO Supreme Commander said that the best way to end a meeting in Brussels was to bring up the subject of nuclear weapons."[39] As members in the very secretive NPG, Finland and Sweden could play the role of new members with a legitimate right to know. NATO clearly needs serious discussion and the first basic question to ask could be the following: "Could you tell us under what conditions NATO would use nuclear weapons?" The new members could become a stimulus for filling the black hole of earlier unwillingness to even talk about these basic issues.

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35 Ibid.

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37 Letter from Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on July 5, 2022, https://www.svtstatic.se/image-cms/svtse/1657542892/nyheter/inrikes/article35953569.svt/BINARY/L%C3%84S%20Ann%20Lindes%20brev%205%20juli%202022. For a critical assessment of Sweden's decision, see Jens Petersson, "As Sweden gets ready for NATO, will its approach to nuclear weapons change?", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, July 27, 2022, https://thebulletin.org/2022/07/as-sweden-gets-ready-for-nato-will-its-approach-to-nuclear-weapons-change/

38 Hans M. Kristensen and Matthew Korda, "United States nuclear weapons, 2022", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Issue 3, May 9, 2022, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2022.2062943

39 Col. (ret., USAF) Sam Gardiner, private communication, July 14, 2022

THE ARCTIC

FROM CO-OPERATION TO CONFLICT?

IN 2022

BY ANDREAS ØSTHAGEN

Geopolitical tensions and jockeying for influence in the Arctic have intensified over the past few years. Although it never came to direct competition for resources in the North, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 caused the pendulum to swing away from co-operation, at least in the domain of security and military relations. Russia already had great ambitions in the Arctic, but a tense international situation casts a shadow across the region writ large.[1]

THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE in February 2022 marks a further watershed in relations between the West and Russia, including in the Arctic, as co-operation was halted and further sanctions on Russia were put in place. Still, politicians in Arctic countries emphasize how the Arctic is a region characterized by co-operation, and the hope is that, despite the invasion of Ukraine, low-level forms of collaboration with Russia can still be possible. There are, in other words, multiple political dynamics at play, in the field of security and 'geopolitics' in the Arctic.

Andreas Østhagen is a Senior Researcher at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Nord University, Oslo New University College & Wilson Center. His work focuses on the political dynamics of the Arctic/High North region, with a particular emphasis on security and geopolitics.

1 Østhagen, "Ukraine Crisis and the Arctic: Penalties or Reconciliation?"; CBC News. "Canada Boycotts Arctic Council Moscow Meeting over Ukraine"; Rahbek-Clemmensen, '"The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?'

One way to approach a study of these dynamics is by separating them into 'levels of analysis', a basic concept in the studies of security policy as, for example, formulated by David Singer. Singer divided the 'international system' and 'nation state' in order to better distinguish between events in international politics that occurred at one level but not the other.[2] I distinguish here between three levels: the international (the system level), the regional (the Arctic level), and the national.[3]

The system level is linked to neorealism and Kenneth Waltz,[4] where all states are considered equal entities in the search for relative power. A spotlight on the nation state, on the other hand, is about understanding states' foreign policy decisions and their specific security strategies. Graham Allison's study of the US handling of the Cuban [Missile] Crisis in 1962 is a prime example of such an analysis.[5] Over the past decades, we have also seen a number of regional studies on security policy. The decisive factor in such studies is geographical proximity: states that are close to each other have more intense interactions (positive and negative) than those located on different continents.[6] Regional security dynamics in regions such as the Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and the Arctic spurred increased academic attention.[7]

Dividing into these three levels and using Norway as the example on the national level,[8] helps bring to light the various dynamics of the Arctic, allowing an explanation of why ideas of conflict persist and why this is not necessarily contrary to the concepts of regional co-operation and stability. In addition, such a striation enables a discussion of how the different Arctic states perceive security policy challenges in

2 Singer, 'The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations'.

3 Østhagen, 'The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions'.

4 Waltz, Man, the State, and War; Waltz,. Theory of International Politics.

5 Allison, 'Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis'.

6 Kelly, 'Security Theory in the "New Regionalism"'.

7 Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Hoogensen, 'Bottoms Up! A Toast to Regional Security?'

8 The author is Norwegian and works at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute which is an independent research institute concerned with Norwegian High North / Arctic issues. For additional writing on this topic by the author, see (Østhagen 2016, 2018; Østhagen, Jørgensen, and Moe 2020; Østhagen and Raspotnik 2017; Østhagen, Sharp, and Hilde 2018; Østhagen 2021a).

their northern regions, and how things have changed (or not) since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

International Level: Power Balance and Spill Over

During the Cold War, the Arctic played a prominent role in the political and military competition between two superpowers. The region was important not due to conflicts of interest within the Arctic itself but because of its strategic role in the systemic competition between the US/NATO and the USSR at the international level.[9] Norway was one of only two NATO countries (the other being Turkey) that shared a border with the Soviet Union. Alaska—albeit separated by the Bering Strait—was in close proximity to the northeast of the USSR. Greenland and Iceland were strategically located in the North Atlantic, and the Kola Peninsula was, and remains, key in terms of Soviet and Russian military planning, as it provides Russian access to the Atlantic Ocean for strategic nuclear submarines.[10]

When the Cold War ended, the Arctic went from a region of geopolitical rivalry to one where Russia could be included in various co-operative arrangements with its former opponents. Several regional organizations (such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Council, and the Northern Dimension) appeared in the 1990s to deal with issues such as environmental matters, regional and local development, and cross-border co-operation – and relates to regional relations.[11] Although the interaction between Arctic states and Arctic peoples increased during this period, the region nevertheless disappeared from the geopolitical radar and lost its systemic or global significance.

9 Åtland, 'Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic'.

10 Huebert, 'Submarines, Oil Tankers and Icebreakers'.

11 Young, 'Whither the Arctic? Conflict or Cooperation in the Circumpolar North'.

Over the last two decades, the strategic importance of the Arctic region has again increased. As in the Cold War, the strategic importance of the region has grown primarily because Russia is committed to revamping its global militaristic and political position. The Arctic is one of the geographical areas where this can be done more or less unhindered. At the same time, the region is critical to Russia's nuclear deterrence strategy vis-à-vis NATO because of the Russian Northern Fleet, which houses the country's strategic nuclear submarines. Russia's increased military emphasis on the Arctic stems both from the melting of the sea ice that leads to increased shipping and activity, and from the importance of the Arctic to Putin's overall strategic plans and ambitions.[12]

In turn, especially since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, this has led NATO countries to look north and counter the Russian presence there by increasing their military presence through exercises or maritime security operations in the Barents Sea.[13] With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the security environment in the Arctic has become more tense. Hopes of re-starting security dialogue in the North to reduce tension that emerged around 2019-20 have been dashed, and sanctions on Russia, as well as halts in dialogue with the country, have been put in place. Finland and Sweden's subsequent decisions to join NATO in 2022—making seven out of eight Arctic countries NATO members—further solidifies the divisions and spillover of tensions to the North.

> *In contrast to what was the case during the Cold War, China has also emerged as a player in the North.*

12 See for example: Sergunin and Konyshev. 'Russian Military Strategies in the Arctic: Change or Continuity?'; Todorov, 'Russia in Maritime Areas off Spitsbergen (Svalbard): Is It Worth Opening the Pandora's Box?'; and Hønneland, "Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy."

13 Depledge. 'Train Where You Expect to Fight: Why Military Exercises Have Increased in the High North'.

In contrast to what was the case during the Cold War, China has also emerged as a player in the North.[14] When Beijing asserts its influence on the world stage, the Arctic is one of many regions where China's presence and interactions are components in an expansion of power, be it through scientific research or investments in Russia's fossil fuel industries.[15] China describes itself as a 'near-Arctic state', which can be perceived as not only having the right to get involved, but also having a duty to do so.[16]

But China's entry into the Arctic policy realm elicits reactions, especially in the US. This has led to the Arctic becoming relevant in the increasing global power competition between China and the US. US Secretary of State Pompeo's 2019 warning about Beijing's Arctic interests highlights how the US sees the Arctic as yet another arena where the new systemic competition between the two countries is sharpening.[17] This is to a lesser extent linked to Chinese actions in the Arctic; it is more about the US wanting to blunt China's global growth in as many areas as possible.[18] However, questions about Chinese-Russian co-operation in the Arctic and the effects this could have on regional tension are increasingly on the agenda after the sanctions placed on Russia in 2022.

Thus, tensions arising from issues in other parts of the world (i.e. Ukraine) or global power struggles have a spillover effect for the Arctic: on the rhetorical level in the form of bellicose statements and on the operational level in the form of increased military presence and exercises by NATO and Russia. The Arctic will continue to be on the global political agenda both because of its importance for Russia's strategic thinking and because of increasing Chinese interest in the region that in turn engender rivalry with the US.

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14 For an anlysis with a Nordic focus, see for example: Koivurova and Kopra, eds. Chinese Policy and Presence in the Arctic.

15 Guo, and Wilson. 'China, Russia, and Arctic Geopolitics'.; Edstrøm, Stensdal, and Heggelund. 'Den «nye Supermakten»: Hva Vil Kina i Arktis?'

16 The Guardian. 'US Warns Beijing's Arctic Activity Risks Creating "New South China Sea"'.

17 US Department of State. 'Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus'.

18 Østhagen, 'The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions'.

Regional Level: Common Interests

THERE IS AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE between these overall strategic considerations and those security issues concerning the Arctic region, in particular. As highlighted, when the Cold War's systemic competition came to an end, regional interaction and co-operation flourished in the North in the 1990s. As the region again gained global attention, in response to the concerns about 'a lack of governance' in the Arctic, the five Arctic coastal states gathered in Greenland in 2008 and declared the Arctic to be a region marked by co-operation.[19] They affirmed their intention to work within established international parameters and agreements, especially the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea – highlighting a specific regional approach and coherence amongst the Arctic states.[20]

Following this meeting, the Arctic states have frequently repeated the mantra of co-operation, articulated in relatively streamlined Arctic policy and/or strategy papers.[21] The deterioration in the relationship between Russia and the other Arctic states in 2014 did not change this.[22] They reconvened in Greenland in 2018 and repeated promises of co-operation and protection of the Law of the Sea, which, after all, gives the Arctic states sovereign rights over large parts of the Arctic Ocean.

