



Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Hanating, 17 November 2020

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Ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to thank Hanaholmen for hosting this conference and giving me the opportunity to participate and give a speech.

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As you all are aware of, we are living in unpredictable times with new challenges and threats. We are witnessing an increasingly challenging security situation both globally and in our neighbourhood. At the same time, we are in the middle of a pandemic with profound impact on our countries and in our societies. This is happening in a time when stability and security is already being contested.

We all have lessons to learn in terms of resilience, security of supply and preparedness. Another obvious conclusion is that better international cooperation and coordination is needed, not the least before decisions are made that affect populations in more than one country. We must be humble in this and be ready to find new ways to cooperate.

On the other hand, the Nordic defence cooperation has proven to be functional and robust through this crisis. Last year we introduced the so-called NORDEFECO Crisis Consultation Mechanism. The purpose is to support information sharing, communication and coordination among the Nordic countries in the case of crisis.

The mechanism was activated at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis to discuss the situation and the consequences for our armed forces. Consultations and information sharing are done frequently, often on weekly basis, among the countries' ministries of defence and the military

headquarters. Beyond that, and as a routine we share information and discuss security and defence policy issues of common concern.

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Sweden's international defence cooperation and national defence efforts constitute the two pillars of Swedish defence policy. In line with the Swedish Government's new defence bill for the period 2021-2025 we are increasing the defence spending to reinforce our national military capability. We continue to improve our military capability and deepen our international cooperation, a work that was started in 2015. The defence bill should be seen against the background of the deteriorating security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood and in Europe over time.

We still face a Russia that challenges the European security order and breaks international law. The Russian aggression against Georgia and Ukraine demonstrates that Russia is willing to use military force to pursue political goals. Most recently we have seen how Moscow has responded to the popular protests in Belarus, Russia's closest partner. It is safe to assume that Russia will not allow the opposition to oust Lukashenka or take Belarus in a political direction out of Moscow's control. If Russia gets free access to Belarusian territory and airspace it will have a tool to create uncertainty and ambiguity, namely the threat of moving military resources into Belarus if Moscow deems necessary.

Add to this a continued Russian military build-up including nuclear weapons in our vicinity, increased military presence in the Arctic and a continuation of hybrid, cyber, and disinformation activities against other states. That will be the reality of tomorrow as it is of today.

The new defence bill represents the largest increase in defence spending in 70 years. This is a clear signal to the Swedish people and our neighbourhood that we are taking the security situation seriously. During the coming 5 years, the level of funding to the Armed Forces will increase by SEK 27.5 billion. In total, funding for the military defence will have increased by 85 percent in fixed prices between 2014 and 2025. The investments mean that total defence capabilities continue to be strengthened to meet an armed attack against Sweden, including acts of war on Swedish territory.

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For Sweden a security policy characterised by solidarity is the foundation.

Threats against peace and our security are best averted in collaboration with other countries. Challenges must be met through cooperation and joint action. When I look at the map it is obvious that the North Atlantic, the Arctic and the Baltic regions are strategically connected – and of considerable importance to transatlantic security. In 2018, a new vision for the Nordic defence cooperation was adopted. We agreed to improve cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict.

A historical step in this regard was taken in September this year when my friends and colleagues Antti Kaikkonen and Frank Bakke-Jensen, and I signed a trilateral Statement of Intent on enhanced operational military cooperation between Finland, Norway and Sweden. This new Statement of Intent outlines our common ambition to be able and ready to conduct coordinated operations in crisis and conflict. This new trilateral cooperation will improve our ability to act together.

A possible outcome from this enhanced cooperation is coordinated operations planning in areas of common concern, for example the northern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden. We foresee an improved interoperability between our armed forces that enable common military action, if separately so decided. This is a good example on how we step by step are building a security web in Northern Europe, a web that raises the threshold for military conflicts.

To achieve our goal of peace and stability in our part of the world we also need an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced security policy co-operation.

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The defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden is more ambitious and more extensive than ever. The cooperation is by all standards all inclusive, including the strategic, operational and tactical level. This is becoming a routine, where civil servants, military officers and military units cooperate, communicate and exchange information on a daily basis. This is a historical new normal in our relationship.

The interoperability between our armed forces is improving day by day. Together with Antti, I had the pleasure to visit the Finnish air defence exercise Ruska earlier this autumn. Seven JAS 39 Gripen fighters together with more than hundred Swedish soldiers and technicians were deployed at Lappland Air Base in Rovaniemi. It is important that we continue to

maintain a close exercise cooperation despite the COVID-19 situation. The exercise Ruska showed that it is possible.

I was impressed by the level of integration between the Finnish and Swedish air force. We have come a long way in developing a capacity to conduct combined military operations in support of Swedish and Finnish defence. It is clear that we can act together!

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In challenging times, we must continue to stand together, confront the challenges and unite in maintaining peace and stability. We are stronger together! Thank you for listening!

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Government Offices of Sweden

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist's speech at UK NATO Heads of Mission's Forum Monday 15 June 2020

Stockholm 15 June 2020. Check against delivery.

Ambassadors, excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – I am happy to be able to participate today, despite the circumstances. I would like to thank the British embassy for hosting this event.

I will speak about the changing security situation in the region and the challenges facing us - such as cyber and disinformation, and systems and structures to tackle them.

However, I will start by saying a few words on how the military-strategic situation in our region has deteriorated. The region has become less secure. Not least in the current situation when the focus is to combat the spread of COVID.19, which is affecting us all.

Challenges to European security must be met together and this calls for close dialogue and cooperation. Every year a vast number of exercises take place in our region. Common exercises in the Baltic Sea region signal that we take shared responsibility for the security. However, this year, the current situation to combat the spread of COVID-19 has affected many of the planned activities, not least the Aurora 2020 exercise that we had to postpone. Many exercises have been cancelled, leaving only a limited number of air and naval exercises to be conducted. However, for us, it is important to still carry out the exercises such as Swenex and the BALTOPS exercise, to signal that we continue to contribute to the security. Even if the participation is smaller than usual.

Russia, however, is carrying out its exercises in large scale, which creates an unbalance in activities in our region.

The Russian Armed Forces are highly affected by the COVID 19 crisis. Still, there is a substantial number of regular exercises carried out – the large snap exercise in late March, paratroopers landing on Franz Josef’s Land and an air defence exercise in Crimea, just to mention a few examples. In addition, there is an increased Russian naval and airforce presence and activity in the Baltic sea, coinciding with the NATO exercise BALTOPS 2020. This is routine Russian procedure but the level of activity has increased compared to previous years.

The Russian Armed Forces are also heavily involved in tackling the COVID 19 crisis, for example by constructing 16 medical centres across Russia. The CBR protection troops have been very active in different measures – also in Italy and Serbia.

Summarizing the Russian activities over the last few months, we found that they have executed tailor-made operations, tested long-range weapons systems in the region, and executed training and exercises.

Long distance patrols and surveillance with strategic bombers in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea, anti-submarine warfare and landings in the Baltic Sea as well in the Barents Sea are examples. Other examples include training with airborne troops and numerous tactical exercises with ground forces can be added to the list.

Several of these activities have been displayed in Russian media in order to stress that the Russian Armed Forces readiness and capability is not affected by COVID-19. The massive readiness inspection at the end of March, gathering 82,000 personnel is one example.

The Arctic remains an area of low tension in an international perspective. However, we must stay clear headed about Russia’s willingness to use military power against sovereign states to pursue political goals – as we have seen recently in modern times.

We have seen Russian deployment of advanced air defence system S-400, shipborne missile systems and Bastion coastal missile systems. The naval bases on the Kola Peninsula are home to Russia’s strategic nuclear submarines. It was a clear indication of the military importance Russia attaches to the region when we could observe around ten submarines being active simultaneously in the North Atlantic Sea, and in and around the Barents Sea, in the October 2019.

Influence campaigns and disinformation are far from a new phenomenon, but the current crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic has again showed the kind of threat disinformation poses to our open societies.

Different actors are deliberately using COVID-19 to disseminate mis- and disinformation aimed at undermining democracies, question trust-worthy sources of information and reliable guidance, or to influence or interfere in states' and democratic institutions' policy making.

Disinformation does not abide by any borders and as such it must be tackled with international cooperation; multilateralism is at the core of our joint efforts to counter disinformation, not least in the wake of COVID-19.

Our collective response to disinformation and other hybrid threats can only be addressed with actions that are based on our democratic values. Every activity initiated to counter disinformation must consider the EU's fundamental values on free expression, independent media, democratic processes and the respect for our citizens' right to privacy.

We work closely together in the EU and the joint activities that run within EU's Action Plan on Disinformation, as well as the Rapid Alert System and the stratcom task forces in the EEAS. Especially the East StratCom Task Force is performing an important task through its webpage. We fully support all the efforts done to strengthen this system further.

Public diplomacy on the EU's contribution to the global response is an imperative part of countering disinformation.

Nordic countries are all members of the International Partnership to Counter State-Sponsored Disinformation (IPCSD), an important platform for international cooperation to counter state sponsored disinformation and pool resources for joint and strategic communications efforts. The platform is also a good tool to maintain the links to the UK and US. In addition to EU efforts, we also have the Centre of Excellence for Stratcom in Riga and the Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki, whose relevance has only become more obvious. Our Nordic countries could coordinate our strategic communication efforts with a strong narrative for our open and democratic societies.

Due to the deteriorated security situation the Swedish government has concluded that we need to develop a modern psychological defence capable to deal with the challenges of today.

We therefore appointed a Committee with the purpose to suggest the formation and organization of a new Government Agency with the overall responsibility to develop and coordinate Sweden's psychological defence.

The Committee has just delivered its report where they propose that the new Agency will support, strengthen and enhance the Swedish society's collective resistance within the psychological defence.

One of the major tasks the Committee suggests for the new Agency is to identify, analyse and counter information campaigns and other deliberately misleading information activities against Sweden and Swedish interests.

Another major task for the Agency would be to forward knowledge and research and thereby contribute to preparedness within psychological defence.

The government is currently finalising the formation of the new Agency based on the Committees findings and suggestions.

As mentioned, the security environment has worsened in practically all fields of defence and security policy. The cyber domain is a case in point.

It is clearer than ever that cyber security is a matter of both national security and prosperity. Our security and prosperity rests on digital foundations. The ability to reap the benefits from digitalisation must be matched by an equal ability to handle the threats and risks that is part of a digital society.

We all face increasingly advanced antagonistic actors. Let me say a few words on two recent Swedish initiatives to tackle cyber threats.

The Swedish government will establish a national cyber security centre in 2020. This centre will strengthen Sweden's collective ability to prevent, detect and handle antagonistic cyber threats and reduce cyber related vulnerabilities. It will also provide support to private and public actors on how to improve their cyber security and protection against cyber attacks.

In the defence bill from 2015, the government stated its intent to establish a cyber defence capability. It was met with broad approval by Parliament and in 2016 the government tasked the Swedish Armed Forces. The Armed Forces have implemented this task with support from our signals intelligence agency – the Defence Radio Establishment, FRA.

Sweden also contributes personnel to the NATO Cyber Center of Excellence in Tallinn.

A core part of any cyber defence is human resources. The Armed Forces have established a structure for education, training and recruitment for cyber defence. One of the cornerstones is the cyber soldier training program. This program is held according to conscript law. The first class of conscripts will enlist in July. The program is roughly 11 months long and will be challenging and fast paced. This program will serve several purposes. First and foremost it will provide the Armed Forces with a steady flow of staff for various positions in the cyber defence structure. It will also, to a certain extent, support other agencies close to the Armed Forces and, in the long run, provide society as a whole with a number of qualified cyber experts. In addition to the cyber soldier program, the Armed Forces have established a centre for cyber defence related research together with the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH). This centre will be involved in the education and training of the cyber conscripts.

Sweden is increasing defence spending to reinforce our national military capability. From 2016-2020, Sweden has increased defence spending with approximately 3 billion Euros.

In August, the Government reached an agreement with the Centre Party and the Liberal Party to substantially increase defence spending during the period 2021-2025. The agreement entails that annual defence spending will have increased with approximately 2.5 billion Euros by 2025, in relation to 2020. This is an increase of the annual defence budget by more than 40 percent from 2020 to 2025. All in all, an additional 7.5 billion Euro will be added during the period 2021-2025.

This increase in defence spending provides for an improved military capability. Based on the proposals that were put forward by the Swedish Defence Commission we plan to propose to Parliament, among other things, the following measures:

A new and larger war-time organisation as of 1 January 2021, which will be designed for the task of defending Sweden against an armed attack. Total strength will increase from 60,000 to 90,000.

The number of conscripts, both men and women, called up for training every year will double from 4,000 to 8,000.

The Army will be reorganized and consist of three mechanized brigades, one smaller motorized brigade and, on the island of Gotland, one mechanized battalion with support elements. Additional ranger, intelligence, security, artillery, engineer, logistics and air defence units will be added.

When it comes to the Navy the existing corvettes will be upgraded with new air-defence missiles. Two new corvettes will be acquired in order to replace two older ones after 2025. One existing submarine will get a mid-life upgrade and therefore the number of submarines will increase from four to five. A new amphibious battalion will be established on the west coast of Sweden.

When it comes to the Air Force the current fighter JAS 39 C/D will be maintained, as the new fighter JAS 39 E is integrated into the squadrons and becomes operational. This allows the Air Force to keep six fighter squadrons. The development of the next generation fighter aircraft will also commence.

Defence intelligence capabilities will be strengthened as well as cyber defence.

The Home Guard will receive new vehicles and equipment.

Major investments will be made in logistics, in order to improve the ability to fight for sustained periods of time. Also, major investments will be made to acquire munitions and basic equipment.

During the past couple of months, I have conducted political deliberations with all the political parties in the Swedish Parliament regarding Sweden's future defence and the upcoming Defence Bill, which will be presented to Parliament in September.

Unfortunately, these deliberations have not resulted in a broad political agreement. The main dividing line is that the opposition parties would like to see that the agreement includes additional funding for the period 2026-2030, while the Government would like to postpone the discussions on additional funding until 2023 when the economic effects of the Corona crisis have become clearer.

I stand ready to resume deliberations at any time as I find it very important to reach a broad political agreement. It sends a strong signal both nationally and internationally.

I will end my speech by underlining that the complexity and scale of the challenges at hand, means that no state can face them alone. Together we need to use the entire range of security policy instruments, enhanced national defence capability, international cooperation and dialogue and confidence-building measures.

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It is important that we move forward in the spirit of solidarity in our response to this crisis, both internally and externally. Actions taken by the Swedish government to combat the spread of COVID-19 are based on the evolving assessments of our national experts' assessments.