In fact, it has been claimed that co-operation at low (regional) levels helps to ensure a low level of tension in the North.[23] The emergence of the Arctic Council as the primary forum for regional issues in the Arctic plays a role here,

19 Arctic Ocean Conference. 'The Ilulissat Declaration'.

20 Stephen and Knecht. Governing Arctic Change: Global Perspectives.

21 Rottem, 'Klima Og Sikkerhet i Arktis'.; Heininen, Everett, Padrtová, and Reissell. 'Arctic Policies and Strategies — Analysis, Synthesis, and Trends'.

22 Østhagen, 'High North, Low Politics Maritime Cooperation with Russia in the Arctic'. Byers.'Crises and International Cooperation: An Arctic Case Study'.

23 Keskitalo. 'International Region-Building: Development of the Arctic as an International Region'; Graczyk and Rottem. 'The Arctic Council: Soft Actions, Hard Effects?'; Stokke, 'Examing the Consequences of Arctic Institutions'.

despite (or because of) the fact that the forum actively avoids discussing security policy.[24] An increasing number of actors outside the Arctic have applied to the Council for observer status and this serves the Arctic countries more than anyone else, as it ensures that Arctic issues are addressed by the Arctic states themselves.[25] Demonstrating well-functioning co-operation mechanisms in the region also helps restrain the conflict-oriented discourse we have seen regarding developments in the Arctic. The Arctic Council can also curb any competing regimes in the area.[26]

The Arctic states have shown a preference for a stable political environment in which they maintain their dominance in the region. This is not only encouraged by regional co-operation but also by economic interests, which are well served by a stable political climate. As a consequence of the melting ice and high raw material prices at the beginning of this century, the Arctic states have looked north both in terms of investment and of opportunities related to shipping, fishing, and oil and gas extraction. Russia's ambitions with the northeast passage and industrial activity on the Yamal Peninsula, in particular, require a presence in the North, but also stability.[27]

Therefore, we see a commonality of interests between the Arctic states. This is particularly visible at the regional level, where mutual dependence and common interests lead to the absence of conflict. Here, the Arctic states are served by co-operation, with the aim of promoting their own interests. Such co-operation will create interdependence between the players, which in turn will raise the threshold for exiting the co-operation.[28]

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to the suspension of co-operation with Russia in various forums such as the Arctic Council and Barents Cooperation. Despite these negative developments, the Arctic countries have still stated a desire to shield the region from conflicts in other parts of the

24 Graczykand Rottem. 'The Arctic Council: Soft Actions, Hard Effects?'
25 Rottem.'The Arctic Council: Challenges and Recommendations'.
26 Stokke.'Asian States and Arctic Governance'.
27 Østhagen, Jørgensen, and Moe. 2020. 'The Svalbard Fisheries Protection Zone: How Russia and Norway Manage an Arctic Dispute'; Claes, and Moe.'Arctic Offshore Petroleum: Resources and Political Fundamentals'.
28 Young. 'International Regimes: Toward a New Theory of Institutions'.

world and co-operate in so-called 'soft' policy areas. However, political co-operation or dialogue with Russia is not possible as of the time of writing and will apparently be very limited in the country in the future.

The question is to what extent the events in 2022 will alter the long-term fundamentals of shared interest amongst the Arctic states. The Arctic is unlikely to figure less prominently in Russian economic development agendas, but this might be counterweighed by its increased strategic importance vis-à-vis NATO. Whether the Arctic Council will ever return to 'normal' remains to be seen, and much depends on the actions of the Putin regime in Moscow.

The National Level: How important is Russia?

FINALLY, TO UNDERSTAND the dynamics of security policy in the North, we must include a national perspective on the challenges and opportunities in the Arctic. Central to this is the role of the region in national defense and security considerations, as there is great variation in what each country chooses to prioritize in its northern regions in terms of national security and defense.

For Russia, as mentioned above, the Arctic is integrated into national defense considerations. Although these are to some extent related to developments elsewhere, investments in military infrastructure in the Arctic also have an Arctic impact, although primarily on the countries in close proximity to Russia (mainly Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and to some extent those in the wider North-Atlantic area and the US across the Bering Sea/Strait). Consequently, the Arctic is also integrated in the national defense policy of the Nordic countries, precisely because it is here that Russia—as a major power—invests some of its military capacity.[29]

29 Saxi.'The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Nordic Defence Cooperation'.; Depledge and Østhagen.'Scotland: A Touchstone for Security in the High North?'

In North America, the Arctic plays a slightly different role in national security concerns.[30] Although an important buffer vis-à-vis the USSR and later Russia, some have argued that the most immediate concerns facing the Canadian Arctic today are social and health conditions in northern communities.[31] This does not discount the need for Canada to be active in its Arctic domain and to have Arctic capabilities, but this perspective differs from the crucial role that the Russian land border plays in Finnish and Norwegian security concerns. However, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the debate has (again) emerged if Canada has actually invested sufficiently in Arctic security capabilities to be able to deter Russia in the north.[32]

> *For Alaska, security relations are indeed defined by its proximity to Russia.*

The US, however, is in a different situation. For Alaska, security relations are indeed defined by its proximity to Russia. Alaska plays a somewhat important role in the US defense policy, with its border with the Russian region of Chukotka across the Bering Strait—albeit it is not comparable to the role of the Russian border in the security policy concerns of Norway (and NATO) due to the presence of Russia's strategic nuclear weapons (submarines and ballistic missiles).[33] However, this has only to a limited extent attracted the attention of decision makers in Washington, DC. The US has been reluctant to make a significant investment in capabilities and infrastructure in the North,[34] although the rhetoric around the Arctic hardened under the Trump administration, and decisions

30 Østhagen, Sharp, and Hilde. 'At Opposite Poles: Canada's and Norway's Approaches to Security in the Arctic'.; Depledge and Lackenbauer, On Thin Ice: Perspectives on Arctic Security.

31 Greaves and Lackenbauer. 'Re-Thinking Sovereignty and Security in the Arctic'.; Lackenbauer. 'Threats Through, To, and In the Arctic: A Canadian Perspective'.

32 Blake. 'To What Extent Does Russia Present a Real Threat to Canada's Arctic?'

33 Padrtova, 'Frozen Narratives: How Media Present Security in the Arctic'.

34 Conley Melino, Tsafos, and Williams. 'America's Arctic Moment: Great Power Competition in the Arctic to 2050'.

were made to invest in new icebreakers for the US Coast Guard.[35]

The limited involvement of the US in its own 'northern areas' highlights the mentioned differences in the nuanced distinction between the international (system) level and national considerations. At a system level, the US can and will involve itself in regions such as the Arctic when it coincides with American interests. The activity of the US Sixth Fleet in the Barents Sea in May and September 2020, the reactivation of the US Second Fleet out of Norfolk in 2018 with responsibility for the North Atlantic (i.e. High North),[36] and increased US participation in NATO exercises in Norway since 2014—such as the biannual Cold Response exercises and Trident Juncture 2018—are examples of the US's ability and willingness to engage in security policy in parts of the Arctic as required, with a goal to both reassure its Nordic NATO allies and keep a close eye on Russian strategic capabilities on the Kola Peninsula.[37]

At the same time, Alaska itself has primarily served as a base for US missile defense and a limited number of forces (primarily air force) and there is no immediate concern over Russian threatening actions across the Bering Strait – a stark contrast to what the northern border with Russia means to Norwegian defense and security policy.

35 Herrmann and Hussong. 'No UNCLOS, No Icebreakers, No Clue? U.S. Arctic Policy Through the Eyes of Congress'.

36 Note that "Arctic" and "High North" are not used interchangeably. The Arctic refers to the whole circumpolar area, often defined as everything above the Arctic Circle (although some countries, like Canada, the US and Denmark/Greenland often includes parts below the Arctic Circle in their national definitions of the Arctic). The High North, however, is specifically targeted towards the European Arctic – the area that includes the Barents Sea, North Norway, Svalbard, and the North-western parts of Russia.

37 Østhagen, 'The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions'.

Norway's delicate balancing act

The relationships between states, however, are more complex than either/or descriptions—especially concerning security. The best example of this is in Norway's relationship with Russia in the Arctic. Concerning security policy, the commonly used mantra of 'deterrence and reassurance' can still be used to summarize the Norwegian approach to its neighbor in the east.[38] Norway is actively working to 'deter' Russia by maintaining its own defense capabilities and engaging allied nations in its challenges in the North.

At the same time, as part of Norway's "reassurance" policy,[39] it chose to not allow nuclear weapons on its territory, to restrict military aircrafts flying east of the 24th meridian east, and not allow foreign countries to set up military bases on Norwegian territory. In addition (as a further step in "reassurance"), co-operative relations, both military and civilian, are being built across the border with Russia, with the aim of breaking down distrust (at least before 2022) and avoiding crises.

However, here it is crucial to highlight that the change in the defense and security stance started as early as 2007-08, as Russia resumed Cold War-like patterns of military activity on the Kola Peninsula in 2007, and engaged in conflict in Georgia in 2008. Concerns related to Russia never completely disappeared after the Cold War but were seen as less pressing in the early 2000s. Before the High North policy was lifted on the political agenda in 2005, and to a large extent from 2005 to 2007, traditional security aspects were almost absent in the High North policy debates. While co-operation was still highlighted in Norwegian foreign policy in general, in the years 2007 and 2008 there was a clear shift in Norwegian security and defense policy.

With the renewal of the Russian Northern Fleet, Norway was (again) faced with a more challenging security policy

38 Søreide, 'En Balansert Sikkerhetspolitikk'. See also: Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes. 'Allianseforsvar i Endring 1970–2000'

39 Søreide, 'En Balansert Sikkerhetspolitikk'.; Hilde, 'Forsvar Vår Dyd, Men Kom Oss Ikke for Nær. Norge Og Det Militære Samarbeidet i NATO; Rottem, 'Forsvaret i Nord - Avskrekking Og Beroligelse'.

situation in the north. At the same time as the Stoltenberg II government (2005-13) continued to emphasize the need for good neighborly relations with Russia, this government also took the decision to modernize the Norwegian military.[40] Here, the Norwegian work to secure NATO's and allies' attention regarding Norwegian concerns in the north is central, among other things through the "Core Area initiative" launched by Norway in NATO in 2008.[41]

The blue-blue coalition government had only barely started (in office from 2013) before a recalibration of the High North policy was forced by external events. Russia's annexation of Crimea in Spring 2014 and the fall in the price of oil and natural gas in Autumn 2014 changed both the economic and security policy calculations in the north.[42] The Norwegian authorities began to openly refer to Russia as a possible threat that needed to be deterred – a shift that in many ways was a return to a "normalcy" in Norway-Russia relations.[43]

Traditional security policy issues related to geography and Russia in the north became more pronounced, while joint exercises with Russia in the north and forums to discuss Arctic security policy challenges were cancelled. At the same time, as NATO gradually returned to emphasizing collective defense at home from 2014, instead of promoting NATO's involvement in the "Arctic",[44] Norway placed new emphasis on maritime security issues in the North Atlantic/Barents Sea.[45] As a result of developments after 2014, Norwegian security and defense policy gradually became more detached from the Norwegian Arctic policy. The High North initiative largely consisted of foreign policy attempts to preserve the forms of co-operation

40 Pedersen, 'Endringer i Internasjonal Svalbard Politikk (Changes in International Svalbard Policy)'.

41 Haraldstad, 'Embetsverkets Rolle i Utformingen Av Norsk Sikkerhetspolitikk: Nærområdeinitiativet [The Role of the Bureaucracy in the Shaping of Norway's Security Policy: The Close Area Initiative]'.; Rowe and Hønneland. 2010. 'Hva Er Nordområdepolitikk? Utfordringer Innenrikspolitisk, i Nærområdene Og Globalt'.; Østhagen, Sharp, and Hilde, 'At Opposite Poles: Canada's and Norway's Approaches to Security in the Arctic'.

42 Østhagen, 'Det Nye Havet (The New Ocean)'.

43 Rowe'Fornuft Og Følelser: Norge Og Russland Etter Krim (Sense and Sensibility: Norway and Russia after Crimea)'.

44 Hilde, 'The "New" Arctic: The Military Dimension'.

45 Olsen, 'NATO and the North Atlantic: Revitalising Collective Defence'.

in the north in areas such as environmental co-operation and fisheries management, not least within the framework of the Barents Co-operation and the Arctic Council.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014-15 is the obvious driver of the "new" policy, namely, to strengthen allied interest in Norwegian northern areas. Thus, the rhetorical and political shift came first in 2014 after the conflict in Ukraine. In the same period, the effects of Norway's desire for attention to the north become clear: allies' operational interest in the Arctic and the North Atlantic becomes more obvious in terms of presence. In addition to the rotating forces, the US demonstrated its commitment to the defense of NATO's "northern flank" through exercise activity and military operations. The largest military exercise in Norway after the fall of the wall – the NATO exercise Trident Juncture – was held in Autumn 2018. In 2020, American interest in the High North culminated with the US Navy carrying out so-called "maritime security operations" in the Barents Sea together with the British Navy (in May) and with the British, Norwegian and Danish Navy (in September), which creates a discussion about whether there was too much allied attention given to the Norwegian Arctic.[46]

At the same time, in 2020 and 2021 American Seawolf-class nuclear-powered submarines marked a presence outside Tromsø, and in 2021 American B-1 bombers operated in the Nordic region from Ørland air station. This eventually led to a debate about local interests in the use of Tønsnes harbor for submarine landings, and Norway's role in a possible conflict in the north. The Russian invasion in 2022 is therefore not as a watershed in the security posture; if further amplifies the already-present concerns, and provides rationale for further investments in defense and security with a northern focus. It also has become even more of a priority to ensure allied (i.e. NATO and especially US) engagement in Norwegian security concerns.

We also see signs in the period 2019-21 that the relationship with Russia was entering a new phase or a new "normal state", characterized by both political and military tension at

46 Sveen, 'Ann Helen Bor Ved En Ny Atomhavn: – Om Man Ikke Har Informasjon, Så Lager Man Sin Egen'.; Påsche, 'Amerikanske Bombefly Skal Muligens Operere Fra Norge'.

the same time as co-operation and dialogue resumed in some areas. In 2019, Prime Minister Solberg met Russian President Putin for the first time in five years, at the Arctic Forum conference in St. Petersburg. Six months later, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was in Kirkenes together with Søreide and Solberg as well as King Harald to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Eastern Finnmark. In the same period, Norway and Russia were negotiating an addition to the Incidents at Sea Agreement (INCSEA) from 1990 to prevent dangerous incidents at sea.

The relationship with Russia had several dimensions at this time. Norway had to deal with the particularly difficult Frode Berg case, after the retired Norwegian border inspector was arrested in Moscow in December 2017 on charges of espionage. It took almost two years before Berg was returned to Norway in 2019. After the dust had barely settled, Norwegian MFA had to deal with a Russian Svalbard sting in February 2020. In connection with the centenary of the Svalbard Treaty, Russia breathed life into the old conflict about who has the right to what in the sea areas around the archipelago, at the same time as they invited Norway to a bilateral dialogue on Svalbard (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2020) – which they knew would be in direct conflict with Norwegian Svalbard policy.[47]

> *After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, we have seen that any idea of collaboration or co-operation with Russia has been placed on hold.*

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, we have seen that any idea of collaboration or co-operation with Russia has been placed on hold. Norway only maintains bilateral mechanisms to deal with co-management of the shared fish stocks in the Barents Sea, emergency preparedness and response in the border-region at sea, over Svalbard where 400-500 Russians live as they can according to the 1920 Svalbard

47 Jensen 'The Svalbard Treaty and Norwegian Sovereignty'. Moeand Jensen. 'Svalbard Og Havområdene – Nye Utenrikspolitiske Utfordringer for Norge? (Svalbard and the Maritime Areas - Challenges for Norway?)'.

Treaty, and regarding nuclear waste and safety in the north. At the same time, we have seen continued allied engagement in the North through military exercises – the pinnacle being Cold Response in March 2022 – and statements about the importance of the Arctic.

Norway's foreign policy decisions in the north are of course influenced by developments at the other two levels already described.[48] The balance of power and tensions between the US, China, and Russia (and the EU) at the international level have consequences for Norwegian policy and regional agreements and dynamics within the Arctic region. At the same time, the national level is more complex (including foreign policy) than allowing dynamics at another level to set the entire framework for Norwegian maneuvering of space.[49] Local and national interests come into play, such as the need for trade and cultural co-operation across the border between Finnmark and North-west Russia.[50]

Clearly, the state's deliberations on the development of foreign policy consist of more than just the balance of power and/or common interests. Historical circumstances, identity, and the impact of Norwegian-Russian co-operation across the three decades since the fall of the Soviet Union play an important role here.[51] The narrative is also important for the development of a High North policy by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[52] The relationship between Norway and Russia in the north, especially related to the Barents' co-operation and practical forms of co-operation, are examples of activity at the national level that is not necessarily characterized by either a systemic balance of power or regional co-operation, but includes a bit of both.[53]

48 Østhagen, 'Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?

49 Østhagen, and Rottem. 'Stormaktspolitikk Og Økt Spenning? Kunsten å Skille Mellom Is Og Bart i Arktis'

50 E.g. see Hønneland, Jørgensen, 'Kompromisskulturen i Barentshavet (the Culture of Compromise in the Barents Sea)'.

51 Jensen, 'An Arctic "Marriage of Inconvenience": Norway and the Othering of Russia'.; Østhagen, 'Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?'; Neumann, 'Self and Other in International Relations'.

52 Steinveg, and Medby. 'Nordområdenarrativer Og Identitetsbygging i Nord'.

53 Rowe,. 'Fornuft Og Følelser: Norge Og Russland Etter Krim (Sense and Sensibility: Norway and Russia after Crimea)'.

Arctic dynamics after 2022 – A new Arctic role for NATO?

In sum, the Arctic region cannot simply be boiled down to a statement of conflict or no conflict. This tenet holds, even after February 2022. The Arctic states have limited reason, if any at all,[54] for entering into direct regional conflict over resources or territory in the whole Arctic region—even though sub-regional or national security concerns persist, such as those between Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. These are linked to the defense posture of various Arctic countries, as well as the overarching links between the Arctic region and other domains such as the Baltic Sea.

Still, the war in Ukraine has clear consequences for the Arctic security dynamics in several ways. The impression of what is possible of Russian behavior has changed radically. It strengthens the security policy arguments mentioned above. Although the drivers of the growing tension between NATO / "West" and Russia are not in the High North or in the Arctic in general, we are already seeing the contours of the consequences along several axes.

First, the European High North might become even more central to operational defense and security policy thinking in both Norway and NATO in general. This would have been the case even without the Finnish and Swedish accessions: the more tension between NATO and Russia, the more relevant the High North is in terms of deterrence, surveillance and the ability to deny Russian access to the North Atlantic/Atlantic at large. These trends are further amplified by the Finnish and Swedish NATO memberships, in effect making the Baltic Sea surrounded by NATO countries (some have used the term a "NATO lake").[55]

Some expect that this in turn makes Russia more "insecure" in the north and will lead to it placing further emphasis on the ability to deter threats from both land and sea in the Barents

54 This can be debated. See for instance: Østhagen, 'Fish, Not Oil, at the Heart of (Future) Arctic Resource Conflicts'.

55 Some have used the term "NATO lake," e.g.: Georgia Today. '"The Baltic Sea Will Become a NATO Lake" – Interview with Gen. Major Pekka Toveri, Former Intelligence Chief of the General Staff of the Finnish Defense Forces'.

region.[56] The force structure of Finland, Norway and Sweden combined will also be considerable. Some have even made the point that the three countries could divide force responsibility amongst themselves – Finland taking land, Norway taking sea and Sweden taking air – although that seems highly unlikely given the extended land, maritime and air space that each country have been – and will continue to be – responsible for.[57] Moreover, although integration and co-operation have expanded, the Nordic countries are still far apart along various axes, be it on security issues, relations to Europe, the US, or general economic development.[58]

Still, many questions remain regarding the structure and subsequent effects of all Nordic countries being part of NATO. Will Russia use this is as an excuse (or feel threatened?) for increasingly belligerent militarily behavior in the North, vis-à-vis the Nordics?[59] And what self-imposed restrictions – if any – will the two new members adhere to regarding Russia? As outlined, Norway placed some self-imposed restrictions on itself as part of a "reassurance" effort vis-à-vis the USSR and later Russia. These include limiting nuclear weapons, foreign bases and flying too close to Russia. Will Finland and Sweden follow similar self-imposed restrictions, perhaps in close consultation with Norway?