The current situation in Sweden is as follows: Sweden have 7206 confirmed cases of COVID-19 infected individuals. 590 people have been treated at intensive care units. We have 477 deceased.

The Swedish Armed Forces is providing military assistance to civilian national authorities. The assistance includes:

1. Deployment of two field hospitals and medical units.
2. Support with tents, medical equipment and protective masks to hospitals and medical facilities.
3. Support to the Public Health Agency with a mobile laboratory and staff.

Having said that, I want to underline that the Swedish Armed Forces' main focus is to ensure continued endurance regarding readiness and operations, both nationally and internationally. The core task for the Armed Forces is to defend Sweden.

The crisis affects some planned activities, such as training and exercises. Last Friday, the Swedish Armed Forces took the decision to postpone the Aurora 2020 exercise. However, those Swedish conscripts that are at the end of their training cycle, will still carry out some exercise activities. Furthermore, national air and naval exercises will be conducted.

When it comes to international operations, Sweden greatly appreciates the work our personnel continues to carry out, despite the current situation. Our intention is to maintain our engagement in the international operations we are represented in. Sweden believes that it is important that international military operations can continue to the extent possible, but we must also ensure the health of our soldiers.

When it comes to EU coordination of military assistance, then I would like to underline the importance of coordinating with civil authorities, focusing specifically on transport and other logistics. The starting point should be to use already existing coordination mechanisms, in order to avoid duplication. One concrete example is the Movements Coordination Centre Europe.

Furthermore, the EU must counter the efforts of Russia, China and others that seek to advance their agenda through disinformation, propaganda and other hybrid threats. This is clear in the context of COVID-19, where we have seen a disinformation campaign directed at the EU and its member states. A key message from these actors is that the EU or individual member states are not able to handle the crisis. The campaign includes false narratives, conspiracy theories, and incorrect health advice, which could have harmful consequences for public health.

We need long-term resilience and a coordinated strategic communication approach. We must make full use of our collective resources in detecting and countering disinformation. The Rapid Alert System, the EEAS Stratcom Task Forces, and the “EU versus Disinformation” website are important tools in this effort.

Moreover, we must counter disinformation by acting proactively. It is of strategic importance to counter the false narrative. We support the High Representative’s efforts in this.

Finally, I think its important to keep each other updated and maintain our close international cooperation. Thank you!

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Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist's keynote speech at Chatham House Security and Defence Conference

Chatham House, 12 March 2020. As prepared. Check against delivery.

I am happy to be here at this occasion recognizing Chatham House's 100 years of independent thinking. I would like to thank the Chatham House for giving me the opportunity to present my view on the European security order, its architecture, and why we must defend it.

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We are living in times of uncertainty. In these unstable and unpredictable times, we also see strong political tensions throughout the Western world. There are constant and conscious attempts to undermine our communities. The democratic structures and the openness of our societies are used intentionally, systematically and shamefully for this purpose.

Disinformation has become an easy way to inflict instability and split societies. There are many examples I could raise which has caused uncertainty in democratic processes in Sweden.

One being in the process of implementing the Host Nation Support agreement with NATO, where we noticed many illegitimate methods to influence opinion or decision-making.

Another example being a letter that was supposedly sent in my name, where I congratulated a Swedish defence company concerning their successful sales of weapons to Ukraine.

Another example of a disinformation campaign was in the aftermath of the

attack on Sergi and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury. Russia denied allegations by London and others of the attack. Instead Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that Sweden, the Czech Republic and Slovakia could be possible perpetrators behind the attack.

The accusations were of course absurd, but they show a clear example of how far Russia is willing to go in order to create confusion and uncertainty.

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Europe is facing provocative and destabilising Russian actions that has lowered the threshold for using military force. Thus, the intent to undermine the European security order, as defined by the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, has been made clear.

The territorial integrity and sovereignty of states is not negotiable. Russia's actions in Georgia in 2008, in Ukraine since 2014 and in Syria since 2015 demonstrate its willingness to use military means to achieve political objectives, both within Europe and beyond.

The illegal annexation of Crimea and continued aggression against Ukraine violates the prohibition of the use of force that is stated in the Charter of the United Nations. Russia's actions also violate the norms, cooperative formats and institutions that constitute the foundation of European security.

From time to time, we hear officials and thinkers suggest that we must negotiate and accommodate Russia's demands on establishing a new European security order. They argue that this will increase cooperation and security in Europe or help to meet global challenges. I do not share this view.

The Russian actions are not only an aggression against Ukraine but constitute a threat to the right of all countries to make sovereign policy choices, including those in Russia's neighbourhood. This is a cornerstone in the European security order.

Just because time has passed, it does not mean that we can give in to Russia's demands as long as Russia is not contributing actively and without ambiguities to find a solution accordance with the OSCE principles and international law.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine concerns us all and makes our response all the more important. To support Ukraine's fight for self-determination is to defend the very heart of the European security order.

The Russian military aggression and Russian violation of international law is unacceptable. There can be no business as usual with Russia as long as this behaviour continues. The international sanctions imposed on Russia must remain.

We can never accept a new European security order where one nation acts like other, smaller states are part of its' sphere of influence, giving them no right to self-determination.

For Sweden, international law is our first line of defence and the European security order is a fundamental interest.

The rules-based order gives small states a say in international affairs. International institutions and organisations such as the UN, EU, NATO and the OSCE ensure security and stability. But these institutions are only as strong as their members and their commitment to cooperation.

The upcoming Swedish Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2021 will have a clear focus on our strong commitment to the European security order underpinned by a well-functioning European security architecture. Our efforts will be based on the concept of comprehensive security where respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are fundamental to security both within as well as between states.

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The Swedish neighbourhood is a distinct border area between Russia and the West. The Baltic Sea Region is of significance to European security. Russia is clearly seeking to increase influence over what it considers as its area of interest, including at least parts of our neighbourhood.

Russian military activity has intensified in the Baltic Sea Region. Since 2014 we have seen a military build-up in the region, including permanent deployment of advanced weapon systems, as well as an increased military presence. The increasing military presence in the Arctic region is also a reality we must deal with.

Russian large-scale strategic exercises are characterized by a lack of transparency, which damages trust. Zapad 2017, Vostok 2018 and Ocean Shield 2019, send a signal about Russian capability to undertake large-scale military operations in our vicinity. This reflects not only the objective to develop the Russian Armed Forces, but also determination to re-establish

Russia as a great power with a right to define its sphere of interest.

A newly published study by the Swedish Defence Research Agency examines Russian military capability in a ten-year perspective and concludes that, over the past ten years, Russia has bridged the gap between its policy ambitions and its military capability.

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Sweden believes that the challenges to European security must be met through cooperation and joint action. But at the national level, every country must take their share of the responsibility.

Swedish defence policy is a direct response to the declining security environment in Europe. A renewed regional focus has become a priority, with the emphasis on national defence and planning for wartime scenarios. Among other things, this renewed regional and national focus require an updated total defence concept for Sweden to be able to cope with present day challenges and threats, including an armed attack.

Sweden is pursuing a two-track defence policy: First, increasing defence spending to reinforce our national military capability and the total defence. Second, deepening our security and defence cooperation with other nations and organizations.

One concrete example of our defence policy is our national exercise Aurora. On the one hand, it is a national military exercise that will include parts of our civil defence. Meaning, municipalities and civil government agencies will be exercised as well. On the other hand, we are conducting this exercise with our partners.

Of the approximately 25 000 participants 3 000 are international. In total, 12 countries – nine of which are NATO allies – will contribute with troops. The United States presence is a considerable contribution with a Marine Corps battalion, naval units and Patriot systems. Aurora 20 is a national exercise designed to build a stronger defence. The goal is to enhance our national capabilities and to work together with our partners to deal with an attack on Sweden.

The exercise will be taking place on land, air and at sea, with elements of the exercise being conducted all over Sweden – from low-intensity battles in the north to high-intensity battles in the south. Aurora 20 will be bigger, longer

and more extensive than its predecessor, Aurora 17 – at the time the biggest Swedish exercise of its kind for more than 20 years.

In building military capacity and interoperability, military exercises are key. When we train and exercise together, we strengthen our national capabilities and our capacity to act together.

Aurora 20 takes place at a time when many other exercises are being conducted in Northern Europe, one being Defender 2020.

These exercises are all examples of what raises the threshold in our part of Europe and as a result, increase stability and predictability in our region. They demonstrate that we are willing to defend the European security order.

From a Swedish perspective, we have decided to be very open and transparent about this exercise. We have reported the exercise to OSCE and will inform nations in our vicinity and OSCE partner states. Despite the transparency we will bring to this exercise, we are prepared to manage possible disinformation campaigns targeted towards us.

During the Aurora exercise 2017, we saw an increase in disinformation and false rumours spread at high level. We will target these types of attacks with swift responses and by continuing to be very open about the exercise.

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For the first time in more than two decades, Sweden has strengthened its defence budget. The Swedish parliament approved an increase of military defence spending with approximately 3,3 billion EURO [33 billion SEK] during the period 2016–2020.

Recently the Swedish Government decided to increase defence spending by totally 2,5 billion EURO [25 billion SEK] in the years 2021 to 2025. In total, this constitutes a 40 percent increase of defence spending. A massive national effort.

During the last couple of years, we have taken important steps to increase our military capability. I have already mentioned military exercises, which has increased in number and size. Other examples include the reactivation of conscription. Worth to note is that the conscription is also gender neutral. We have re-established a permanent presence on the island of Gotland.

Large investments in defence equipment have been made, for example with new next generation submarines, Gripen fighter aircrafts and with the Patriot

missile defence system. We have also added funding to ensure that civil defence planning is restarted.

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At the same time as we are strengthening our national defence, we are deepening our international defence cooperation focusing on the security of the Baltic Sea and Northern Europe.

On a bilateral basis we work closely with our Nordic neighbours – especially with Finland – with the Baltic states, Poland and Germany. We also cooperate very closely with the UK, the Netherlands, France and the US.

The defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden is the most far-reaching. The cooperation aims at strengthening the defence capabilities of our two countries and creating the preconditions for combined joint military action and operations in all situations. The cooperation covers operational planning for all situations, including beyond peace time.

The cooperation with the United Kingdom is also of great importance. We regret the fact that the UK has left the European Union but of course respect this democratic decision. However, the UK is, and will remain, one of Sweden's most important partner countries in the field of defence and there is a mutual desire to maintain and deepen this cooperation. The Swedish-British defence cooperation will not change because of Brexit. In July 2019, we entered a Future Combat Air Systems Cooperation (FCASC) agreement with the UK looking at the options for jet-fighter systems after 2040. We are confident that Britain will maintain its contribution to European security in a spirit of solidarity.

Besides bilateral cooperation, the security network in the Baltic Sea Region is strengthened by different regional defence cooperation such as NORDEFECO, the Northern Group and the Joint Expeditionary Force. It is important to focus on making all these collaborations operational.

The Nordic defence cooperation celebrated its ten-year anniversary last year. It is my strong belief that the defence collaborations Sweden enters must lead to concrete and operational results. The Nordic defence cooperation fulfils this belief.

We have together established secure communications between our capitals, we have facilitated easy access to each other's territories, and we have taken

measures to improve our common situational awareness by the exchange of air surveillance information. We have also established a Crisis Consultation Mechanism which enhances information sharing and consultation during crisis or conflict.

Regional capability development and cooperation is crucial when building security in our vicinity. However, a strong transatlantic link is key.

For the security of Europe, and particularly the stability in the Baltic Sea Region, United States-, Canada- and NATO-presence is necessary.

Therefore, we welcome NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence and the US efforts to further strengthen its presence.

Sweden has a long-standing bilateral defence cooperation with the United States including a Statement of Intent from 2016. One good example is training and exercises which is conducted on a regular basis. The United States made for example, together with a number of countries, a substantial contribution to our national exercise Aurora 2017 and to Aurora 2020 as previously mentioned. This is a clear signal of the US engagement.

On a European level, the exercise Defender 2020 will send an even more important signal regarding its commitment to European security. Together with Finland, we also have a trilateral cooperation, including a Statement of Intent from 2018, with the United States. During my six years as Minister for Defence, I have seen a continuity and increase in the practical implementation of our cooperation with the United States.

Sweden's bilateral and trilateral security arrangements with the US is complementary to our relationship with NATO. NATO plays an indispensable role for transatlantic and European security due to its unique capabilities and institutional strength.

The importance of Sweden's NATO partnership has grown as a direct consequence of the deteriorated security situation in our neighbourhood. Political dialogue with NATO on common security challenges and how to counter them is of strategic value. The partnership with NATO is crucial to developing the interoperability and capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces. Through our status as Enhanced Opportunities Partner, we are seeking to further strengthen this partnership, in particular regarding cooperation in a potential regional crisis. Training and exercises are another priority in our partnership with NATO.

The EU and NATO are both instrumental for meeting today's complex security challenges in Europe and beyond. As a member of the EU and close partner to NATO, Sweden has a strong interest in an effective, result-

oriented strategic partnership between these organisations. Let me stress that the organisations must be complementary to each other. The work on simplified military mobility is an area where EU and NATO are complementing each other.

The EU is an important foreign and security policy arena and a guarantor for security and peace. Europe must take a greater responsibility for its security and defence, while ensuring that we strengthen our ability to work with partners.

Sweden welcomes the progress made within the EU towards strengthening the defence domain of Europe. Moving forward, our cooperation on security and defence should strengthen both Europe's military capabilities and EU's solidarity, cohesion and our ability to act. From a Swedish perspective, the goal for EU's defence cooperation is to create a stronger European pillar in security and defence, to be a stronger partner and to realize the agreed level of ambition. This must be done in a way that strengthens both the EU and our cooperation with strategic partners.

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Sweden is just in the beginning of a long-term process of strengthening our contribution to European security. This demands both time and political endurance. This autumn the Swedish government plans to present a new defence policy bill for the period 2021–2025. I can ensure you that the main lines remain; Sweden will continue to build national military capability and deepen our international cooperation. By strengthening our defence, we are also raising the threshold for conflicts in our vicinity and making sure that Sweden is a provider of security in Europe.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

International challenges require international response. I believe in the strength of European cooperation and a strong transatlantic link. In the face of increased global competition, friends must continue to stand together. We must confront the challenges, whether they come from inside or outside. We are united by the responsibility of maintaining peace and stability. In order to shoulder that responsibility, we must continue to strengthen our military capabilities and ensure our defence collaboration leads to concrete results.

We must also do everything in our power to restore respect for the principles of international law and the European security order. We must also

strengthen the institutions and instruments – such as the OSCE and the Vienna Document – that are key parts of European security architecture.

Thank you for listening. I am ready to take your questions.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at the Ukrainian seminar, Yalta European Strategy/Viktor Pinchuk Foundation

Munich, 15 February 2020 Check against delivery.