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56 Diesen. 'Norsk Og Nordisk Forsvar Etter Ukraina'.

57 Diesen. 'Norsk Og Nordisk Forsvar Etter Ukraina'.

58 Østhagen, and Raspotnik. 'Partners or Rivals? Norway and the European Union in the High North'.

59 The debate on Russia's threat perceptions and concerns has been ongoing in the Arctic ever since Russia started re-investing in its Arctic military posture around 2005-2007, see for instance: Wilson Rowe, and Blakkisrud. 'A New Kind of Arctic Power? Russia's Policy Discourses and Diplomatic Practices in the Circumpolar North'.; Sergunin, 'Four Dangerous Myths about Russia's Plans for the Arctic'.; Mitchell, 'Russia's Territorial Ambition and Increased Military Presence in the Arctic'.; Rumer, Sokolsky, and Stronski. 'Russia in the Arctic—A Critical Examination'. In Norway, for example, the years 2019-2021 mark a time of hefty debate regarding whether NATO's actions/expansion made Russia "insecure", or whether Russia was the primary source of tension in the North, eg.: Heier, En Randstat På Avveie? Norges Vei Inn i Den Nye Kalde Krigen, 2014–2021. With Russia's invasion in 2022, this debate was further amplified, as those who had argued for a deeper understanding of Russian motivations and interests clashed (through op-eds and media coverage) with those who had argued for a more hard-line approach to Russia, e.g.: Khrono. 'Opprop: Akademisk Frihet'.; Fanghol, 'Forskerkrangel Om Analyser Rundt Invasjonen i Ukraina'..; Snoen, 'Om å «forstå» Russland'.

It should perhaps also be mentioned that, although the entry of Finland and Sweden to NATO is a big shift for both countries, and for the Nordics and the immediate High North/European Arctic security environment, these Nordic countries have been training together, exchanging information, engaging in joint-procurement procedures, and have attempted closer military and political integration for decades.[60] The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) is the prime example of this. However, the main barrier NORDEFCO and the mentioned efforts have always come up against has been the divergence in security and political alliances (NATO vs. EU).[61] With this impediment out of the way, perhaps even closer integration will be possible in years to come.

Second, the nascent great power rivalry in the Arctic will increase, as the US, UK, France, the EU and China look more to the north for strategic and symbolic reasons as the region is increasingly accessible as well as relevant in global power games. The Arctic will not become less important, simply because the US and Russia are already in the region, and China is increasingly demonstrating its (strategic) interests in the north. The worse the relationships among these players are globally, the more tension we will see in the Arctic, too, which is materialized by challenging statements, sanctions, and occasional military displays. This became particularly apparent in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Such tension has little to do with regional issues in the Arctic (ice melting, economic opportunities, etc.), and everything to do with the strategic position that the Arctic holds between these actors.

Although the reason for conflict does not emerge from the Arctic, the Arctic is undoubtedly important for Russian military doctrines and thus also in a larger deterrence perspective as seen from the NATO headquarters in Brussels and Mons. Linked, there is a question about Russian calculations in the north. Forums for co-operation in the Arctic have been suspended, and thoughts of a security policy dialogue with

60 Saxi, 'Nordic Defence Cooperation after the Cold War'.; Saxi, 'The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Nordic Defence Cooperation'.

61 Archer, 'The Stolteberg Report and Nordic Security: Big Idea, Small Steps'.; Forsberg, 'The Rise of Nordic Defence Cooperation: A Return to Regionalism?'; Bailes, Herolf, and Sundelius, "The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy."; Saxi, 'The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Nordic Defence Cooperation'.

Russia in the north have been shelved. The goal of reduced tension and dialogue with Russia in the north has been replaced by a halt in co-operation in some areas and an increased need to deter Russia in the High North.[62]

Up until 2022, it has been the conclusion by decision-makers and scholars alike that Russia has been served with stable relations in the north from a purely self-interest perspective.[63] Moreover, Russia has signaled a continued desire to keep co-operation on low-level issues sheltered. The question is whether these interests are shifting away from a desire to keep Arctic relations peaceful, as some of the economic projects in the north are more difficult to complete due to sanctions and Russia has been excluded from various co-operative forums in the north.

Furthermore, in this context small disputes over sovereign rights at sea, the legal status of passageways or maritime zones, or (un)intended mishaps during military exercises and operations might escalate beyond immediate control. Such escalation could drag the Arctic (or parts of the Arctic) into an outright conflict between Russia and NATO members. This is arguably the most troublesome aspect of the current political situation in the north, and where transnational dialogue and multilateral co-operation are needed to alleviate pressures.

From a Norwegian (national) perspective, it is also clear that the biggest challenge and concern is how to deter Russia from aggressive behavior in the north, while maintaining low tension in the same region. Norway needs allied support, but Norway does not want uncoordinated allied actions that might cause more friction in the Barents Sea.[64]. On the one hand, it is a question of co-ordination and knowledge amongst NATO allies. On the other hand, it is a question of mechanisms to manage unintended (or even

62 See for example: Norwegian Government. 2021."'Hurdalsplattformen: For En Regjering Utgått Fra Arbeiderpartiet Og Senterpartiet'". p. 80

63 Tamnes, and Offerdal. 'Conclusion'. In Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic:; Depledge, and Lackenbauer, eds. 2021. On Thin Ice: Persepctives on Arctic Security.; Rahbek-Clemmensen, 'The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?; Østhagen, 'The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions'.

64 Hilde,. 'Forsvar Vår Dyd, Men Kom Oss Ikke for Nær. Norge Og Det Militære Samarbeidet i NATO [Defend Our Virtue, but Do Not Get Too Close. Norway and the Military Cooperation in NATO]'.

intended) escalation in the north. Examples of the latter are the so-called "hotline" between the Norwegian Armed Forces HQ and the Northern Fleet, and the INCSEA-agreement with Russia amended in 2021.

In all of this, in a Nordic-NATO context, the US is the central actor given its security posture. It is also worth noting that the US's High North presence is also about controlling the movements of Russia's strategic assets sailing out of the Kola Peninsula. These submarines with ballistic missiles could pose a threat to the whole North Atlantic seaboard, not just Norway. With Finland and Sweden joining NATO, we are not likely to see less allied – and US – interest in and engagement with security concerns in the north. This is inherently of benefit to Norway (and Finland and Sweden), as long as there is also an emphasis on controlling tension and avoiding escalation in the north.

It should also be highlighted that, despite the unravelling of relations in 2022, Russia and its Nordic neighbors are served with having pragmatic and functional relationships in order to deal with practical issues ranging from environmental protection to nuclear safety and resource co-management. This, in turn, means that notions about conflict and co-operation are not necessarily mutually exclusive but are components in a more complex picture of the north and the Arctic. Still, whether anything will remain of the 'cooperative Arctic spirit' depends on the time and scale of the Ukraine war, and whether the conflict between Russia and the West is further escalated either in the Arctic or areas beyond.

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ALREADY

FINLAND AND SWEDEN BRING

DEALING WITH

INSIGHTS TO NATO

HYBRID THREATS

BY PATRIK OKSANEN

As new members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Sweden and Finland contribute experiences both on how to identify and to meet hybrid threats, and to endure challenges in a world where the use of methods short of war is on the increase. Both NATO as such – but also its member states – have lessons to learn from these newcomers, but there are many more obstacles to deal with in the future.

Patrik Oksanen is a Senior Fellow at Stockholm Free World Forum. He has extensive experience as a prize-winning journalist and is a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of War Sciences and the Royal Society of Naval Sciences.

SWEDEN AND FINLAND could be used as a testbed to assess what works to fight influence from aggressive dictatorships and terrorist networks, without losing the compass as a modern democratic country defending civil liberties.

When Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, called for a new security order in Europe on December 17th, 2021, he started the chain reaction that brought Sweden and Finland into NATO. The outspoken ultimatum to halt NATO enlargement and withdraw allied troops and installations from Eastern Europe also had direct implications for Sweden and Finland. Together with demands to scrap exercises with neighbors as well as the US, this would have undermined the fundamentals of Finland and Sweden's security policies. "Totally unacceptable", as Swedish defense minister, Peter Hultqvist, stated in December 2021.[1] Finland took the lead in the process that accelerated with the renewed Russian offensive against Ukraine in February 2022, and Sweden followed suit.

For years, Russia has worked to make sure Sweden and Finland stayed outside of NATO, or at least that the nations would become divided on the issue. Historically, the countries were outside because of geopolitical reasons. Finland was under heavy pressure from the USSR after World War II and was forced to sign the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance in 1948. For Sweden, Finland's situation was a key strategic issue and, when attempts to form a Scandinavian defense pact failed as Norway and Denmark joined NATO, Sweden decided to remain non-aligned because of concerns over Finland. The fear, at the time, was that Sweden joining NATO would unleash a Soviet-led communist coup d'etat in Finland, just as it had in Czechoslovakia in 1948. Finland's fragile independence and democracy were in peril.

Let us now fast forward to current times.

One of the most frequently used Russian narratives against Finland and Sweden during the last decade has been aimed at NATO. In a report from the NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence (COE), narratives were identified, such as 'ridiculing the Russian threat', 'NATO is threat to Russia', 'Finland and Russia are good partners no matter what', 'NATO is luring Sweden and Finland to join', 'If Finland and Sweden would join, Russia must act'.[2] For several years, Russia repeatedly warned Finland and Sweden against joining NATO through various channels. This rhetoric was combined with both active measures

1 Holmström 2021, "De ryska kraven är helt oacceptabla".

2 Nato Stratcom COE 2016/2017, "Russia's Footprint in the Nordic-Baltic Information Environment"

and displays of military force. During the Easter weekend in 2013, Russia conducted what is believed to have been a simulated nuclear attack with bombers against targets in Sweden. The episode is known as the 'Russian Easter'. A couple of years later, this nuclear signaling was followed by a letter from the Duma to the Swedish Parliament warning of an all-out European war.[3]

Likewise, when the Swedish navy searched for a sub-water intruder in the Stockholm Archipelago in 2014, the effort was mocked by Russian media. The Russian military expert, Viktor Baranets, accused Sweden of making up the intrusion. He also stated what would happen if NATO membership became a reality in an interview with the Finnish public broadcaster: "Then Finland and Sweden will become our enemies. In such a situation every city, base and strategic target will be attacked by the Russian Federation."[4] This statement is only one of several similar comments made to Finnish or Swedish media during the last decades. Beating on drums of war and horror was supposed to scare Finland and Sweden to withdraw and turn inwards. However, this strategy has failed and, instead, became an important argument for deepening the bonds with NATO and Western Allies.

When the Swedish navy searched for a sub-water intruder in the Stockholm Archipelago in 2014, the effort was mocked by Russian media.

Among the 'active measures' that could be noted is how Covid protesters were married with anti-NATO groups,[5] such as the Finnish Convoy Movement in 2022.[6] Collaboration with the Peace Movement to influence the domestic NATO

3 Oksanen 2015, "Dumans propagandabrev: Hotar hela Europa med krig"

4 YLE 2014, "Om Finland går med i Nato, blir ni vår fiende"

5 "Active measures" (Активные мероприятия) is the Russian term for political warfare and was developed in the 1920s by the young Soviet state. Activities, such as propaganda, espionage, harassment, subversion, sabotage, and assassination, are included.

6 Gestrin-Hagner & Björkqvist 2022, "55 gripna vid Convoy Finland – finlandssvenska Alexander, Ella och Helene vill avsätta regeringen"

debate has also been identified as part of the Kremlin toolbox. When the Swedish parliament debated the Host Nations Support Agreement with NATO, several falsehoods were publicly spread by parts of the movement. The Swedish Security Service also identified an officer from Russian intelligence services participating at a meeting in Sweden in order to influence the debate.[7] At an annual Swedish national security conference in the ski resort Sälen in 2016, defense minister Peter Hultqvist made headlines because of his strong condemnation of the disinformation that had surrounded the Host Nations Support Agreement:

> It is alleged that Sweden is forced to accept the deployment of nuclear weapons on Swedish territory. At the same time, it is said that Sweden will be forced to accept permanent NATO bases. According to the same type of disinformation, soldiers from NATO countries are subject to immunity from punishment for crimes committed in Sweden.
> I just want to declare clearly and unequivocally: this is lies, damned lies. When things like this are spread in the undergrowth of the debate, it is about sowing uncertainty and planting myths. It is a classic way of working for those who want to undermine.[8]

At the same time, Finland had started to organize how to react to disinformation, with better intergovernmental communication to quickly respond to disinformation narratives before they gained a foothold. Finland also had a cornerstone in the Security Committee, established in 2013. The committee assists the government and ministries in security issues. Besides a secretariat, the committee itself has 20 members and four experts from different ministries, agencies, and industries. This whole-of-government approach does not have a Swedish counterpart, but several Swedish parties have demanded a similar body (in the Swedish debate it is called a National Security Council, drawing inspiration from the US).

7 Oksanen 2017, "Stig Henrikssons märkliga omsorg om rysk underrättelsetjänst"

8 Speech by Peter Hultqvist at the annual Folk & Försvar conference, 2016. Translation from Swedish by the author.

Finland also took the lead in the international community in developing knowledge and best practices around hybrid threats. Inspired by the NATO COE establishments, Finland established the Hybrid COE together with partners in Helsinki. The cente is under the auspices of the EU and NATO and was set up in 2017. Currently, there are 31 participating countries in the center.

In Sweden, the Swedish Contingency Agency, MSB, developed its abilities to identify and counter disinformation, which was expanded into its own agency in 2022 as the Psychological Defense Agency (MPF).

A combination of tackling Russian influence attempts journalism and public debate, outspokenness from central decision makers and the preventive work undertaken by government agencies in Sweden and Finland paved the way for the failed Russian attempt to prevent the Swedish and Finnish NATO applications. Not only did Sweden and Finland apply to join NATO, they did so with an overwhelming public and political support. Neither society were divided over the issue. In the Finnish parliament, 188 MPs voted yes versus eight to Finnish NATO membership.[9] The Swedish government's decision to apply for membership was supported by six of the eight parties in parliament who collectively hold 305 of 349 seats.

The fact that Sweden and Finland are high-trust, resilient democracies has also played a role. At a time when democracy is in decline globally and its authoritarian enemies are attacking it ferociously, Sweden and Finland stand out. They both score 100 points in Freedom House's annual index; together with Norway they are the sole countries with this score. By comparison, Germany had 94 points, the United Kingdom 93, France 89 and the US 83.[10]

Other indices give a similar picture. Sweden and Finland are marked with high ratios of the populations willing to defend their country. In the aftermath of Russia's renewed attack on Ukraine, the highest score ever was measured in Finland: 83 percent of the population was recorded as willing

9 YLE 2022, "Riksdagen godkände Finlands Natoansökan"

10 Freedom House 2022, "Countries and Territories".

to defend its country militarily in May 2022.[11] In Sweden, a poll showed that 77 percent of the population was ready to contribute to the national "total defense" concept.[12]

Besides high trust and a strong willingness to defend sovereignty and democracy, Finland and Sweden have also scored other successes through showing the ability to identify, adapt and correct issues with regards to hybrid threats.

Let us look at two examples that have resulted in subsequent legislative changes.

Strategic assets

THE PHENOMENON OF RUSSIANS buying properties close to strategic places in Finland did not go unnoticed in the press. This debate in Finland started with media coverage in 2009, and in 2016 the Security Committee called it a security threat. The Finnish fear is that the real estate could be used as bases for "green men" that could slow down and disturb mobilization in a time of crisis.

In the 1990s, Finland liberalized the real estate market and by 2000, there were no obstacles in place for foreigners to buy land in Finland. Finland went further than its EU membership demanded, and this opened up the market for Russians. The pattern became evident at the end of the 00s, when Russians had been buying land close to military airfields, naval bases, ammunition storages, army bases, nuclear plants, important communication hubs, and so on. Along highway 6, which runs close to the Russian border, 30 larger Russian-owned real estates were noted. The Security Committee's secretary, Tatu Mikkola, said to the public broadcaster YLE: "Hybrid warfare's new phenomena are migrants, information warfare and buying real estates close to strategic important areas."

11 Vanttinen 2022, "Number of Finns willing to take arms to defend country at all-time high"

12 MSB 2022, "Många vill gå in I totalförsvaret – men få är beredda att gå in i en stridande roll"

Thanks to the work of the Security Committee, the Finnish state now have the right of first refusal in areas that are central for Finnish defense and supply lines. These rules came into force in 2020 for non-EU citizens, but are viewed to be insufficient. The defense ministry wants to have even stricter rules.

Finland has also dealt more actively with the threats. In the archipelago of Åboland (between Turku/Åbo and the demilitarized Aaland Islands), a Russian company had bought several pieces of real estate along important shipping lines. This was all the more alarming since Turku/Åbo is not only the third largest city in Finland, it is also the home of the Finnish navy. If Russian "green men" were able to place mines and stop the Finnish navy and the nearby amphibious brigade from defending the Aaland islands, this would be a serious security challenge both for Finland and Sweden. On September 22, 2018, Finnish authorities conducted a huge and spectacular raid that involved 400 employees from different governmental agencies, including the police, the border guard, the defense forces, and the tax authorities. The raid was not framed as motivated by security reasons, but rather to investigate economic crimes. The legal aftermath has not yet been resolved, after almost four years.

In Sweden, the debate has not been concerned with privately owned real estate but, instead, has focused on municipalities doing business with strategic infrastructure. For example, the Russian energy giant Gazprom wanted to rent a harbor on Gotland for Nord Stream 2 (as it did for Nord Stream 1). However, after consultation with the Swedish government, the local government refused. On the other hand, the municipality of Karlshamn agreed and was able, due to Sweden's high degree of local self-government, to decide against the government's security recommendation. This experience of flaws in the legislation led to Lex Karlshamn, and the government started work to ensure that this could not be repeated.[13]

13 Holmström 2017, "'Lex Karlshamn' ska öka den svenska säkerheten"

Cyber and information influence

THERE ARE SEVERAL CASES OF HACKING and leaks coming from Russia that have hit Sweden and Finland. In 2018, the Swedish Sports Federation was hacked in order to discredit Swedish work against doping. The aim of these Russian active measures was to make all "cats grey in the dark", after Russian athletes were caught red-handed and Russia was punished for supporting cheating in sports. Moreover, the reputation of Swedish and Finnish scientists has been smeared and even the Finnish parliament has been hacked. When it comes to high-end competencies in cyber operations, Sweden has the highly acknowledged FRA (Försvarets Radioanstalt), which is the agency for signal intelligence. However, Swedish society's overall societal cybersecurity capabilities lag behind in international indices.

> *When it comes to disinformation and malign information, Sweden and Finland are both forward-leaning.*

When it comes to disinformation and malign information, Sweden and Finland are both forward-leaning. Finland's involvement of schools and education to combat disinformation has received worldwide interest. The same goes for Sweden's reborn agency for psychological defense, which is operating in peace time against foreign influence operations. The importance of having a designated and highly trusted government agency that can state when meddling has been detected cannot be overestimated.