Thank you, Dr. Richard Haass, for organising this meeting and thank you for your invitation.

I am of course honoured to take part in this seminar and discussion again. At the same time, it is with great regret that I come back to the MSC six years after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and once more I am reminded of the fact that the conflict in Donbas is still going on and Crimea is still illegally annexed by Russia. So, the pleasure of meeting you aside, I wish we did not have to have this conversation.

However, let me start by saying that my country's position on the situation in Ukraine remains very clear and at the same time very firm:

The illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian aggression in Donbas (alongside the war in Georgia in 2008) are the greatest threats to the existing European Security order since the end of the cold war. Furthermore, they are clear examples of how a country that perceives itself as a great power thinks itself entitled to a sphere of influence where it can act at its will.

I have said this before here in Munich: we cannot allow the illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian aggression in Donbas to become a status quo. This cannot be written in our history books as something which just happened.

For that reason, international support for Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty, within its internationally recognized borders, is central. Not only

to Ukraine but to all of us, and to the credibility of the European security architecture.

Furthermore, a successful Ukraine is an effective way to meet Russia's challenges to the European security order. Promoting and supporting Ukrainian reforms is therefore also of key importance.

I welcome the constructive approach shown by president Zelensky. His determination to bring the conflict in Donbas closer to a resolution provides grounds for optimism.

The confidence-building measures agreed at the Normandy Summit in December are a step in the right direction.

While the Ukrainian ambition to seek solutions is admirable, we must also keep in mind the importance of all parties now honouring their commitments.

We must maintain international pressure on Russia to fulfil the Minsk agreements and to end the illegal annexation of Crimea.

The conflict started with violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine depends on Moscow. We cannot allow that the constructive Ukrainian approach to be exploited and used as a way for Russia to move its positions further forward or to remain idle. So far, we have not seen Russian willingness to live up to its commitments under Minsk (withdrawal of mercenaries, control of the state border, unlimited access of OSCE SMM to non-government controlled areas etc). Instead Russia is further aggravating the problems, for example by issuing Russian passports to inhabitants of the territories not controlled by the Ukrainian government.

Now that we have a grave situation in Europe where the rulebook – I am talking about the European security order – is being challenged by one large country. In this situation the single most important factor for us is unity. European and transatlantic unity in meeting and confronting the Russian challenges is absolutely paramount.

We must not accept, directly or indirectly, the use of military violence as a political tool to interfere in other countries in Europe in the 21st century. The respect for the principles of the European Security Order, enshrined in Helsinki and Paris, must be restored.

I would also caution against some ideas currently circulating on regional

consultation mechanisms between the great powers, while excluding the countries concerned. There can be no talk of spheres of influence, buffer zones, unequal right to sovereignty and territorial integrity. There can be no states “in between”.

One obvious measure from our side is to assure that the EU sanctions remain in place. They should not be allowed to be lifted nor eased until full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Let me also say a few words about the OSCE.

As you know, Sweden will assume the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2021. We will focus on OSCE core business and our commonly agreed principles and commitments. The European Security Order and the concept of comprehensive security including democracy, human rights and equal rights for all, will feature high on our agenda. Likewise, we will continue the important efforts aimed at conflict-resolution in the OSCE area.

Dear friends, maintaining our existing security architecture and the commonly agreed European Security Order – as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris – is a core security policy interest for Sweden and, I believe, our whole region. The right of states to territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to freely choose their own security arrangements is not negotiable.

For that reason, what happens in Ukraine concerns us all. It concerns all European countries, including my own. Sweden is a medium-sized European country that has chosen to be militarily non-aligned. It goes without saying that what has happened in Ukraine is an intimidating scenario. That the illegal annexation of Crimea and the intervention in Donbas have been going on for six whole years puts European stability in peril.

This is not only about the fate of two parts of Ukraine. This is about our core values, our freedom, our sovereignty, our prosperity and our democracy.

Thank you for your attention.

Published 16 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist's speech at Georgia's Army Hall

Georgia's Army Hall, 6 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Dear Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished guests, officers, ladies and gentlemen – it is a pleasure to address you. I would like to thank Minister Izoria for the opportunity to speak here today.

The bilateral relationship between Georgia and Sweden was established already in 1918 and in that same year the first Georgian embassy opened in Stockholm. The bilateral relationship in the area of defence reaches back to 2009.

In 2008 Georgia experienced the Russian invasion. Let me start by pointing to the fact that this was the first serious attack on the European security order after the end of the cold war.

Six years later came the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea and the Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine. For Sweden the rule-based European security order is of fundamental interest. The right of every country to make its own foreign and security policy decisions without veto from other states is a cornerstone of this order.

My visit yesterday to Ukraine and today to Georgia is important, not the least because we want to show our support for the two countries that have suffered from Russian aggression.

I am pleased that the Swedish-Georgian relations have developed in the defence area. Last year I had the privilege of welcoming my colleague defence minister Levan Izoria to Stockholm and today I visit Georgia as the first Swedish minister of defence ever.

The exchange of experience with the Georgian Armed forces is appreciated and valuable to us. Also, the Swedish support to the reform of the security sector in Georgia is an important element in our bilateral cooperation.

In particular, I am pleased to have a Swedish instructor in place at the NATO Joint Training and Evaluation Centre supporting the training of the Georgian armed forces.

With that background, I would like to present Swedish perspectives on the security situation in Europe and our view on how we should respond to them.

* * *

Today's Europe faces fundamental challenges. Continued high unemployment, instability in our neighbourhood and the challenges posed by the recent migration crisis. At the same time, the EU is dealing with the consequences of Britain's decision to leave the European Union. On top of this, we see nationalist and populist movements in Europe, including in Sweden and other countries around the Baltic sea.

The complexity and scale of the challenges at hand means that no European state can face them alone – the need for European cooperation is greater than ever.

The current security situation calls for all European countries to engage in creating a Europe that is united and has the capacity to take responsibility for its own security. This is why Sweden was an active partner in the creation of the European Global Strategy and why we have welcomed the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, PESCO.

In these challenging times European unity and solidarity combined with a strong transatlantic link is key. This is of great importance, not the least since Europe is facing a more provocative and destabilising Russia that has lowered the threshold for using military force. Russian military aggression and Russian violation of international law is unacceptable. Russian actions challenge the European security order that we stand for.

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For over a decade, Russia has invested heavily in modernising and rearming its armed forces. The military capability has increased considerably and this development will continue. By investing a substantial part on national

defence in the federal budget, Russia sends a clear message about its priorities.

As I said earlier, the Russian invasion of Georgia and Russia's support to the self-proclaimed republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support to so-called separatists in eastern Ukraine are the greatest challenges to the European security order.

There can be no business as usual with Russia as long as this behaviour continues. Russia remains aggressive and its actions increase tensions in our vicinity. This is not only manifested in military action, but also in disinformation and propaganda operations.

The Russian actions do not only constitute an aggression on Georgia and Ukraine but also a threat to the right for every country, including Russia's neighbours, to make their own policy choices. This is a cornerstone in the rule-based world order and the European security order. Therefore, the Russian actions are a concern to us all and make our response all the more important.

Along with the Black Sea, the significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security has increased. Russia has over the past few years showed a more challenging behaviour including violations of its neighbour's territorial integrity. The military-strategic situation has deteriorated, and the region has become less secure. Russia is clearly seeking to increase influence over what it considers as its area of interest.

Parallel to this, it is important to remember that the Russian aggression comes from the current regime. Sweden continues to maintain that people to people contacts and an active diplomacy are important tools for our long-term relation with Russia. This includes seeking dialogue on issues where we can agree.

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However, on the national level, every country must take its own responsibility when it comes to national defence. The Swedish defence policy has broad support in Parliament. Our key priority is to enhance the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces. This also includes the development of a modern "total defence" that includes both the military and the civilian defence. Reinforcing our national defence goes hand in hand with deepening our bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation. In March 2017, the Swedish government decided to reactivate conscription.

The military units are essentially fully manned and made up of both full-time and part-time employees as well as conscripts. It means that our Armed Forces will have a mixed system with both conscripts and professional soldiers, sailors and squad leaders.

The modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men. We start this year with 4 000 that will do conscription service. I believe that this will increase the number of women in our armed forces and thereby making better use of the whole population in strengthening our warfighting capabilities.

Sweden is increasing defence spending to reinforce our national military capability. Up until 2020 the Swedish government, with a broad support in Parliament, is increasing defence spending, including civilian defence, with a total of approximately 2,6 billion euros. This constitutes the largest increase in defence spending in more than two decades.

The most important priority for me as Minister for Defence is to strengthen our national defence by increasing our capability to resist an armed attack. By doing this, we raise the threshold for conflicts in our vicinity, and as a result, increase stability and predictability in our region.

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Our policy of military non-alignment requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation and credible national defence capabilities. Sweden firmly believes that security is best built together with others. This is a core principle in Swedish security and defence policy.

The cooperation between Sweden and Finland holds a special place in both our countries' security and defence policies. It aims at increasing effect and efficiency through combined use of resources, increased interoperability and a closer dialogue on common challenges. The cooperation also includes planning for scenarios beyond peace time.

Considering our common history, our shared culture and values as well as a common geostrategic position, Sweden attaches high importance to the Nordic Defence Cooperation – NORDEFECO - as well as our cooperation with the Baltic States. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world. We also work closely with the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland and Germany.

The European Union is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena. Sweden is actively seeking to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy while keeping its intergovernmental character. From a Swedish perspective, we see two main objectives with the quickly evolving defence package: strengthened common security and defence policy, and enhanced EU cohesion.

The deteriorated security situation in our close vicinity has increased the importance of Sweden's partnership with NATO. Political dialogue on common security challenges and how to counter them is essential. In November 2017, our status as member of the Enhanced Opportunities Programme was renewed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

Sweden welcomes the U.S. and NATO's decisions to strengthen the security of its Eastern allies. The European Security Initiative and the Enhanced Forward Presence are crucial efforts to Baltic Sea security and regional stability.

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The Swedish defence policy has a strengthened focus on national defence. We develop a modern "total defence" that includes both the military and the civilian defence.

We define in Swedish law, total defence as the preparations and planning required to prepare Sweden for war. When the government has declared the highest alert, all societal functions are defined as total defence, which consists of military defence and civil defence. In accordance, the Parliament, the Government, government authorities, municipalities, private enterprises, voluntary defence organizations as well as individuals are all part of the total defence.

In 2017, we added resources to ensure that municipalities, county councils, county administrative boards and Government authorities responsible for civilian defence are able to complete and intensify the civil defence planning.

The defence bill also states that civil defence will be built on the crisis management structures, complemented with measures required in wartime. Notable key factors are for example transforming society to manage warlike conditions, mobilise society and the military and civil resources to strengthen the defence efforts. Also, individual responsibility is an important part of the

aggregated capability in society to withstand and mitigate the consequences of serious disturbances in the functionality of society.

Without a functioning civil defence and a functioning civil-military coordination, the military defence cannot perform its tasks with full effect in a crisis situation. This involves, among other things, the ability to deal with issues such as information and cybersecurity, health care, uphold order and security, transports and infrastructure, and long-term sustainability of the society in stages of readiness and war.

This must be closely coordinated so that efforts on the civilian side harmonise with what is happening on the military side. In a civil and military interaction, a coordinated approach to defence and contingency planning should be reached.

The development of the total defence also includes recreating a psychological defence in order to ensure an open and democratic society with freedom of opinion and free media.

One key aspect in developing the total defence include training and education, information and exercises. Thus, we will conduct a large total defence exercise in 2020.

* * *

To sum up, we are living in a world with increasing insecurities, where institutions and relationships we considered stable are now under increasing pressure. We all have a responsibility to do our utmost to ensure peace, security and stability, on the basis of our different security choices.

Thank you for listening. I am ready to take your questions.

Published 12 March 2018



Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Saab Global Eye roll-out

Linköping, 22 February Check against delivery.

I want to begin by congratulating Saab for reaching a new level of multi-mission airborne surveillance capability.

The road toward today's roll out has not been short. Swedish knowledge in radar technology dates back more than half a century ago. The collaboration with industry, academia, the armed forces and government has always been close. I am proud of the long history Sweden has in radar technology.

The idea of airborne radar was an idea that arose some 40 years ago in discussions between industry, the armed forces and government. The debate was connected to the ability to protect Sweden's territorial integrity. The initial idea consisted of adding a surveillance pod on a fighter aircraft. This was rejected for both technical and political reasons.

However, the industry presented the idea of a turbine engine transport aircraft equipped with a radar carrier antenna. With the support of the Swedish government, this idea was taken further with the Defence Material Agency whom since then has worked closely with the defence industry.

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So here we are today, with a system that has developed over many years with a broad support from the political level.

Furthermore, it is a system that is connected to the ability to uphold a nation's right to protect and maintain its territorial integrity according with international law.

Sweden's defence and security policy ultimately aims at preserving Swedish territorial integrity and sovereignty. The core objective is the protection of

life and health, to ensure the functionality of society, to protect our democracy, rule of law and human rights.

Our security policy also aims at preserving our sovereignty and defending us against political, military or any other kind of pressure.

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Sweden is now half way through our current defence bill. We are pursuing a two-tiered defence policy.

First, by increasing defence spending we reinforce our national military capability.

Second, from a military non-aligned position, we deepen our defence and security cooperations with other nations and organisations.

This policy is based on a broad parliamentary support.

In parallel to this we are using all available tools to enhance the long-term security situation in our vicinity. This means using an active foreign policy, diplomacy, trade and people to people contacts to create trust and lower tensions.

* * *

The broad democratic support for our security and defence policy is important as the security environment is more complex than ever.

The rise of extremist non-state actors and terrorism is a fact. In our vicinity, we see a more provocative and destabilizing Russia that has shown that she is prepared to use military force to change existing borders.

Today, Russia occupies 20 % of Georgian territory since the war in 2008. In 2014, we saw the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea. Since then, the Russian proxy war in Eastern Ukraine continues.

Let me be clear: this is against international law and it is unacceptable. Territorial integrity must be respected.

Beyond the wars against Georgia and Ukraine, we have seen Russia supporting the Assad regime in Syria, a nation that is conducting a horrific war against its own population.

* * *

As for Swedish defence industry, I fundamentally believe that a strong, resilient and internationally competitive Swedish defence industry is essential and closely connected to our national security. The defence industry in Sweden has a history dating back to the 16th century.

The Swedish position of neutrality in war during the World War and Cold War required a strong Armed Force, which in turn required a strong national defence industry.

Today, neutrality is not part of our defence policy. We are military non-aligned, but this does not mean that we stand alone.

Our defence industry has moved from predominantly government-owned companies to more of private companies, many of which are present on the international market.

Our history has made it possible for Sweden to develop a strong defence industry with a spectrum of high quality systems, like fighter aircrafts, submarines, frigates, military vehicles, radars and sensors, weapon systems and ammunition.

For being a small nation, I am proud to be the Minister for Defence with these domestic capabilities.

The Swedish government has also announced the fighter aircraft, submarine technology, radars and sensors as areas of Swedish national security interests. Saab is the largest defence industry in Sweden and has been very successful internationally for decades.

We have also seen the growth of small and medium-sized companies that contribute with innovative thinking, critical thinking and ambitious entrepreneurship.

Many of the Swedish SME-companies focus on the domestic market, both directly to the defence agencies and as sub-suppliers to other larger companies that export internationally.

The Swedish defence industry has always been present on the international market, but the export share of defence equipment has increased during recent decades.

That increase has made the need for partnerships, both domestically and

internationally, even more important in order to maintain the high competence and thus the competitiveness.

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Sweden has a defence industry that is relevant today and for the future. The Global Eye is an excellent evidence of that.

Together with partners, I foresee that Swedish defence industry and its partner will continue to grow by building, integrating and sustaining the Swedish Armed Forces and our international partners.

Thank you.

Published 22 February 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Atlantic Council's conference Securing Northern Europe – Bridging the Baltic Sea, North atlantic and the Arctic

Stockholm, 12 December 2017. Check against delivery.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – it is a pleasure to address you today.

I want to thank the Atlantic Council and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung for organising this event and for giving me the opportunity to address you all. Some years ago, a discussion on how to secure northern Europe would have seemed absurd, but today it is the reality.

Today's Europe faces fundamental challenges, that affects us here in the north as well.

A recovery after the financial crisis, continued high unemployment, instability in our neighbourhood and the EU:s inability to handle the following migration crisis. At the same time, the EU is dealing with the consequences of Britain's decision to leave the Union. On top of this, we see emerging nationalist and populist tendencies in many European states, including those around the Baltic sea.

The complexity and scale of the challenges at hand means that no European state can face them alone. Se situation in our region calls for more and deepened cooperation, bilaterally as well as multilaterally. I will address this in detail further on.

For a number of years Russia has invested heavily in modernising and

rearming its armed forces. Russian military capability has increased since 2008. To my judgement this is a continuing process. By investing almost 5 percent of GDP in its Armed Forces, Russia sends a clear message about their priorities. Military spending is at the highest level since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Through its actions in Georgia and Ukraine, Russia has shown that she is prepared to use military force to change existing borders in Europe. The illegal annexation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order since it was established 25 years ago.

The Russian actions do not only constitute an aggression on Ukraine. They are a challenge to the right for every country, including Russia's neighbours, to make their own policy choices. This is a cornerstone in the rule based world order and the European security order. Therefore, the Russian actions are a concern to us all and make our response all the more important.

In order to secure and stabilise our region, there is need for diplomatic efforts. But I want to be clear: There can be no business as usual as long as this behaviour continues. Russia remains aggressive and thus increases tensions in our vicinity.

Our response must be guided by democratic principles and values. It needs to be firm, clear and long-term. And it needs to build upon European and transatlantic unity. This shows that we have a desire to stand up for international law and the European security order.

The significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security has increased. Russia has over the last years showed a more challenging behaviour including violations of its neighbour's territorial integrity as well as provocative and unprofessional behaviour in the air as well as on the sea. The military-strategic situation in our region has deteriorated and the region has become less secure.

Sweden believes that challenges to European security must be met through cooperation and joint action. But on the national level, every country must take their share of the responsibility.

This is why Sweden is pursuing a defence policy with two distinct pillars: First, increasing defence spending to reinforce our national military capability.

Second, from a military non-aligned position, deepening our defence cooperation with other nations and organisations.

This policy is based on a broad support in Parliament and has great support among the Swedish people.

For the first time in more than two decades, the Swedish government, with a broad support in Parliament, has decided to substantially strengthen the defence budget. Up until 2020 we will increase defence spending, including civilian defence, with a total of approximately 2,6 billion EURO.

By strengthening our defence in order to increase our ability to resist armed aggression and attack, we are also raising the threshold for conflicts in our vicinity.

Due to the security situation in Northern Europe the Swedish government in March this year decided to reactivate the conscription. We have commenced enrollment since July this year and mandatory basic training will begin in January next year. The decision was made due to the failure of the all-volunteer system and the need to man our units with enough trained soldiers, sailors and squad leaders. The Swedish Armed Forces is planning for (at least) 4,000 recruits annually in basic military training in 2018 and 2019.

This means that our Armed Forces will have a mixed system with both conscripts and professional soldiers, sailors and squad leaders. Our Armed Forces' ability to man its units is fundamental in the light of the deteriorated security situation.

The modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men. Of just over 6 000 young persons called for enrollment, almost 25 percent are women. I believe that this will increase the number of women in our Armed forces and thereby making better use of the whole population in strengthening our warfighting capabilities.

Another example of Sweden enhancing the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces is the Combined Arms Exercise AURORA 17 conducted in

September. This was the largest military exercise in Sweden for over 20 years. The exercise involved some 20 000 Swedish soldiers, sailors and officers, some 40 government agencies and broad participation from several international partners.

The objective of AURORA 17 was to exercise our capability to meet an armed attack, and it was an important step in implementing the Swedish defence decision from 2015. The exercise included all elements of our defence policy: increasing our warfighting capabilities, to deepen our cooperation with other countries and to rebuild a modern Total Defence.

The first impressions I have received have been to the most parts, positive but have also shown that there still is work to do. We will therefore continue to participate in, and host multinational exercises in our region.

An intensive exercise pattern in the Baltic Sea region is important. Every exercise is a signal that we, as individual countries as well as together, will do what is needed to defend ourselves if the worst comes to worst.

Sweden firmly believes that security is best built together with others. This is a core principle in Swedish security and defence policy. We are deepening our cooperation with our Nordic neighbours, in particular with Finland, the Baltic States, the EU, NATO and the USA. The transatlantic link is of key importance, as well as a unified European response to the events challenging European and global security.

The cooperation between Sweden and Finland holds a special place in both our countries' security and defence policies. It aims at increasing effect and efficiency through combined use of resources, increased interoperability and a closer dialogue on common challenges. The cooperation also includes planning for scenarios beyond peace time. Such planning and preparations shall be complementary to, but separate from, national operational planning in the two countries. This creates the possibility to, after necessary national decisions, act jointly and thereby contributing to a higher threshold for conflicts in our vicinity. The deepened cooperation between Finland and Sweden will remain central to managing current and future security challenges and thereby contributing to stability in the Baltic Sea region.

Considering our common history, our shared culture and values as well as a common geostrategic position, Sweden attaches high importance to the

Nordic Defence Cooperation – NORDEFECO - as well as our cooperation with the Baltic States. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world.

We have a close cooperation on the bilateral level with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. We have signed new agreements with Denmark, we have established an action plan for our cooperation with Norway and we have a close dialogue with the Baltic states.

A strong transatlantic link is important for both European and American security. For the stability in the Baltic Sea Region, US and NATO presence is necessary. Therefore we welcome NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence and we welcome the US efforts to further strengthen its presence in Europe.

Sweden have a long-standing bilateral defence cooperation with the United States, which was consolidated last year through our Statement of Intent (SOI). The SOI covers five broad areas: Interoperability, Training and Exercises, Armament, Research and Development and Multinational Operations. We have taken important new steps both at the political and at the military level.

The other week in Berlin, I met with the commander for US Army Europe, Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, together with our own Army chief Karl Engelbrektsson. They both confirmed the close cooperation between our countries on the military level and through my meetings with Secretary Mattis, I can confirm our close political cooperation on defence issues.

The substantial American participation in the Swedish exercise Aurora 2017 and the comments I have gotten from them afterwards, is also a signal of this.

These last years we have signed or renewed our agreements for cooperation with the United Kingdom, with Germany and with Poland as well. We had a large French contingent in Aurora. This summer we joined the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force, JEF. And only a couple of weeks ago, our status as member of NATO's Enhanced Opportunities Programme was renewed.

My work to deepen our defence cooperation is not for fun, but because it is needed. Security is best built together and in order to build security, you need to be prepared. When crisis comes, we need these personal and

institutional relationships. We need to know each other through exercises. We need to have a common idea on which challenges we are up against and how we could meet them together.

All of this is building a security network around Sweden and are contributing to the security in our region. That me and my Norwegian colleague in peace time discuss the importance of Gothenburg's harbour, will matter also in crisis and war. No country in our region will be isolated in the case of a crisis. And we all need to prepare for what could happen.

Finally, I want to add a few words on multilateral cooperation. The EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena. Sweden is actively seeking to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy while keeping its intragovernmental character. This is important when it comes to the Permanent Structured Cooperation, PESCO, as well as the European Defence Industrial Development Programme. From a Swedish point of view it's important that we all have agreed upon the principle that the programmes should be member state driven.

What we do within the Common Security and Defence Policy must add value for the member states and support European solidarity.

The EU and NATO are two of the most important institutions constituting the West as we know it. They both play important roles in meeting today's security challenges in Europe and elsewhere. Sweden has a strong interest in an effective, complementarily and results-oriented strategic partnership between these organisations.

The importance of Sweden's partnership with NATO has grown as a result of the negative development in our close vicinity. Political dialogue on common security challenges and how to counter them is essential and we are looking to further strengthen our cooperation with NATO in regional crisis.

The challenges we are facing point to long term destabilization. What we some years ago believed could only happen elsewhere, are now realities here. Populism, nationalism and a more intense Military rhetoric are now everyday issues in our once so peaceful region. This is what we have to face, and we must do it together.

Thank you for listening.

Published 12 December 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Berlin Security Conference 2017

Berlin, 28 November 2017 Check against delivery.

Dear Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – it is a pleasure to address you today.

I want to thank Behörden Spiegel for organizing the Berlin Security Conference. Sweden is honoured to be partner this year. The theme of the conference is "Europe under pressure – security and defence in unpredictable times". I would like to take this opportunity to present Swedish perspectives on the security situation in Europe and our view on how we should respond.

Today's Europe faces several fundamental challenges: a recovery after the financial crisis, continued high unemployment, instability in our neighbourhood and the EU's inability to handle the following migration crisis. At the same time, the EU is dealing with the consequences of Britain's decision to leave the Union. On top of this, we see emerging nationalist and populist tendencies in many European states.

The complexity and scale of the challenges at hand means that no European state can face them alone – the need for European cooperation is greater than ever. The current security situation calls for all European countries to engage in creating a Europe that is united and has the capacity to take responsibility for its own security. This is why Sweden was an active partner in the creation of the European Global Strategy and why we welcome the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, PESCO.

These challenging times must be an opportunity for the EU to step forward and for European core values to lead the way. European unity and solidarity is key. This is of great importance not least since Europe is facing a more provocative and destabilising Russia that has lowered the threshold for using military force. A Russia that violates international law and through its

actions challenges the European security order.

For a number of years Russia has invested heavily in modernising and rearming its armed forces. Russian military capability has increased since 2008. To my judgement this is a continuing process. By investing almost 5 percent of GDP in its Armed Forces, Russia sends a clear message about their priorities. Military spending is at the highest level since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Russia has shown that she is prepared to use military force to change existing borders in Europe. We have seen this happening in Georgia and in Ukraine. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order since it was established 25 years ago.

There can be no business as usual as long as this behaviour continues, manifested in military action, disinformation and propaganda operations. Russia remains aggressive and thus increases tensions in our vicinity. Our response, guided by democratic principles and values, is firm, clear and long-term, and fosters European and transatlantic unity. The foundation of our approach is a desire to stand up for international law and the European security order.

The Russian actions do not only constitute an aggression on Ukraine but also a threat to the right for every country, including Russia's neighbours, to make their own policy choices. This is a cornerstone in the rule based world order and the European security order. Therefore, the Russian actions are a concern to us all and make our response all the more important.

The significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security has increased. Russia has over the past few years showed a more challenging behaviour including violations of its neighbour's territorial integrity. The military-strategic situation has deteriorated and the region has become less secure. Russia is clearly seeking to increase influence over what it considers as its area of interest.

Sweden believes that challenges to European security must be met through cooperation and joint action. But on the national level, every country must take their share of the responsibility.

Sweden is pursuing a two-tiered defence policy:

First, increasing defence spending to reinforce our national military capability.

Second, from a military non-aligned position, deepening our defence cooperation with other nations and organisation.

This policy is based on a broad support in Parliament and has great support among the Swedish people.

Our key priority is to enhance the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces. This also includes the development of a modern "Total Defence" that includes both the military and the civilian defence.

For the first time in more than two decades, the Swedish government, with a broad support in Parliament, has decided to substantially strengthen the defence budget. Up until 2020 we will increase defence spending, including civilian defence, with a total of approximately 2,6 billion EURO. This constitutes the largest increase in defence spending for many decades.

My main focus as Minister for Defence is to strengthen our defence in order to increase our ability to resist armed aggression and attack, thereby raising the threshold for conflicts in our vicinity, thus increasing stability and predictability in our region.

Due to the security situation in Northern Europe the Swedish government in March this year decided to reactivate the conscription. We have commenced enrolment since July this year and mandatory basic training will begin in January next year. The decision was made due to the failure of the all-volunteer system and the need to man our units with enough trained soldiers, sailors and squad leaders. The Swedish Armed Forces is planning for (at least) 4,000 recruits annually in basic military training in 2018 and 2019.

This means that our Armed Forces will have a mixed system with both conscripts and professional soldiers, sailors and squad leaders. In the light of the deteriorated security situation, our Armed Forces' ability to man its units is fundamental.

The modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men. Of just over 6 000 young persons called for enrolment, almost 25 percent are women. I believe that this will increase the number of women in our armed forces and thereby making better use of the whole population in strengthening our warfighting capabilities.

Another example of Sweden enhancing the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces is the Combined Arms Exercise AURORA 17 conducted in September. This was the largest military exercise in Sweden for over 20 years. The exercise involved some 20 000 Swedish soldiers, sailors and officers, some 40 government agencies and broad participation from several international partners.

The objective of AURORA 17 was to exercise defence of Sweden, and it was an important step in implementing the Swedish defence decision from 2015. The exercise included elements of Host Nation Support in receiving troops on Swedish territory, and is a security signal in itself.

Transparency and openness were key principles during the preparations for and conduct of AURORA 17. These principles are crucial for de-escalation and promotion of trust between countries. Apart from informing other nations and international organisations, such as the OSCE, a voluntary inspection in accordance with the Vienna document was performed during the main phase of the exercise.

Sweden will continue to participate in, and host multinational exercises in our region. An intensive exercise pattern in the Baltic Sea region is important.