Both countries have seen court cases – with convictions – concerning Russian defamation against journalists. The consequences for writers who have shone a light on Russian influence operations have been widely publicized in both countries, thanks largely to the Finnish author Sofi Oksanen and the YLE journalist Jessikka Aro. Oksanen described it as:

> Harassment like this is a kind of trolling, one mode of operation in the field of psychological influence. Persecution of this sort also worked according to

> the basic principles of active measures from the old Soviet times: planting a seed of suspicion is enough to tar a reputation. Not to mention that the threat of a lawsuit, whatever the reason, puts its target on the defensive and cripples their ability to act, which is the very purpose of harassment of this kind.[14]

The conclusion is increasingly becoming to view the cognitive and cyber arenas as one cohesive whole, and that it is an arena of fighting. The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences recently published a report about contemporary security threats, and the sub-working group on cyber stated that war is already raging in this domain:

> The single most important conclusion is that Sweden is already today in an electronic and cognitive battle with foreign powers. The faster society accepts this, the better we can deal with our vulnerabilities and losses. We will also become more efficient in creating our offensive responses to be able to strike back against trespasses and to destroy and harm our antagonists' information security as well, if needed.[15]

The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences is independent from the state of politics but has an influence in the policy-making debate. It is also interesting to note that, at the same time, the Swedish state is moving forward in its views on digital sovereignty and the consequences that it brings. For instance, in July 2022, the Swedish government published a "Position Paper on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace".[16] In this position paper, the government states that violation of sovereignty could occur from cyber operations that lead to harm, or at least that functions are disturbed. Thus, to change data or disturb the distribution of data without physical harm could also be a violation of sovereignty. Furthermore, Sweden states that human rights are equivalent online and offline, and that international

14 Oksanen 2016, "What It's Like To Write About Russia"

15 KKrVA 2022, "På allvar: Svensk säkerhetspolitik i ofärdstider". Note: the author was a part of the KKrVA working group on cyber.

16 Swedish Government 2022, "Position Paper on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace"

humanitarian law also applies for cyber warfare operations that are conducted during military conflicts.

This paves the way for a more forward-leaning stance when it comes to the combined cyber and cognitive arena. With the combined insights from the Academy of War Sciences and the position paper from the Swedish government, a more active and pro-active counter strategy could be developed and put into operation. This should be of high interest for the whole NATO family to follow.

Civil defense and hybrid threats – a chance to do something new

NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR FINLAND and Sweden means that all three countries (including Norway) on the strategic Fennoscandian peninsula (which, strategically, is viewed as an island connecting the Arctic with the Baltic Sea region) are now under the same umbrella. In other words, Norway is finally not alone in a NATO context.

When it comes to civil contingencies, supplies and civilian assets supporting NATO operations, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian authorities could start a joint NATO plan that would also increase their ability to deal with civilian crises and hybrid threats as well as a full-scale war. This would include common planning on strategic resources, storage, distribution, preparedness for industry to change production into key supply, and so on. The dependency on the civilian side is huge, as the NATO COE of Civilian Military Cooperation concludes:

> 90% of military transport is accomplished using civilian assets, over 50% of satellite communications used for defence purposes are provided by the commercial sector, 75% of host nation support to NATO operations is sourced from local commercial sources.[17]

17 Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence 2022, "Resilience Through Civil Preparedness"

Today, there are several NATO entities dealing with resilience through Civil Preparedness, but more on a supportive, analysis and broader level. Here, Finland, Sweden and Norway could experiment with a body to plan and provide support to national authorities in peace time, and when activated by NATO become operational in war time as organizing logistical tasks across borders. It could be called a "Civil Preparedness HQ" and could perhaps be situated in Karlstad, Sweden. Close to Oslo and known from history as the place where the union between Sweden and Norway was dissolved, it is also the hometown of several Swedish total defense agencies.

The weak spot

IN DEALING WITH HYBRID THREATS, Sweden and Finland have a weak spot: Chinese influence operations. Even if the "Wolf Warrior" ambassador Gui Congyou – who became infamous for his attacks in the Swedish debate – has left his post, the Chinese economic challenge (especially in the data collection field) remains a challenge.

For example, the Chinese-owned firm Nuctech was awarded a contract to provide security equipment at Stockholm Arlanda Airport. The company is close to the Chinese military but is also a global leader in the scanning of people, luggage, vehicles and parcels. The reason behind this is that the company is subsidized by the Chinese government and offers prices at 30-50 per cent below market.[18] The same company is established in the Finnish market, with contracts with the Finnish government. The fear is that data from the system will end up in the hands of the People's Liberation Army and the Chinese Communist Party. Even if the data does not end up in China, it could be used to cause disturbances at strategic places, for example by doing "need maintenance" at a sensitive moment between China and the other country. This is only one of several examples, that ranges from internet medical provider to transportations, of companies with Chinese

18 SVT 2022,"Kinesiskt bolag tar över säkerhetskontrollen på Arlanda"

minority or majority ownership that could collect sensitive data.

In 2019, the Swedish Defense Research Agency FOI presented a report where they had identified 51 companies that Chinese firms had become majority owners of, and 14 where Chinese companies held a minority stake. The most famous of these companies is the car manufacturer Volvo, which is owned by the Chinese firm Geely.[19]

Together with Huawei, TikTok and other firms that collect data, China is building up a formidable information gathering resource. Here the Chinese National Intelligence Law from 2017 plays a vital role. It demands citizens and companies to assist the security services upon request.[20] This gives the People's Liberation Army and the Ministry of State Security enormous powers over Chinese businesses and diaspora.

Together with Huawei, TikTok and other firms that collect data, China is building up a formidable information gathering resource.

The strategy to focus on information and information infrastructure is not new. During the Chinese Civil War, Chairman Mao had a concept of three phases in influence operations. The first was secretly building capacity, while the second prioritized information infrastructure (and was also the phase where operations were conducted in the open). The third phase was the offensive, winning phase. Of course, the information infrastructure in 1940s China differs from today. Nevertheless, the Chinese interest in information and information infrastructure must be viewed through this perspective.[21]

China is of growing concern for NATO and, in its strategic concept, NATO calls China a systemic challenge:

19 Hellström et al. 2019, "Kartläggning av kinesiska bolagsförvärv i Sverige"

20 Tanner 2017, "Beijing's New National Intelligence Law: From Defense to Offense"

21 Oksanen 2022, "Solidaritet som avskräckning mot cyber- och påverkansoperationer"

> The PRC employs a broad range of political, economic and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up. The PRC's malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target Allies and harm Alliance security. The PRC seeks to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains. It uses its economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and enhance its influence. It strives to subvert the rules-based international order, including in the space, cyber and maritime domains. The deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests.[22]

Regarding the Chinese hybrid threat, the debate in Sweden and Finland is not yet mature. This has much to do with the dependency on the Chinese economy and the fear of sanctions. The fear may be due to China making an example of the country, such as it has done repeatedly – for example, with Norway, Australia and Lithuania. But NATO's ambition is that this threat must be dealt with. The decision at the Madrid summit in June 2022 was clear: "We will boost our shared awareness, enhance our resilience and preparedness, and protect against the PRC's coercive tactics and efforts to divide the Alliance."[23]

22 NATO 2022, "Strategic Concept"

23 Ibid.

Conclusions

NATO MEMBERSHIP MEANS A LOT of new opportunities, both for the Alliance and for Finland and Sweden. The boldest approach would be to make Sweden and Finland a testbed for new practices and policies. With their long experiences of neighboring Russia, the countries have a historical knowledge of Russian hybrid warfare in various forms. Sweden and Finland have also shown the ability to adapt to threats and to take counter-measures, both operational within the existing framework of the law and by introducing new legislation.

However, both Sweden and Finland are far from perfect and the biggest Red Storm Rising is yet to come, and that is China and Chinese hybrid warfare. In dealing with China, Sweden and Finland have not been in the frontline. Fighting hybrid warfare means a holistic approach to safeguard key societal functions and democratic values – and that fight is not against one single opponent, but against several non-democratic countries or networks, such as militant Islamists.

The understanding of this exists in Sweden and Finland, for example through the Hybrid COE, but more measures need to be taken to deal with the complexity of threats. Sweden and Finland have the possibility to become leaders in combating all kinds of hybrid threats – not only Russian – to the benefit of the whole Alliance.

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GERMANY AND THE NORDICS

IS NATO'S NORTHERN FLANK PART OF THE *ZEITENWENDE*?

BY ROBIN ALLERS

Germany's role as a security actor in the Nordic region can seem paradoxical. On the one hand, the Nordic countries and Germany regard each other as close and likeminded friends. The current energy crisis as well as the Covid-19 pandemic has emphasized mutual dependencies as well as an interest in developing political and economic relations further. NATO's reorientation towards collective defense since 2014 has led to closer defense relations. Due to its status as one of the big western powers and, because of geographic proximity, the Nordic countries look to Germany as an important ally and security partner – in the multilateral framework of NATO and EU, as well as regionally and bilaterally.

Robin Allers is Associate Professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies at the Norwegian Defence University College. He is part of the research programme Security and Defence in Northern Europe (SNE), where he focuses on Norway's bilateral relations with key European allies like Germany.

AT THE SAME TIME, however, Germany's role as a security actor in the region is often seen with skepticism. According to a recent study by the Norwegian think tank NUPI, "none of the four Nordic states identify Germany as the key

European security and defence partner".[1] Germany is often perceived as an actor lacking military and strategic culture.[2] While Berlin shows signs of a more coherent understanding of the Baltic region's security challenges, this is not backed up by "sufficient military forces or military spending to create credible deterrence".[3] In the High North, one expert observes, "Germany does not stand out as a leading nation with respect to strategic or military leadership".[4] In addition to Germany's traditional reluctance to play a forward leaning military role, this may have to do with Germany's 360-degree strategic outlook, in which the Nordic region is not among a top priority.[5] From the point of view of German decision-makers, the NATO's northern flank appears as comparably stable, with reliable regional powers and proactive allies like the US and the UK taking care of security.

Russia's attack on Ukraine has changed this picture. When Germany's chancellor, Olaf Scholz, met with the Nordic prime ministers in Oslo in August 2022, security challenges and the potential of closer defense cooperation were key points on an agenda that was otherwise dominated by the energy crisis and the complex management of the European power market. Russia's aggression, combined with President Putin's threats against the existing Euro-Atlantic security order, have forced allies and partners to reconsider their role in the security architecture and their contribution to collective defense. In Germany, chancellor Scholz diagnosed a Zeitenwende, a watershed moment, and announced a policy change towards Russia as well as massive investments in the modernization

> *Meanwhile in the Nordic region, non-aligned Finland and Sweden reacted to Russia's threats by applying for full membership of NATO.*

1 Haugevik and Svendsen, "Nordic partnership choices", p. 3.
2 Matlary, Hard Power in Hard Times, p. 153, 273.
3 Sprūds and Vizgunova, Perceptions of Germany, 8-9.
4 Wegge, "Arctic Security Strategies and the North Atlantic States", 374-376.
5 Engelmann and Matlé, Germany's role, 43; Kamp, "Defence and security in Northern Europe", 73.

of the armed forces.[6] Meanwhile in the Nordic region, non-aligned Finland and Sweden reacted to Russia's threats by applying for full membership of NATO. Denmark joined the trend towards closer defense integration when it held a referendum to decide on full participation in the EU's security and defense policy (CSDP). Norway and Iceland, NATO allies with close relations to the EU, may see no urgent reason to change their institutional affiliation, but they too signal an interest in closer cooperation and even integration with their Nordic and European partners.

This chapter takes stock of Germany's contribution to NATO's northern flank and raises the question as to whether or not ongoing changes and adjustments in the region's security architecture may lead to a deepening of defense relations between Germany and the Nordic countries.[7] I will start by looking at the different components of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture in which German-Nordic relations are taking place. Next, I will explore to what extent Germany's armed forces are present on the northern flank, i.e. in the area stretching from the Baltic Sea to the North Atlantic and the High North. Finally, I will discuss defense cooperation and investments in defense material and whether they can function as drivers for deeper security relations. In conclusion, I will argue that the Nordic countries and Germany must use the current discussion about adequate responses to Russia's aggressive behavior to engage in an open and more explicit dialogue about mutual expectations, interests, ambitions and limitations of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

6 Bundesregierung, "Policy statement by Olaf Scholz".

7 In addition to the articles and documents cited, the chapter draws on interviews and roundtable discussions conducted in the framework of the German-Norwegian research project, "Dealing with Russia in the Nordic Region". All translations from German and Scandinavian texts are made by the author.

Dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture

GERMANY MAY NOT BE the Nordic countries' most important security and defense partner, but cooperation is extensive across all dimensions of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. As one of the main powers in NATO and the EU, Germany has traditionally played an important role as a partner to lean on for smaller allies and partners, and as a go-to country for non-members. In the framework of the EU's Common Security and Defense policy, Germany has taken the lead on several PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) projects to which Nordic member states, and Norway as a so called third country, contribute. The Nordic armed forces have also cooperated with the German Bundeswehr in several international operations from the Balkans to Afghanistan, Mali and Iraq. Building on a long-standing cooperation in the 1st German-Netherlands corps, Norway cooperates with the Bundeswehr in NATO's new response force, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) since 2015. Since 2017, Norwegian troops have joined NATO's enhanced forward presence (EFP) in Lithuania, where Germany is the framework nation. Denmark partners with Germany (and Poland) in commanding the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE).[8]

Cooperation in the framework of NATO and the EU is supplemented by several regional formats. The Nordic countries have intensified relations amongst each other through the Nordic defense cooperation (NORDEFCO) but also bilaterally and trilaterally. They have also reached out to their neighbors in northern Europe, through Nordic-Baltic consultations and through the Northern Group, a forum for discussions on strategy and situational awareness that includes Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Poland.[9] Before Sweden and Finland's applications to NATO, these groups had a useful role in bridging gaps between countries with different affiliations to NATO and the EU. In the future they might play a role as platforms for coordinating northern European

8 Allers, Modern deterrence?, 25.

9 Quinn, "Arctic security discussed".

positions, and they could help to bridge the deep political gaps between Germany on the one side and Poland on the other that emerged during the Ukraine crisis. With the Framework Nations Concept (FNC), Germany has taken its own initiative to facilitate defense cooperation between both larger and smaller nations. At the alliance's summit in Wales in 2014, the FNC was implemented together with the UK initiative for a Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and an Italian project. Over the following years all the Nordic countries have joined the FNC. It is worth mentioning, however, that Germany does not participate in the JEF, a format to which Nordic and Baltic countries attach great significance.[10] Germany is nevertheless well integrated in the region's different collaborative formats and, because of a more active German role, new formats like the Nordic + 1 consultations initiated with the German chancellor's visit to Oslo might establish themselves as permanent.

Bilaterally, Germany holds regular security consultations with all Nordic countries and has entered different types of agreements with Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. In line with its policy of deepening defense ties with "close allies", Norway looks most eager to develop the relationship further.[11] On their way to full NATO membership, Finland and Sweden are still in the process of determining what kind of ally they want to be and what role great powers like Germany can play for them. As for Denmark, the decision to join the CSDP and a bilateral joint action plan suggest an interest in exploring new areas of co-operation.[12] The challenge remains to fill the different framework agreements and action plans with concrete initiatives and projects.

10 Allers, "The framework nation"; Saxi, "British and German initiatives for defence cooperation"; Hagström Frisell and Sjökvist, "Military Cooperation Around Framework Nations".

11 Expert Commission, «Unified effort», 45; Norwegian Government, "Evne til forsvar – vilje til beredskap", 91; Norwegian Government, Hurdalsplattformen, 77.

12 Milne, "Denmark poised to vote for tighter defence ties to EU"; Federal Foreign Office, "Joint Action Plan for Future German-Danish Cooperation".

German military presence on the northern flank

ONE POSSIBLE WAY TO DEEPEN the defense cooperation between Germany and the Nordics is through increased German military presence on the northern flank.

Germany's contribution to NATO's defense and deterrence stance is primarily focused on assuring allies at the eastern flank. Another priority is Germany's role as a logistics hub in Europe. In 2018 Germany offered to establish the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) as one of two new NATO commands. Furthermore, chancellor Scholz repeatedly emphasizes Germany's responsibility for organizing territorial defense in Europe together with the US. However, as part of its reorientation towards collective defense since 2014, Germany's armed forces are also looking north. Through air policing and as a framework nation for NATO's enhanced forward presence in Lithuania, the German Air Force and Army contribute to securing the Baltic Sea region, for which, according to chancellor Scholz, Germany has a special responsibility.[13] Participation in the large-scale exercise Trident juncture 2018, hosted by Norway, was a test for NATO's readiness, but also for the Bundeswehr's ability to move large amounts of troops and material. Like other allies, German units like the Gerbirgsjäger regularly train and exercise under arctic conditions.

But the main engagement on the northern flank is through Germany's maritime presence. Since 2014, Germany's naval presence in the Baltic Sea region has steadily increased and the initiative for a Baltic Commander Conference as an annual consultation forum for allied and partner navies reflects the ambition to assume a leading responsibility in the region. This was followed in 2019 with the establishment of the German maritime forces staff (DEU MARFOR) and with plans for a Baltic Maritime Component Command (BMCC). Germany now offers a naval headquarters for NATO at its northern flank. Even before February 24, 2022, Germany could no longer be considered a "reluctant ally" in the region, but increasingly

13 Bundesregierung, "NATO-Beitrittsantrag Finnlands und Schwedens".

as the backbone of NATO's reassurance efforts with an outspoken willingness to take a leading responsibility.[14] In reaction to Russia's military build-up on the border of Ukraine in February 2022, the German navy deployed several ships to the Baltic Sea region. In June 2022 a frigate was deployed to strengthen the northern flank as part of NATO's rapid reaction force. Following his Zeitenwende announcement that "our navy is helping to secure the North Sea and the Baltic as well as the Mediterranean with additional vessels", Scholz promised in May to "intensify our military cooperation, especially in the Baltic Sea region and through joint exercises".[15]

The renewed focus on the northern flank extends beyond the Baltic Sea, through the Kattegat and Skagerrak and the North Sea to the Norwegian sea up to the ice-free parts of the High North. During the Cold War, these regions were a prioritized operational area for NATO, and the West-German navy played a major role in allied plans.[16] During the 1990s and 2000s the strategic significance of the northern flank seemed less imminent. Regional commands were disbanded and with them disappeared area-specific capabilities, knowledge, and experience. Russia's annexation of Crimea and the rebalancing towards national and collective defense brought another turn. The Bundeswehr concept of 2018 notes that Germany's maritime orientation and dependency on foreign trade and resources gives it a special responsibility to secure its coastal waters, the adjacent areas in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea as well as "the waters of NATO's northern flank and the international sea lines of communication".[17] A recently signed German-Danish joint action plan aims at "an increasingly shared operational picture, for example in the Baltic Sea region and

During the Cold War, these regions were a prioritized operational area for NATO.

14 Bruns/Pawlak 2021; Pawlak 2022

15 ibid.

16 Albrecht et al., „Vom Wesen der Seemacht", 355; Tamnes, "The significance of the North Atlantic and the Norwegian contribution", 17-18.