Sweden firmly believes that security is best built together with others. This is a core principle in Swedish security and defence policy. We are deepening our cooperation with our Nordic neighbours, in particular with Finland, the Baltic States, the EU, NATO and the USA. The transatlantic link is of key importance, as well as a unified European response to the events challenging European and global security.

Germany and Sweden have a long tradition of co-operation bilaterally and multilaterally within the EU and within the framework of Sweden's partnership with NATO. Our bilateral co-operation is excellent in the area of defence. To high-light the cooperation between our countries, me and the German Minister of Defence Dr von der Leyen signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) in late June this summer.

The content of the LoI builds on current cooperative activities and new initiatives to work together effectively. It includes for example exercises, armament and multinational operations, and covers land, sea as well as air forces. Explicit examples are, promoting naval exercises and mine

countermeasures in the Baltic Sea. The Letter of Intent also sets out to deepen the dialogue on defence policy, particularly concerning the Baltic Sea Region.

Germany is an important actor in the Baltic Sea Region and a partner that we share values and many central interests with. German-Swedish defence cooperation promotes stability in the Baltic Sea region and in Europe as a whole. It is of great importance for Sweden and for the region that Germany takes an active role in promoting peace, security and stability in our region. Therefore Sweden welcomes that Germany decided to take lead in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania.

The cooperation between Sweden and Finland holds a special place in both our countries' security and defence policies. It aims at increasing effect and efficiency through combined use of resources, increased interoperability and a closer dialogue on common challenges. The cooperation also includes planning for scenarios beyond peace time. Such planning and preparations shall be complementary to, but separate from, national operational planning in the two countries. This creates the possibility to, after necessary national decisions, act jointly and thereby contributing to a higher threshold for conflicts in our vicinity. The deepened cooperation between Finland and Sweden will remain central to managing current and future security challenges and thereby contributing to stability in the Baltic Sea region.

Considering our common history, our shared culture and values as well as a common geostrategic position, Sweden attaches high importance to the Nordic Defence Cooperation – NORDEFECO - as well as our cooperation with the Baltic States. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world.

Within NORDEFECO, particular emphasis is on increasing situational awareness in our region through enhanced cooperation on air-surveillance as well as strengthening our military capabilities. One concrete example of this is the development of the Nordic air exercise Arctic Challenge Exercise into a flag level exercise.

The United Kingdom is and will remain an important partner to Sweden in the defence and security field. Our joint Programme of Defence Cooperation, signed by me and the former British Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon in June 2016, has borne fruit and most of what we agreed has been completed. The strategic approach and efficiency of this form of cooperation bears witness of just how important and useful these types of common statements and agreements with key partners can be. To further

deepen our defence cooperation with the United Kingdom, Sweden and Finland, joined the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) earlier this year.

A strong transatlantic link is important for both European and American security. For the stability in the Baltic Sea Region, US and NATO presence is necessary. Sweden have a long-standing cooperation in the area of defence with the United States, which was consolidated last year through our Statement of Intent (SOI). It was signed by Secretary of Defence Carter and me, and was confirmed when I met with Secretary Mattis in May this year. The SOI covers five broad areas: Interoperability, Training and Exercises, Armament Cooperation, Research and Development and Multinational Operations. We have taken important new steps both at the political and at the military level.

Since the signing, we have deepened our dialogue on the policy and military level. Focus for our discussion has been Northern Europe and how we can respond to challenges together. We have stepped up our training and exercise programs, in the air, at sea and on ground. All this, recognising that joint activities bolster our ability to operate together and send security political signals to friends and others.

In September, we had a substantial American participation in the Swedish exercise Aurora 2017. Units from US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and special forces took part. A few weeks ago Sweden decided to send a Letter of Request to the United States, concerning acquisition of the ground based air defence system Patriot

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena. Sweden is actively seeking to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy while keeping its intragovernmental character. From a Swedish perspective, we see two main objectives with the quickly evolving defence package: strengthened common security and defence policy, and enhanced EU cohesion. Both are more important now than ever.

Within the EU the Common Security and Defence Policy is rapidly developing. This is shown in the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme. From a Swedish point of view it's important that we all have agreed upon the principle that the programmes should be member state driven.

Sweden welcomes the work to move forward with an inclusive and ambitious PESCO and has notified its intention to participate in this cooperation. The objectives for establishing PESCO are both political and practical – our goal should be a PESCO that strengthens EU political

cohesion and also helps us achieve the agreed EU level of ambition for the Common Security and Defence Policy. Both aspects are of strategic importance. Above all, PESCO is a matter of security policy.

Sweden also welcomes the European Defence Industrial Development Programme. We believe this programme has the potential to strengthen the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the European industry, including small and medium sized enterprises, without distorting competition. I would here like to stress the importance of including all European based industry and not limiting it to European owned industry only.

The EU and NATO are two of the most important institutions constituting the West as we know it. They both play important roles in meeting today's security challenges in Europe and elsewhere. As a member of the EU and an Enhanced Opportunities Partner to NATO, Sweden has a strong interest in an effective, complementary and results-oriented strategic partnership between these organisations.

The importance of Sweden's partnership with NATO has grown as a result of the worsened security situation in our close vicinity. Political dialogue on common security challenges and how to counter them is essential and we are looking to further strengthen our cooperation with NATO in regional crisis. This includes modalities for information exchange, de-conflicting of activities and mechanism for political and military dialogue. About two weeks ago, our status as member of the Enhanced Opportunities Programme was renewed by the NAC. EOP is the bedrock of our cooperation with NATO and an important part of our defence and security policy.

The challenges we are facing point to long term destabilization. Europe has a key role in meeting the global challenges and threats we are facing. Only a united EU ready to stand up for its principles, will be able to contribute to European peace and stability in close cooperation with NATO and the USA. We need to continue developing the European defence and security cooperation in order to counter these challenges together. Sweden will remain an active part in any such discussion.

To finish where I started, we are living in a world with increasing insecurities, where institutions and relationships we considered stable are now under increasing pressure. We all have a responsibility to do our utmost to ensure peace, security and stability, on the basis of our different security choices.

Thank you for listening.

Published 28 November 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at AFCEA TechNet Europe conference 2017

Upplands Väsby, 10 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The central theme of this year's conference is "Cyber Capabilities in Hybrid Warfare Scenarios".

The number of challenges in this arena is not small, and I will – from a political perspective - discuss some aspects of the topics that will be discussed during the coming days.

* * *

But first of all, I would like to put Swedish cyber security policy in the context of the broader Swedish defence policy. Our defence strategy focuses on two parts: first, to upgrade national military capability, and second, to deepen cooperation with other nations and organisations. Our government has, for the first time in more than two decades, decided to successively increase the defence spending with roughly 25% from 2014 up to 2020.

The key objective of the Swedish Defence reform for 2015 - 2020, is to strengthen military operational capability and to develop a modern total defence concept. The Swedish total defence concept is a combination of military and civil defence encompassing a wide range of agencies, authorities and representatives of civil society.

Cyber defence is an essential part of our national defence capabilities as well as a part of overall deterrence. And in order to ensure a strong cyber defence it is also necessary to have the ability to carry out active operations in the cyber domain. This was also part of the message from the Swedish

Government and Parliament in the Defence Bill of 2015. We are therefore strengthening our capabilities in this area.

In addition to initiatives on total defence and cyber defence we have also decided to re-activate conscription for both women and men. This is a signal to adversaries and to our partners that we are taking security seriously.

We have re-established military presence on the strategic island of Gotland which is located in the middle of the Baltic Sea.

We have increased training and exercises. Just two weeks ago, we completed our largest national exercise in over 20 years, with contributions from the U.S., and neighbouring partners. The exercise involved almost 20,000 military personnel and over 40 agencies. In 2020 we will have our next large national exercise. It will focus on Total Defence and civilian defence. In this exercise, cyber security will likely be one component.

The Navy will maintain surface combatants and upgrade two corvettes. Two next-generation submarines are under construction. Additional investments will be made in anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

On the Air defence side, we will keep investing in a new generation of Gripen fighters and arm them with air-to-air missiles.

Our defence bill should be seen in the light of the shifting security environment in Europe and our vicinity. Russia's war in Georgia was a negative change to the European security environment. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in eastern Ukraine came to challenge what had been the European security order for 25 years.

Russia has been upgrading its military capability for almost a decade. Our neighbours and partners in the vicinity of Russia feel the pressure. Russia is increasing its military exercises and intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea. Russia exercises their nuclear capability. From time to time Russian officials also refer to nuclear weapons in their rhetoric.

The possible action of states, state-sponsored actors or other actors with similar capabilities constitutes the most serious cyber security threat against Sweden. Like all other nations we must do our utmost to protect our critical infrastructure.

Ultimately, cyber security is about safeguarding fundamental societal values and objectives, such as democracy, human rights and freedom, national sovereignty, security and right to autonomy and economic stability.

* * *

Cyber threat is very much real and growing. Cyber attacks are aimed at Swedish companies and agencies. Last year we saw over one hundred thousand cyber activities from foreign state actors - in one year. Those activities are attempts, probing's or outright attacks.

Cyber attacks are often used as a means to other ends. The reported events in the United States last winter could be one example of the power of cyber tools as part of influence campaigns in the hands of antagonistic actors.

Other examples, although with both similarities and differences, are Estonia in 2007, Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine from 2014.

During the last years, we have experienced a number of instances in Europe and beyond where possible state sponsored actors have engaged in systematic fabrications, deception and other harmful influences.

I have seen my own signature on falsified documents concerning armaments deliveries to Ukraine. This false document circulated in media all over the world.

Last month, Sputnik news falsified an article in English by twisting the truth and what my comments had been to a Japanese journalist whom had written an article in Japanese on Swedish defence reform.

Six or so fake Twitter accounts have been opened in my name.

The Russian military doctrine states that the 4th arena for warfare is the information and cyber arena. The strategy they are using is also combined with deception known as "Maskirovka". Russia trains its military extensively in this arena. Russia uses a combination of psychological warfare and military power in a hybrid combination, as we saw in the annexation of Crimea.

Disinformation and fabrication is something Russia uses systematically. The U.S. and Europe must counter this more effectively and smarter. Policy makers have to be more deliberate when it comes to both cyber policy and strategic communication against this type of attacks. We often fail to address Russia's activities for what they are.

* * *

International law

Cyber attacks are becoming more common, sophisticated at times and damaging. Cyber attacks have entered a new realm where it is possible to

create physical damage on, for example, critical infrastructure.

As concerns international law, cyber defence raises a lot of issues, such as:

- Under which circumstances a cyber attack can constitute an armed attack, thereby creating a right to self-defence?
- To what extent a cyber weapon is lawful? and,
- How the proportionality of the response can be assured?

The development of cyber technologies is continuous. Legal advisors therefore play an important role in ensuring that international law is respected in this area.

* * *

It is very important to see things for what they actually are. Some say that the Internet changed everything. I would say to some extent yes, but also no. Yes, it is a revolution in itself. And yes, we seek and share information, communicate and interact in new ways. But the fundamentals of security-, defence- and foreign policy remain rather unchanged. Some states and non-state actors seek to influence other states by alternative information and propaganda, with the goal to destabilise and establish strategic and tactic advantages. In that sense the cyber domain is "just" another domain, another tool, for ancient purposes.

Russian operations in the Ukraine gave rise to an impression that Russia had employed new concepts of armed conflict. This is not the case. Russian actions in the Ukraine have roots in ancient warfare and traditional Soviet tactics.

If you look closer at Russian military intervention in Ukraine, it was very much a conventional military war. The modernised Russian Armed Forces acted with support and with a combination of various forms of cyber tools, disinformation, propaganda, influence campaigns and other traditionally non-military means.

* * *

The Response

The growing antagonistic dimension in cyber space makes it necessary to develop and strengthen cyber defences, in addition to all other vital instruments to counter fraud, theft, espionage etc. An active cyber capability is necessary to give credibility and to raise the threshold for a potential

attacker. We see Swedish cyber capabilities as a cost effective, long term and major asset to defend the nation.

A key challenge will be to ensure that our cyber defence capabilities are connected with other abilities and measures in our society. Even the most advanced attackers might just as well use simple methods to reach advanced goals.

For Sweden, our total defence concept is an integral part of how to meet all forms of antagonistic threats to our nation and its interests. However, when it comes to cyber defence, strengthening your capabilities on a national level is not enough. International cooperation is required. One of many important international initiatives in this field that Sweden is engaged in is the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. Sweden recently sent an expert to the centre in order to contribute to its work. The centre plays an important role as a training facility as well as a contributor to discussions on cyber warfare and international humanitarian law. During the EU defence ministerial meeting in September, defence ministers took part of a cyber table top exercise. It gave us all ample opportunity to discuss and learn from advanced scenarios and how they can unfold.

Another important part of the Swedish Defence reform is the development of a Psychological Defence adapted to modern conditions and challenges. Psychological defence is key to maintaining our open and democratic society with freedom of expression even in times of extraordinary conditions.

Propaganda and influencing operations are part of a wide spectrum of threats and challenges in peacetime as well as in war. The ultimate objective is to uphold our fundamental values and to improve the ability of our society to withstand pressure from potential antagonists and opponents. Swedish agencies are tasked to improve their capability to identify and develop relevant international cooperation. We have already established cooperation with NATO's Stratcom Centre of Excellence in Riga and we have joined the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki.

Although I have emphasised that we are facing problems that are in essence not new, I do believe that we can only handle and counter these problems with new levels of cooperation; nationally, regionally and globally.

There are many lessons to be learned. The most important lesson we all need to grasp is that these challenges have to be met together. Good luck during the upcoming days at AFCEA.

Published 10 October 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist on Northern European Security

Key Note Speech at John Hopkins University.
Washington, May 17, 2017. Check against delivery.

Dear Dean, Distinguished professors and students, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Sweden reach back to the days of the American Revolutionary War. The recognition in the "Treaty of Amity and Commerce" between Benjamin Franklin and the Swedish representative Gustaf Philip Creutz was the first recognition of the U.S. as a sovereign nation.

During the period 1820 to 1930 approximately 1.3 million Swedes, a third of the country's population, emigrated to North America. 200 years later and our ties are as strong as ever. Swedish affiliated companies directly support more than 333,000 jobs in all fifty states of the United States.

* * *

It is an honour to be here at the John Hopkins University. Being invited as part of a long row of Statesmen from the US and the rest of the world makes me humble.

I will begin by saying a few words on last month's terrorist attack in Stockholm. A hijacked truck drove into pedestrians in central Stockholm. Five people died and 15 were injured. We have seen similar methods in Nice, in Berlin and in London.

I would like to reiterate what our prime minister Stefan Löfven said "Terrorists want us to be afraid, they want us to change our behaviour, they want us to not live our lives normally, but that is exactly what we are going

to do."

Stockholm demonstrated its unity and determination just hours after the attack. Being here in Washington, I would like to thank the United States whom immediately offered support and condolences.

Our strong partnership is underpinned by a joint commitment to fundamental beliefs. We both believe that sustainable peace, development and prosperity are only possible when grounded upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

* * *

My address on Sweden and Northern European Security will comprise a few main elements. First, Russia and the security challenges in our vicinity and beyond, second, what we are doing to counter this, and third, the Swedish view on the current world order as we see it.

* * *

First, Russia.

The European security order is no longer in place as we know it because of Russia's aggressive behaviour.

The regime in Kremlin is closely knitted together with the security police, the oligarchs, the church and the state administration. The focus is to regain the "greatness of the Motherland" and once again become a world power.

Today, Russia occupies 20 % of Georgian territory since the war in 2008. Since 2014 Crimea is annexed by Russia. The Russian proxy war in Eastern Ukraine continues.

Let me be clear: this is against international law and is unacceptable. Beyond the wars against Georgia and Ukraine, we have seen Russia supporting the Assad regime in Syria, a nation that is conducting a horrific war against its own population.

This is the harsh reality.

* * *

Russia has been upgrading its military capability for almost a decade. They are renewing 70% of all defence equipment. Our neighbours and partners in the vicinity of Russia feel the pressure. Russia is increasing military exercises and intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea. Russia exercises their nuclear capability. From time to time Russian officials also refer to nuclear weapons in their rhetoric.

In the Arctic, we see that Russia is increasing its military presence. With the reopening of former Soviet Arctic bases, come more activities in the Murmansk region, in the Kola region as well as in the Atlantic Ocean.

Moving to cyber space where one of the main challenges is attribution. The last years we have experienced a number of instances when possible state sponsored actors have engaged in systematic fabrications, deceptions and other harmful influences. These incidents have found its way in to our societies and democratic institutions.

I have seen my own signature on falsified documents concerning armaments deliveries to Ukraine. This false document circulated in the media all over the world.

The Russian military doctrine states that the 4th arena for warfare is the information and cyber arena. The strategy they are using is also combined with deception known as "Maskirovka". Russia trains its military extensively in this arena. Russia uses a combination of psychological warfare and military power in a hybrid combination, as we saw in the annexation of Crimea.

Russia uses disinformation and fabrications systematically. The U.S. and Europe must counter-target this more effectively and smarter. Policy makers have to be more deliberate when it comes to strategic communication against this type of attacks. We often fail to address Russia's activities for what it is.

When the USS Donald Cook was buzzed in the Baltic Sea by Russian fighter aircrafts, the U.S. published the videos online so people could decide for themselves what really happened. Immediately after the incident, I publicly stated that Russian behaviour towards the U.S. ship was irresponsible and dangerous. This is a good example of how we, with strategic communication, can counter Russian actions and disinformation.

* * *

Sweden and the U.S. are fully committed to the world order as it was established after the Second World War. We adhere to the established international institutions of the United Nations, the European Union and NATO.

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, many people in Europe and North America believed that that the world was moving towards the eternal peace.

Most of you have read Francis Fukuyama's "End of History and the Last Man" in your political science class. Many believed that Fukuyama was right and that the ruled based world order and eternal peace was here to stay.

The idea that the eternal peace would last is an interesting idea, but appears less achievable as we look upon the world today. The rule-based world order is challenged by totalitarian regimes and fanatical chaos. And challenges far away are linked to challenges at home.

In the South China Sea, China dismisses international law and territorial integrity.

The refugee crisis is a challenge for Europe as the nations within EU member states is divided. Turkey is going in the wrong direction, with a President centralizing power and moving away from democracy. The populism in Europe is on the rise where extremist parties often have support from Russia.

Russia and China want to become dominating powers with spheres of interest. This is worrisome. Russia has acted against the 1975 Helsinki Accords and lack respect of all nations' right to decide their own destiny.

Problems are found in many regions. In Africa, Boko Haram and the terror group "MNLA" in Mali continue to spread fear. Daesh is pursuing with its terror acts in the Middle East and around the world. In East Asia, we see repeated missile tests from North Korea, where the tension is rising as North Korea continues to build its nuclear capability.

We have to meet all challenges together. The response has to be broad and involve stabilisation efforts. Sweden is committed to the Coalition to Counter ISIL, where we are working shoulder to shoulder with the US and other partners. The same goes for efforts in Afghanistan and Korea.

For Sweden, the UN is a cornerstone in world order. Sweden has an advanced ISR-unit with 250 troops at the UN mission in Mali. This UN mission has become the deadliest in its history.

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Sweden assumes responsibilities on the global scene. At the same time our first responsibility is our national security, directly linked to peace and stability in Northern Europe. We are not naïve nor have we taken our eyes of how Russia behaves in Europe or of the challenges beyond.

Swedish defence policy focuses on two parts: first, to upgrade national military capability, and second, to deepen cooperation with other nations and organisation. This policy is based on a broad parliamentary support.

We are building a security network of defence cooperation. Sweden has a special and longstanding relationship to Finland, also a military non-aligned nation – where we plan for joint actions, if we so decide, in peace-time as well as crises and war. We work closely with the Nordic and Baltic countries as well as with UK, Poland and Germany. We cooperate within the framework of the EU and United Nations. We are privileged partners to NATO within the Enhanced Opportunities Program.

From 2015 there is a new trend in Swedish defence spending. The government has, for the first time in more than two decades, decided to successively increase the defence spending with 11% up to 2020.

Adding to this, the Swedish government decided to spend more money, beginning in the 2017 budget.

The key priority in the Defence Bill is to enhance the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces. This also includes the development of a "Total Defence Concept" which includes both military and civilian defence and a whole of society approach to security.

This year, the Swedish government decided to re-activate conscription. This is a signal to adversaries and to our partners that we are taking security seriously. Conscription for both women and men will start from the 1st of January next year.

A few examples of our other priorities:

We have re-established military presence on the island of Gotland which is located in the middle of the Baltic Sea. As U.S. four star General David Perkins said earlier this spring, when visiting the island, "Gotland is like unsinkable aircraft carrier, and it is good to be friend with its captain, Sweden".

Other priorities include increased training and exercises. International exercises are important in order to train together and develop interoperability. I also see these exercises as an important tool to send a message to potential adversaries.

In September this year, we will host a national exercise with contributions from the U.S. and European nations. The Aurora exercise, will be the largest Swedish military exercise in over 20 years, involving almost 20,000 military personnel and over 40 agencies.

The Navy will maintain surface combatants and upgrade two corvettes. Two next-generation submarines are under construction. Additional investments will be made in anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

On the Air defence side, we will keep investing in a new generation of Gripen fighters and arm them with air-to-air missile.

* * *

Let me now turn to the role of the U.S.

The transatlantic link between Europe and the U.S. is critical. Our common challenges are greater and more complex than in decades. Regional powers are testing their strength against neighbours, other states, and international institutions.

A strong U.S. link to Europe is important for the stability in NATO and Europe. And it is only together with the US that European countries can balance the Russians. By acting together in international foras, operations and exercises, we make the threshold against aggression higher. One example is the economic sanctions against Russian.

We have to remember that the strategies of the Russian aggression, Chinese

assertion or Daesh's use terror are to split us, to make us weaker and make us hesitate to act.

* * *

One message that I would like to give you is that the U.S. together with European partners must continue to stand up for international law and the world order. We cannot be naive concerning Russian behaviour and strategy, nor can we close our eyes to other challenges around the world.

Sweden welcomes the U.S. and NATO's decisions to strengthen the security of its Eastern allies. The European Security Initiative and the Enhanced Forward Presence are crucial efforts to Baltic Sea Security and regional stability as a whole.

* * *

Let me say a few words on the Swedish-US bilateral relation.

Sweden and the United States have a long-standing cooperation in the area of defence, last year consolidated through our Statement of Intent (SOI). It was signed by Secretary of Defence Carter and me. The SOI covers five broad areas: Interoperability, Training and Exercises, Armament Cooperation, Research and Development and Multinational Operations. We have taken important new steps both at the political and at the military level.

Since the signing, we have deepened our dialogue on the policy and military level. Focus for our discussion has been Northern Europe and how we can respond to challenges together. We have stepped up our training and exercise programs, in the air, at sea and on ground. All this, recognising that joint activities bolster our ability to operate together and send security political signals to friends and others.

In a few weeks our forces will join this years' largest multinational naval exercise in the Baltic Sea, called BALTOPS 17. In September, we are looking forward to a substantial U.S. participation in the Swedish exercise Aurora 2017.

The security situation in the Baltic Sea region and elsewhere gives us incentives to further enhance our cooperation and increase our preparedness.

* * *

To my conclusions:

First, our common challenges with Russia and around the world remain for the coming years. Transatlantic cooperation is crucial for U.S. and European security.

Second, Sweden will assume its responsibility by contributing to security in the region and elsewhere. This is done by improving our national defence capability and by extending cooperation with other countries and organisations.

Third, as stated in our bilateral Statement of Intent: "Transatlantic and European unity is key. Global challenges can only be addressed if Europe and North America are acting together."

Against this background and the mutual interest we are now engaging with the United States as we did in the 18th century.

Thank you for listening. I am ready to take any of your questions.

Published 17 May 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by the Swedish Minister for Defence at United Nations Security Council

Speech by the Swedish Minister for Defence at the Security Council. Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict Settings New York, May 16 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr. President,

Of all the evil acts that take place in conflict settings sexual violence may be the one that casts the longest shadow.

The lives of victims are changed forever. Besides the physical scars they bear, they will carry the hidden trauma and stigma for the rest of their lives. We can see that the use of sexual violence in conflicts destroys societies, families and community structures, with a goal to dominate and control the society.

Therefore, every effort must be taken to end sexual violence in conflict, and I thank Uruguay for organizing this Open Debate.

We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the acting SRSG for their insightful and, sadly, very troubling accounts of sexual violence in conflict settings.

Let me also thank the outgoing Special Representative Bangura for her strong leadership during her tenure, and welcome the incoming Special Representative Patten.

You have our strong support.

We also express our thanks to the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Sexual violence in any situation is a crime. But, conflict-related sexual violence is also a core security challenge that must be kept on this Council's agenda.

Why? Because the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism has not stopped. On the contrary, sexual violence, human trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable persons through modern slavery in the midst of migration are growing trends worldwide.

Mr. President,

We must move from expressing outrage towards taking decisive action. These are some concrete measures that the Security Council and each Member State can undertake:

First: apply a comprehensive rights-based approach focused on the needs and experiences of victims.

Ensuring human rights, especially the right to freedom from violence, as well as to sexual and reproductive health and rights, remains essential.

Sexual violence in all its forms is prohibited in armed conflict according to International Humanitarian Law. Perpetrators must be held accountable.

Second: make conflict-related sexual violence a priority issue in monitoring the implementation of Security Council mandates.

To that end, we need improved data, including sex-disaggregated statistics, as well as accurate accounts.

That is why we strongly welcome briefings by civil society to the Council, such as Mina Jaf's today.

We also welcome the use of conclusions from the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and summaries of the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Third: use all of the Council's tools to combat sexual violence in conflict, including sanctions.

Resolution 2339 on the Central African Republic introduced the first-ever

separate designation criteria on conflict-related sexual violence in a sanctions regime. Let's work to include similar criteria in all relevant sanctions regimes.

Four: increase the numbers of women peacekeepers, police and correction officers.

The evidence is compelling. With more female peacekeepers and female police officers we reach the whole population in a conflict area and become more efficient in operations. There is a clear need for more female leaders in executive positions.

Sweden is working to meet the target of 15 percent women military observers and staff officers by December 2017.

Sweden actively promotes the agenda for women, peace and security and has had a national action plan in place for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 since 2006. In its work Sweden seeks to actively ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in all international operations in conflict and post-conflict countries. That ambition must be integrated into all peace and security efforts.

Women, peace and security is an integral part of pre-deployment preparations for all Swedish troops, and all deployed contingents have specially trained gender advisers. Furthermore, the UN must be trusted to be effective. That's why, in this context, it's key to expeditiously implement the Secretary-General's approach for eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse committed by men and women working for the UN.

Fifthly: integrate gender throughout counter-terrorism work in line with Security Council Resolution 2242. Sexual violence whether it's politically or religiously motivated in any situation is totally unacceptable and a crime. In addition, Resolution 2331 highlights that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, and used as a tactic of terrorism.

Mr. President,

A clear political leadership is needed at all levels to change norms in society. It can support female victims of sexual violence to speak out. Indeed, we have only seen the tip of the iceberg. Low levels of reporting is a sign of stigma and failed systems. High numbers is a step in the right direction of tackling the problem.

It is important that we break the silence regarding sexual violence in conflict: making it visible and not shameful. Making it part of peace negotiations, reconciliation and transitional justice.

Real leadership and engagement must also come from political leaders, as military commanders, as elders, as judges, community leaders, teachers, peer-to-peer. I am proud to be a Minister in a feminist government. All leaders have a duty to challenge sexist views and violent behavior and attitudes towards women and children. The responsibility to address and speak up falls greater on us in male dominated sectors, such as defense and security. We are working actively within the Swedish Armed Forces with education for our own troops and with troops from other countries. We are ready to share our experiences.

Mr. President,

We cannot spare any effort in combatting these evil crimes. Only by shining a light on this can we lift the long shadow of sexual violence in conflict for the survivors and prevent another generation falling victim. We all can, and must, improve.

Thank you.

Published 16 May 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by the Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at the Munich Security Conference 2017 on “Arctic Security”

Munich, February 18th 2017 Check against delivery

Thank you for the invitation to provide some perspectives on Arctic security.

The increasing importance of the Arctic is due to two factors: climate change that opens up the area for the exploration of natural resources, and the general Russian military build-up, some of which takes place in the Arctic region

The combination of Cold War tendencies and the willingness to use military solutions to push for political goals – read Georgia, Ukraine and Syria – leads me to conclude that the wider implications of the Russian military build-up in the Arctic is indeed worrisome

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Scholars and policy makers have diverging views of Russia's military developments in the Arctic. Some argue that the increasing military presence is primarily aimed at complementing civil authorities in surveillance and search and rescue. Others argue that Russia is protecting its national interests and in strengthening the defence in the North Western direction. Others detect a more offensive edge.

When we look at the facts we clearly see that Russia's increasing military presence in the Arctic is consistent with how Russia has boosted its capabilities in the Baltic Sea and elsewhere.

Since 2008, both Russian civilian and military investments and capabilities have increased notably in the Arctic. A special command, the North Unified

Strategic Command, with the Northern Fleet as the main striking force, was recently established to bolster the command and control capacity in the region.