17 Federal Government, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Konzeption", 57-59.

the Northern Sea approaches to the Atlantic".[18] The German navy is a regular contributor to NATO's standing maritime groups which, according to Germany's chief of the navy, are the maritime equivalent of the enhanced forward presence.[19] German surface ships, submarines and surveillance aircraft regularly join allies (including US carrier strike groups) in exercises and operations, to show presence, provide situational awareness, and protect the sea lines of communication. Contrary to the last decades, when it focused on anti-terrorist and anti-piracy missions in the south, the German navy now regards NATO's northern flank as its main operational area and has stated the ambition to further increase Germany's presence there.[20]

Does this also make Germany a security player in the High North, also known as the European Arctic? According to NATO's secretary general, Russia's war against Ukraine has led to a "new normal" for Arctic security as well. "A strong, firm, and predictable Allied presence" was needed because "a security vacuum in the High North" could "fuel Russian ambitions, expose NATO, and risk miscalculation and misunderstandings."[21] China's presence in the region, although not as a military actor, is also a concern to Brussels. However, as Odgaard rightly points out, "like the term 'North Atlantic', which loosely encompasses the ice-free part of the Arctic, 'High North' is a somewhat nebulous political concept".[22] The alliance has an undeniable role in the Arctic. Through membership by the US, Canada, Denmark, and Norway, SACEUR's area of responsibility already includes the North Pole, and, with Finland and Sweden joining, all Arctic states except Russia will be part of NATO. Yet neither the Madrid Summit declaration nor the new strategic concept mentions the Arctic, and Secretary General Stoltenberg himself is careful to distinguish between alliance activities in the North Atlantic and the military presence of individual allies in Arctic waters.[23]

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18 Federal Foreign Office, "Joint Action Plan for Future German-Danish Cooperation".

19 Bundeswehr, "Fleet Commander: German Navy shows alliance solidarity"

20 Inspekteur der Marine, „Absicht 2022",

21 NATO, "Press conference in Bardufoss"

22 Odgaard, "Russia's Arctic Designs and NATO", 91

23 Hilde, Deep Freeze, 4.

Germany's Arctic policy emphasizes the region's growing strategic significance but remains true to the guidelines published in 2018, highlighting the need "to preserve the Arctic as a largely conflict free region, promote cooperation and thus safeguard the peaceful use of the Arctic on the basis of recognized norms and rules".[24] The guidelines acknowledge that "developments in the Arctic […] affect Germany's security interests as set out in the Federal Government's 2016 White Paper" and in response to parliamentary enquires the government "observes that several states secure their interests militarily". The overall goal is, however, to "counteract an intensified militarisation of the Arctic region".[25] Exercises and training activities in the region are mostly taking place in the North Atlantic area.[26] This does not exclude an interest in following activities further north. The Bundeswehr concept of 2018 tasks the navy to secure a comprehensive operational picture and to stand ready for alliance missions in case of a crisis.[27] However, in contrast to the US and the UK, who conduct a demonstrative presence in form of freedom of navigation and intelligence operations close to Russian territory, the German navy remains deliberatively cautious and less visible.[28]

It is doubtful whether Germany should pursue a more prominent role in the Arctic and it is not entirely clear if the Nordic countries request it. All Nordic countries will welcome Germany's active engagement in revising allied plans for the region and request credible capabilities to enforce them. For Sweden and Finland, the main priority remains a strong commitment to defense and deterrence in the Baltic Sea region. Norway, in particular, but also Iceland and Denmark will welcome an increased military presence of the German navy in the North Atlantic. Under the impression of alleged sabotage attacks on the Nordstream pipelines in September 2022 and

24 Federal Government, "Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines". See also Humrich, More Rhetorical Commitment, 118-119.

25 Federal Government, "Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines"; Deutscher Bundestag, "Deutsche Arktispolitik", 4.

26 Deutscher Bundestag, "Deutsche Arktispolitik", 8-9; see also Deutscher Bundestag, Aktivitäten der Bundeswehr.

27 Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Konzeption", 57-59.

28 Wegge, "Arctic Security Strategies and the North Atlantic States", 374-376.

in reaction to an increase in unidentified drone activities, Norway asked the UK, France and Germany for support protecting its offshore oil and gas installations.[29] When it comes to the Barents Sea, however, Germany's more cautious approach aligns with Norway's overall priority to carefully balance allied military presence with efforts to reduce tension and to guarantee transparency.[30]

Defense cooperation and investments in defense material

COOPERATION ON CAPABILITY projects and the procurement of interoperable defense material may become a driving force behind more German engagement on NATO's northern flank.

By agreeing to the Wales summit's defense investment pledge in 2014 and committing to a Kehrtwende (U-turn) in defense spending, Germany has since increased its credibility as a defense partner. Defense spending has increased by 25% and major investment strategic investment projects have been launched. Through initiatives, like the Framework Nations Concept (FNC) and participation in PESCO projects and other multinational initiatives, Germany has demonstrated an ambition to be a leading partner in defense material cooperation in Europe. However, this ambition has been undermined by a lack of political will to reach the NATO goal of spending at least 2% of GDP on defense and by the shortcomings of an infamously antiquated and overregulated procurement system.[31] It is against this background that the Zeitenwende promises to significantly boost defense spending and to reform its procurement system – both are positively welcomed by allies and partners, including those in the Nordic region.

29 Saue and Trædal, «Støre: Øker sikkerheten på norsk sokkel».

30 Hilde, Deep Freeze, 5, 6.

31 Jones and Ellehuus, "Europe's High-End Military Challenges", 18.

Among the bilateral agreements between Nordic countries and Germany, which all include the intention to enhance cooperation on defense material, the German-Norwegian "Memorandum of Understanding on Naval defense material cooperation" (MoU) of 2017 stands out. Hailed as a strategic partnership and a model for future defense cooperation, the MoU not only includes the purchase of submarines of a common design and the development of a future naval strike missile, but also commits both countries to co-operate on training, maintenance, and research.[32] When the submarine contract was eventually signed in July 2021, navy-to navy co-operation had already come a long way. Liaison officers, project teams and regular staff talks at all levels testify to both navies' willingness to make each other their most important partner. There are still limits to the cooperation, especially when it comes to operating together in the North Atlantic and the adjacent Arctic areas. If Germany's renewed commitment to collective defense includes changes in the "mindset"[33] and leads to a more active role on the northern flank, this might path the way for more operative synergies.

New capabilities can support these synergies and make the Bundeswehr more interoperable with its Nordic allies. With fresh money made available through the special fund, the navy wishes to increase the number of submarines and multipurpose frigates.[34] Already in 2021, Germany decided to replace its aging fleet of P3-C Orion maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) with the more modern P-8A Poseidon. The P-8A offers a critical capability for surveillance operations and anti-submarine warfare on the northern flank, and forms part of the navy's reorientation towards collective defense missions such as sea control and securing lines of communication.[35] It is already operated by the UK and Norway, which opens the possibility to deepen integration on training and maintenance.[36]

32 Allers, "Norge og Tyskland"; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Rüstungsbericht, 89.

33 Fritz and Steckel, „Mindset LV/BV".

34 Preuss, "U-Boote von TKMS stark gefragt"

35 Manaranche, "Germany Approves The Procurement Of Five P-8A Poseidon MPA"; Paul and Swistek, "Deutschland im arktisch-nordatlantischen Raum"; Jones and Ellehuus, "Europe's High-End Military Challenges", 19.

36 Norwegian Government, "Evne til forsvar – vilje til beredskap", 103.

The chancellor's announcement that Germany will buy the US produced stealth fighter jet F35 follows the same direction. The decision springs first and foremost from the necessity to replace the 40-year-old Tornado as the only aircraft capable of carrying US nuclear bombs stationed in Germany – a NATO commitment. But the purchase will also make the German air force part of a family of allies in Northern Europe, among them Norway and Denmark, that have started operating the F35 or are in the process of ordering them. It will certainly take a long time before operating the same platforms leads to comparable levels of interoperability that allies like Norway and Denmark have with the US and the UK. But the potential benefits are considerable, not least regarding maintenance and an extended base structure.[37]

Questions remain. German decision-makers must weigh the advantages of procuring existing American capabilities against their commitment to strengthen European strategic autonomy. US material is rapidly available and increases interoperability. But buying American materials should not undermine efforts to increase the coherence of the European capability landscape and to maintain a competitive European technological and industrial defense base.[38] A next opportunity to demonstrate European leadership might be the German initiative for a coordinated European wide air defence system, to which Finland and Norway have signed up.[39] Nordic countries are facing similar questions. Norway's forthcoming decision on its next Main Battle Tank, for example, is more than a choice between two capable systems – the German produced Leopard 2A7 and the Korean model K2 – it is also a question about the strategic advantages of investing in a fleet of NATO-user nations and deepening defense ties with Europe's main political and industrial power.

37 Paul and Swistek, "Germany in the Arctic-North Atlantic", pt. 1.

38 Csernatoni, "The EU's Defense Ambitions"; European Parliament, "The EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base".

39 DW, «Germany, 14 allies agree»

Conclusion

SUMMING UP THE NORDIC + 1 meeting in August 2022, Norway's ambassador to Berlin noted that, although Germany needs to engage in several strategic directions, the greatest potential for co-operation is with the NATO countries in the north.[40]

It is true that Germany's security and defense relations with the Nordic countries profit from a high degree of political like-mindedness and can build on an already extensive platform of existing co-operation. With a changing security situation that has led to more cohesiveness in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture and – not least – the commitment of more funding, these relations should develop further.

However, despite geographical proximity and close political and economic ties, Germany's security relations with the Nordic countries have often suffered from a lack of open and sincere dialogue on mutual expectations – for example, concerning Germany's military presence on the northern flank, but also regarding capability development and the procurement of defense material.[41] Due to its more forward-leaning stance and despite its global outlook, the UK is often seen by the Nordics as a more reliable defense partner.

With the Zeitenwende, Germany has signaled a renewed commitment to collective defense and a willingness to play a leading role on the northern flank as well. These signals need to be followed up. Politically, the forthcoming national security strategy should clearly state Germany's commitment to a region that has been neglected in previous documents, such as the white paper on defense in 2016. Further investments in maritime capabilities are necessary to demonstrate that Germany's turn towards a more credible role in collective defense is for real. The Nordic countries, for their part, should respond positively to German invitations for a regular and active security dialogue and they should clearly state their expectations as to where and how they would like to see more military engagement.

40 Larsen,"Geografien er tilbake i tysk sikkerhetspolitik"

41 Major and von Voss, Nordic-Baltic Security, 7.

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