Modernization and reinforcement of the air defence is prioritized. New surveillance radars and fighter units are added to the region. Last year, an advanced coastal missile system was deployed to the Kola Peninsula.

To support military operations and to prepare for future increased maritime transports, development and construction of military infrastructure along Russians northern coastline is ongoing. Mainly, former Soviet bases are reopened and modernized but also new maritime support bases are established along the northern coastline including on some of the islands as for example the Wrangel Island, the New Siberian Islands, and the Frantz Josef Land. The infrastructure comprises aerodromes, radar stations, air-control systems and more.

The opening up of the Northeast Passage is of clear economic interest for Russia. The Arctic Ocean shipping route connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific oceans will potentially become commercially viable. Russia's and other nation's exploitation of gas and natural resources will pose future challenges. It will spur Russian ambitions to add military capability in the region. In late 2013, the Russian Northern Fleet opened the airfield at the island Kotelnny, with the tasks to protect offshore oil and gas resources. In March 2014, 350 paratroopers were dropped on the island to demonstrate Russian capacity to operate in Arctic condition. We have seen numerous examples of other military activities, exercises and operations in the region and we expect this to continue.

* * *

What I have described is a reality we must take seriously.

To some extent there is a necessity for Arctic nations to co-operate on a military level to discuss the strategic situation and, in addition, to cooperate with coast guards and civilian maritime agencies in search and rescue operations.

This can be done on a bilateral level or in multilateral formats.

* * *

The good news is that the Arctic region is covered by cooperative policies

and practices on the political level. There are forums established where there is a will to nurture that cooperation.

Nordic states have a long history of cooperation in the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF). In the Nordic, we conduct the biannual air exercise "Arctic Challenge Exercise", together with twelve nations. We are looking to making this into a Flag Exercise. "Cross Border Training" is another example in which the Nordic countries Air Forces engage together practically every other week of the year. We also have the Arctic Coast Guard Forum and have seen the multinational exercise "Barents Rescue", covering this specific form of cooperation between coast guard and other civilian agencies.

The latest "Arctic Security Forces Roundtable", which is a forum consisting of military and civilian agencies, held in Sweden last month, focused on the need for practical coordination in the area of maritime domain awareness for our armed forces, coast guards and maritime administration.

* * *

Finally, on climate security: the average temperature in the Arctic is rising faster than anyone anticipated. Besides the many existing environmental challenges, the warming of the Arctic increases the risk of security implications with regard to sovereignty and territorial issues. This is a global challenge that we really have to take seriously from a security perspective as well.

Thank you for listening.

Published 20 February 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Leangkollen Security Conference

Oslo, 13 February 2017 Check against delivery.

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The defence cooperation between Sweden and Norway has a long and fruitful history. The daily exchange between Swedish and Norwegian units is extensive, not least up north. But our cooperation has had its challenges in the past and there is of course room for further development. I am therefore happy that we last November could agree on a number of concrete areas where our cooperation could develop.

Because this is a time for more cooperation, not less. I will come back to that later.

Over time, the European security environment has deteriorated. The Russian aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea are breaches against international law and have direct negative effect on the security situation in Europe.

The challenges to the European security order are many and keep on piling up.

The cohesion within the European Union is challenged by the lack of common response to the migration situation, by the disparate views on Russia and on the wave of nationalist right-wing populism. Brexit has caused insecurity and ambiguity and more people than before question European cooperation as such.

It is still too early to have a clear view on how the election of Donald Trump

will affect the transatlantic cooperation. However I want to stress that the transatlantic cooperation is fundamental for European as well as American security and will be so in the foreseeable future.

In Europe's southern and south-eastern neighbourhood we can see countries and institutions torn by violence and internal conflicts. Non-state actors defies established states, borders and institutions. Terror organisations like Daesh, Boko Haram and al Shabaab pose a great threat to international peace and security.

But I want to take some time to elaborate on the military situation in the Baltic Sea region.

In 2008 Russia began a comprehensive military reform aiming at strengthening the availability, mobility and operational capacity of its armed forces. The reform has proceeded regardless of economic hardships. The Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) recently published a report that showed how Russia is restructuring, rearming, modernising and exercising for a more large-scale and advanced type of warfare.

We have over time seen an increase in Russian military exercises in our vicinity and we have lately observed new elements in their exercises. We have also seen how civilian parts of the society have been included and that they have conducted more and more snap exercises.

It is important to see the change in content and complexity of the exercises and not only assess the number of them.

If the plans for the Western military district are fulfilled, Russia will in the coming years increase their ability to deny other countries access to the Baltic Sea in all dimensions; by land, by sea, by air and in the cyber domain.

Through the illegal annexation of Crimea, the aggression in eastern Ukraine and the involvement in Syria, Russia has shown not only an increased military capacity but also a will to use military means in order to achieve political goals.

Although an armed attack directly at Sweden is unlikely, the Russian behaviour in the Baltic Sea and elsewhere has increased the risk for crisis and incidents involving military means and we cannot rule out armed attacks in the future.

This is why Sweden has decided on a new orientation for our defence and

security policy. After years of cuts in defence spending and a focus on international operations, parliament decided in June 2015 to substantially increase defence spending and to refocus the Armed Forces towards national defence.

During the period 2016-2020, our number one priority is to increase the operational capability of our armed forces. That means a heavy focus on larger and more complex exercises as well as investments in important weapons such as the next generation JAS 39 Gripen, two new submarines and new mortars. We are establishing a battle group on Gotland, due to the islands strategic position in the Baltic Sea. And we are reforming our personnel system in order to give the armed forces long term stability for its operations.

Well-equipped and well trained personnel are of utmost importance for building military capability. Since the abolishment of the conscription in 2009, the armed forces have had enormous problems recruiting personnel to fill its ranks. At the moment we lack around 800 active soldiers and over 6 000 reservists. In order to stabilise the personnel situation, the Swedish government commissioned an inquiry in the end of 2015 to look into how a modernised conscription could complete the volunteer recruitment. Its directives pointed out the Norwegian and Danish systems for inspiration.

The inquiry presented its report in September last year and has been under referral for consideration until a couple of weeks ago. We are now preparing a decision before the end of this quarter to reactivate the conscription. For the moment we are planning for 4 000 conscripts to begin their basic military training in September next year.

The reactivation of the conscription will not only stabilise the personnel situation in the armed forces. It will also send out a clear signal that we are prepared to do what it takes to secure our sovereignty.

In spite of our renewed focus on national defence, we will still take our responsibility for international peace and security. We contribute with 250 troops to Minusma in Mali. We are increasing our presence in Iraq and have a decision in parliament to increase our contribution from 35 troops to 70. And we will of course honour our long term commitment to Afghanistan.

The other pillar of the new defence policy is to deepen and strengthen defence cooperation with other countries and organisations in the region. Sweden will remain a military non-aligned country. It is a security doctrine

that is distinct, well known and well respected.

It is from the position of military non-alignment Sweden is deepening its defence cooperation with others. The Nordic cooperation is central in this strategy. Our countries face similar security challenges and we share many security interests and positions. Ours is an important geostrategic region and the Nordic defence cooperation, as well as the cooperation with the Baltic states, contributes to a peaceful development and it raises the threshold for military conflicts and incidents in our region in the long term.

I am glad that the Nordic cooperation has taken important steps the last couple of years, with the establishment of secure communication between our capitals, the signing of the Easy Access MoU and the development of the Arctic Challenge Exercise into a Nordic Flag exercise as some of the more important.

Our cooperation with Finland is the most far-reaching we have. It involves all branches as well as a close cooperation between our ministries. We have begun operational planning for common response to scenarios beyond peace time. For our countries to act jointly, national decisions are needed in each case. But the common planning gives us the option of joint action.

Like I said before, I am glad that I and my State Secretary could meet with our Norwegian counterparts in the end of last year in order to develop the cooperation between our countries. We agreed to reinstate defence attachés in each other's capitals. We are going to exchange information on total defence. We are going to deepen our dialogue on security issues. And we are continuing to exercise together.

I am looking forward to host Ine and her State Secretary later this spring.

Besides the Nordic countries, we have during the last couple of years deepened our cooperation with the Baltic states, the USA, the UK and Poland. This year I hope to further develop our cooperation with Germany and I met with the German Minister for Defence in Berlin last autumn and we will meet again in Stockholm this summer.

European unity is fundamental in facing the challenges ahead of us. It is important for keeping up with the sanctions towards Russia.

We also welcome the decisions in Warsaw to increase Nato's military presence in our region. Our partnership with the Alliance is of great

importance for us and we welcome the opportunity to, together with Finland, discuss our security challenges with the allies on a regular basis.

As I think most of you know, Sweden is a member of UN Security Council during 2017-18. Sweden has always been a great friend of the UN and we will use our seat at the table to raise issues on new security issues, gender equality and more effective peace operations. To uphold a rule based, multilateral world order is in Sweden's national interest. And the UN is the bedrock of such an order.

All these cooperation sends out a signal that we want to take our share of responsibility for stability and security in the Baltic Sea region and beyond. We are building a security network around Sweden that increases the stability and raises the threshold for conflict in our entire region.

To finish where I started, we are living in a world with increasing insecurities and where institutions and relationships we considered stable now are under increasing pressure. We all have a responsibility to, on basis on our different security choices, do our very most to ensure peace, security and stability.

Sweden is willing to take our part in that important work.

Thank you for listening.

Published 14 February 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech at UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, London

Improving Peacekeeping – Pre and Post-Deployment
London, 8th September 2016 Check against delivery

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today and I appreciate the opportunity to provide some thoughts on the subject of Pre and Post Deployment.

The challenges we are facing today are often more complex than the ones we faced in the past. The demands on contributors to peacekeeping are higher.

I would like to share some thoughts from Sweden based on our experience as troop contributor to MINUSMA. We began the process to join the Mali operation in 2013. This was in itself a challenge. We had to re-build our national competence in regard to UN missions and the UN system as a whole. It has been a long journey with some bumps in the road.

The development in Mali is troubling and the security situation is not improving. It is a situation that concerns all of us and we, the international community, must work together in order to improve the situation on the ground.

It is clear that multinational cooperation is needed to find sustainable solutions to these challenges. The UN, being the most important platform for international peace and security, should have the tools we need.

In Sweden we have a saying that translates "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link", and I think it well describes the situation we are facing in today's missions. We must all work together to achieve and maintain operational output.

We all have a responsibility to uphold the quality and capacity of our troop

contributions. In this harsh environment we need to know that the person next to us has the right training and equipment for the job. We need to be able to rely on each other in difficult situations.

As we all know, each member state has different circumstances. The Swedish contribution to MINUSMA, an advanced intelligence unit in the ASIFU concept, works side by side with contributors from other regions with other abilities. We need to work together to meet the challenges that comes with this.

Member states with advanced military capabilities have a great responsibility in this new context. Furthermore, the UN must take its part of the responsibility and live up to its commitments. Member states with advanced military capabilities will hesitate to contribute to UN missions if the UN cannot deliver on its part, for example on camps and transportation. These enablers are a prerequisite for other contributions.

I would like to stress the importance of UN Security Resolution 1325, both as a part of mission planning and of pre-deployment training. Our experience from Afghanistan and the Balkans has shown us the importance of reaching the whole population in the mission area in order to reach the best operational results. This is especially important when it comes to the intelligence element of the mission, which Swedish troop experience in MINUSMA. We must increase the number of women in our missions, as well as including the women who live in the mission areas in the peace and decision-making process.

These are important issues to discuss if we want to maintain the UN's operational weight, especially when it comes to more complex UN operations.

Finally, in this the Nordic Center for gender in military operations is a strategic asset, especially for training the trainers. Please, send your people to courses and other activities.

Thank you.

Published 08 September 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Interoperability Platform

Speech by Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist at the NATO Summit 2016 in Warsaw 8-9 July.

Dear colleagues,

The Interoperability Platform was established at the Wales Summit with the aim of enhancing our joint ability to tackle security challenges. I will focus my main points on why exercises are of key importance, not only from an interoperability platform, but also from the perspective of building security.

Only a few weeks ago, the Swedish-Finnish Amphibious Task Unit together with partners from the US Marine Corps, the Royal Marines and Marines from Germany conducted an amphibious landing on the Swedish island of Utö. The aim was to clear the area of a terrorist group's stronghold and basecamp. The coordinated attack was successful and managed to break the will of the opponents. A strong and robust presence on the island was established.

This scenario is taken from the BALTOPS exercise. It is an example of how exercises can provide relevant training opportunities and enhance interoperability in international crisis management operations. It can also prepare us to deal with a regional crisis. At the same time, these exercises are valuable in increasing the operational capability for our national defence.

We are in the middle of an intensive exercise period in the Baltic Sea region, where Sweden, NATO and other international partners signal that we take joint responsibility for the security in our neighbourhood. Common exercises send a clear signal of security and solidarity.

Swedish Army units also participated in the ANAKONDA exercise. Both ANAKONDA and Baltops are good examples of partner nations and NATO allies training together. But I would also like to underline the need for specialized exercises such as antisubmarine warfare exercises. These specialized exercises are another cornerstone in upholding unique capabilities that also enhance our situational awareness in the Baltic Sea

region.

While both large-scale and specialized exercises are of value, I would also like to highlight the importance of having frequency in joint exercises. For example, within the exercise concept Cross Border Training, we fly together with our Nordic neighbors almost every week. The aim is to on a regular basis raise readiness and respond to threats in the region.

These joint efforts of our frequent interaction between our Air Forces all have a stabilizing effect both in the High North as well as in the Baltic Sea region. Our joint, repetitive presence is a clear security policy signal. We are also boosting our operational capabilities by increasing our understanding of how we can support each other in an effective way.

A regional crisis in the Baltic Sea area would be a common concern for all countries in the region, including Sweden. Therefore, we must facilitate the possibility of partner participation in NATO operations in a regional context, to better build resilience together. Early involvement in exercise planning and access to advanced and complex NATO exercises continue to be some of Sweden's main priorities. The Host Nation Support agreement that Sweden signed with NATO also came in to effect a few days ago. This will further facilitate exercises together.

Finally, as a practical way of contributing to the exercise agenda, Sweden would hereby like to announce that we offer to open up the exercise VIKING 18 to both more extensive participation by NATO, and our IP-partners.

Thank you.

Published 09 July 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Preserving Peace – NATO's Role

Speech by Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence, at the NATO Summit in Warsaw, 8 July 2016.

Distinguished guests,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important topic.

The NATO Summit takes place in a time when the security environment continues to be challenging. And these challenges affect us all. Sweden is invited to the Summit to take part in discussions regarding common security concerns. European and transatlantic security is challenged to the East and to the South – by state and non-state actors. Understanding the conflicts and finding common areas for cooperation is crucial, and that is why we are here in Warsaw.

From our point of view, security in the Baltic Sea region is of particular importance in our dialogue with NATO. Other relevant topics to address are the crises in Syria and Iraq, and of course our continuous efforts in Afghanistan.

The brutality of Daesh, sectarian violence, authoritarian states, state weakness and masses of refugees bring destabilization. Sweden has been largely affected by the refugee flows. We are the largest per capita recipient of refugees in the European Union.

Developments in the Middle East pose a strategic challenge and require a comprehensive approach on conflict prevention, reforms and political solutions. Multiple efforts – including military means – are necessary. The conflicts in the Middle East, the root causes of the migration flows and the spread of terrorism can only be stopped with a solid transatlantic resolve. A precondition to create security and stability in the region is to defeat Daesh militarily.

Turning to our own neighbourhood, we are facing a worsened security environment in the Baltic Sea region. In light of the illegal annexation of

Crimea and the continued destabilisation of Ukraine, Russia makes it clear that offensive military operations is an option to consider. From time to time we hear Russian officials making statements regarding the Russian nuclear capabilities. A lower threshold for the use of tactical nuclear arms is deeply disturbing and unacceptable. We see an increased Russian interest not only in the Baltic States, but also in Sweden and Finland, including our partnership with NATO. Besides military options, Russia is increasing its disinformation campaigns, aiming to undermine stability.

We have experienced dangerous and unprofessional behaviour by Russian aircrafts in the Baltic Sea. For example, Russian naval vessels have acted to interrupt the work of civilian ships laying an electric power cable from Lithuania to Sweden in March 2015. We also see Russian military aircraft repeatedly flying in densely trafficked airspace without active transponders.

No matter the nationality of an aircraft or a ship, such actions must be condemned. This behaviour is dangerous and provocative. Russia is acting to increase influence over its self-declared area of interest, including parts of the Baltic Sea region. Russia is testing the determination and the red lines of sovereign states, EU and NATO as well as between the organizations.

Considering the dangerous behavior by Russian military aircrafts, we need to remind all nations operating in the region to adhere to sound, safe and professional behavior when operating with military aircraft or vessels. We need a common understanding on how to operate in the Baltic Sea.

The international community has reacted firmly to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea. Use of force in breach of international law is never acceptable. The response must remain firm and united, and include a strong message of support for the rules-based European security order. This Summit is a manifest for unity among EU and NATO nations. At the same time, we must aim for better channels of dialogue to decrease tensions, reduce risks and promote predictability.

With this security environment in mind, Sweden is pursuing a defence policy with two pillars. We are reinforcing our military capability by increasing defence spending with a focus on national defence capabilities. We have reactivated parts of our dormant legislation on National Defence Service allowing the Armed Forces to call up former conscripts for rehearsal training. Sweden increases exercises and training, both in terms of quantity and quality focusing on increasing our warfighting capabilities. Our fighters fly more and the navy is more present. Among prioritized capabilities are air

defence and anti-submarine warfare. Moreover, we will permanently base a mechanized battle group on the island of Gotland. Controlling Gotland means control of the airspace and the sea lines of communications in the southern part of the Baltic Sea.

At the same time, we are deepening the cooperation with other countries and organisations. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world. In light of the challenging security environment, Sweden strengthens cooperation on security matters within the EU, the OSCE, regionally in the Nordic and Nordic-Baltic setting, in partnership with NATO, as well as in bilateral contacts. The Swedish policy of military non-alignment is the basis for such cooperation.

Sweden is a strong supporter of closer cooperation between NATO and EU - be it in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea or the Baltic Sea – or be it linked to hybrid threats or meeting the consequences of on-going conflicts or failed states outside Europe. By enhancing cooperation we can achieve more results and use common resources more efficiently. At this point in time, we cannot afford to disagree on defence and security concerns.

For the stability in our part of Europe, North American and NATO presence is necessary. The US presence in the Baltic Sea Region is crucial and has a clear threshold effect. We welcome the increased US presence in Europe through the European Reassurance Initiative. We also welcome the additional steps NATO now takes to strengthen the security of the Eastern Allies, thereby further contributing to the security in and around the Baltic Sea region.

Sweden has been and will continue to be an active partner with NATO. The changing security environment has prompted steps toward an even closer political dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO, Finland and Sweden. For example, the Swedish Parliament recently adopted a bill on Host Nation Support, an important agreement which will make it easier for us to exercise together. Our deepened partnership with NATO – with the Enhanced Opportunities Programme as the main platform – is important in facing security challenges in our neighbourhood. We now focus on:

First, continued political dialogue on shared security challenges is essential in our cooperation with NATO. From our perspective, the Baltic Sea security is the main priority.

Second, common exercises in the Baltic Sea region continue to signal that we together take responsibility for the security. Swedish participation in the recent exercises Anaconda and BALTOPS are current examples of our ambition.

A third area where Sweden and NATO can work closer together is by enhancing information exchange on planned activities in the region, to better coordinate our efforts. This would help us deconflict measures that we take on a national level with those taken by NATO. In the long term it means a more efficient use of our resources.

The future of regional peace and stability depends on keeping European and transatlantic unity.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these issues further here at the Summit.

Published 08 July 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist at the unveiling of the first Gripen E test aircraft

Linköping, 18 May 2016 Check against delivery.

Distinguished guests,

I am very happy that we are gathered here for this historic moment. I am looking forward to today's events and the official uncovering of the Gripen E -fighter.

From where I stand, the investment in JAS 39, and thus in a highly advanced and competitive fighter aircraft system, is a crucial part of the Swedish defence efforts. Our Air Force and its fighter system are of particular importance to our national security. Sweden has a long tradition of developing world leading technology and our engineers are among the best in the world. We have managed to produce top-notch fighter aircrafts to a cost that no other competitor can match. For a country the size of Sweden this is indeed some achievement! The Gripen has been constantly evolving since the first Air Craft became operational.

In light of recent developments, the need for a strong, competitive Air Force has become increasingly evident. The tension in the Baltic Sea region has increased during the last years. From the Russian side we see large scale military exercises, snap exercises and provocative behaviour around our borders. We need to further boost our overall operational capability to be able to meet the new security demands and the technological achievements of possible opponents. The introduction of Gripen E is a vital part of this ambition.

We are reinforcing our own military capability and we are deepening our ties with partners from the platform of non-military alignment. The cooperation

between Sweden and Finland builds on the intention that we will have the possibility to act together in case of crisis or war. Together with our EU and NATO neighbors in the Baltic Sea region, we are building deterrence through reinforced military capability and deepened cooperation.

The Gripen is not just a fighter aircraft, it's much more than that. Each aircraft will interact with other fighters, supported by sophisticated sensors. But it is even more. The Gripen E can act in coordinated operations with other advanced systems, our own and our partners; in the air, on the sea, under the surface, and on the ground.

The Gripen system are designed for a Swedish and Nordic environment. It's a result of Swedish technological knowledge in cooperation with our partners. We are proud of that!

There are not many countries in the world able to produce these systems. It is fair to say, that for a country the size of Sweden, the high technology performance is unique. At the same time, we are internationally oriented in transferring and developing the technology further, with Brazil as a strategic partner for the Gripen E.

With this said, I'm very pleased to see the next generation Gripen aircraft roll-out from Saab today as a result of the decision the Government took in a broad political majority back in 2012.

This is the next generation of Gripen which will become operational during the 2020 giving us considerable leverage in the air domain. The new Gripen will allow us to meet new challenges that for sure lie ahead. I see this as a major contribution to our efforts to meet our new security environment.

Thank You!

Published 18 May 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist: NATO in Warsaw - Steeling the Alliance?

Tallinn, Estonia 14 May 2016 Check against delivery

Mr President, Distinguished guests,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here in Tallinn on this important topic.

We live in difficult times. More than two years have passed since Russia's annexation of Crimea. The illegal annexation of Crimea cannot become the status quo. The Russian aim is obviously to keep Crimea off the international agenda, let time pass and hope that this will simply become a fact of life. Despite persistent Russian denials, regular Russian troops remain in Donbass, and Moscow continues to provide military equipment and training to the separatists in eastern Ukraine. The intensity of the conflict in eastern Ukraine can be increased or decreased depending on what best serves the interests of the Kremlin at any given moment. The annexation and the Russian involvement in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order since the Second World War. Russian actions against Ukraine go beyond aggression; they constitute a threat to the right of countries in Russia's neighbourhood to make policy choices of their own.

Therefore, it makes our response and our course of action all the more important. Time passes and other urgent security issues arise on our agenda. But we cannot accept what Russia has done.

Tensions in the Baltic Sea region have increased over the last years. From the Russian side we see large scale military exercises and provocative activities close to our borders. Snap exercises in our vicinity have become a regular feature. From time to time we hear Russian officials making statements regarding the Russian nuclear capabilities.

Just recently, we saw unprofessional and dangerous behaviour by Russian aircrafts in the Baltic Sea, flying dangerously close to the USS Donald Cook. There are other similar examples and from the Swedish side, we know how it feels to be exposed to this provocative behaviour. No matter the nationality of an aircraft or a ship, such actions must be condemned. This behaviour is dangerous, reckless and provocative.

All of this is of course of concern to us and it is important that we respond to the challenges in our region.

In Sweden, we are pursuing a two-tiered defence policy: from the platform of non-military alignment reinforcing our military capability and deepening the cooperation with other countries and organisations. The deepened defence cooperation with Finland is of particular importance since it will include planning for an option to act together beyond peace time. Closer cooperation among the Nordic countries and our solidarity with the Baltic States contribute to enhanced security in our region. We are also strengthening the transatlantic link and our ties to the US. Nationally, we will permanently base a mechanized battle group at the island of Gotland. In addition, we will frequently exercise both air force and navy units as well as our ground-based air defence units.

Overall, a unified European political response is key. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world.

Sweden is an active partner with NATO. NATO has a key role to ensure stability in the Baltic Sea. As a NATO-partner, we welcome the increased defence measures taken by NATO in the Baltic Sea Region. United States presence in the Baltic Sea Region is crucial and has a clear threshold effect. We are welcoming the US ambition to increase its' presence in Europe through the European Reassurance Initiative.

Our partnership with NATO – with the Enhanced Opportunities Programme as the main platform – is important in facing security challenges in our neighbourhood. We are pleased to see that the format continues to develop with concrete areas of cooperation, such as early involvement in exercise planning, information sharing, as well as political dialogue.

Regarding the upcoming Summit in Warsaw, we believe that the focus should be on the substance, not on formats. From our point of view, security in the Baltic Sea region is of particular importance. Other relevant topics to

address are Daesh, Syria and Iraq.

The conflicts in the Middle East, the root causes of the migration flows and the ugly face of terrorism cannot be stopped without solid Transatlantic resolve to stand up for our values and the stability of our societies. The most urgent threat is Daesh and likeminded terror groups.

The future of regional peace and stability depends on keeping European unity. Only together, with a unified European response and through a strong transatlantic link, can we stand up for common values and principles.

Published 14 May 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Peter Hultqvist at the Munich Security Conference 2016, 13 February 2016

Check against delivery.

Distinguished guests,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important topic. There are three points I would like to make:

First, it has been 723 days since the illegal annexation of Crimea occurred. Almost two years has passed and Crimea has not yet been returned to the sovereign state of Ukraine. The Russian aim is obviously to keep Crimea off the international agenda, let two more years pass or, for that matter ten years and hope that this will simply become a fact of life.

Let me be clear: the illegal annexation of Crimea cannot become a status quo. This cannot be written in our history books as something which just happened. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian involvement in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order.

Russian actions are beyond an aggression on Ukraine. It constitutes a threat to the right of making national policy choices of all countries' in Russia's neighbourhood.

Therefore, it makes our response and our course of action all the more important. Time passes and other urgent security issues arise on our agenda. But we cannot accept what Russia has done.

Second, the tensions in the Baltic Sea region have increased during the last years. From the Russian side we see large scale military exercises and provocative behaviour around our borders. Snap exercises in our vicinity have become a regular feature. From time to time we hear Russian officials

with statements regarding nuclear capability. The question is why they continue to bring this up?

This is a concern for us. We are reinforcing our military capability and we are deepening our ties with partners from the platform of non-military alignment. The cooperation between Sweden and Finland builds on the intention that we will have the possibility to act together in case of crisis or war.

Sweden, as a Nato-partner, welcomes the increased defence measures taken by NATO in the Baltic Sea Region. NATO has a key role to ensure stability and to deter threats in the Baltic Sea. United States role in the Baltic Sea Region is of equal importance and has a clear threshold effect. We are welcoming the US ambition to increase its' presence in Europe.

Third, from our perspective, the future of regional peace and stability depends on keeping European unity. The EU, NATO and the US must stay united and defend our basic values. In order to meet challenges to European and global security, we need to stay together.

The many challenges we face in the European neighbourhood, and in Iraq and Syria, point towards long term destabilization. Sweden has been largely affected by the migration flows. We are the largest per capita receiver of refugees in the European Union. We need to tackle the causes of people fleeing.

The most urgent threat is Daesh. In the coalition we work together against Daesh – both militarily and with other means. It is our obligation to accelerate and intensify the military campaign in order to defeat this barbaric organization.

Only a united Europe ready to stand up for its values and principles, will be able to contribute to European peace and stability.

Thank you for listening.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence of Sweden Peter Hultqvist at seminar Regional and Global Impact: The Changing Situation in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea Area

Institut Français des Relations Internationales in Paris
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This year we commemorate the end of the Second World War, 70 years ago.

Time to reflect over the trauma and devastation this war caused in Europe.

Time to reflect on the time consuming and hard work carried out to recover.

Time to reflect over the efforts made to prevent war from threatening our lives and our way of living again - the European Union still being one of the best examples of this.

The lessons provided 70 years ago must be repeated, again and again. Especially at times like this when in and around Europe security is challenged, putting our core values and solidarity at test. European unity is key when responding to these challenges.

We are facing serious challenges in our southern neighbourhood. The conflicts and crises in North Africa and the Middle East have serious implications for Europe as a whole. The brutality of ISIL has choked the world. The reintegration of foreign fighters poses a huge challenge to Sweden and other European states. The risks of terrorist attacks in European states being one obvious example from which France has suffered tremendously.

The events of the Second World War caused millions of people in Europe to

leave their homes. Today, 70 years later, approximately 60 million refugees from other parts of the world

leave their homes because of war and persecution. Most of them stay in their own or neighbouring countries. A small number of these desperate people put their lives at risk to cross the Mediterranean. Many of them do not make it to the shores of the EU. This is a concern for all of us.

At the same time Europe is facing a more provocative and destabilising Russia that has lowered the threshold for using military force, a Russia that violates international law and dissociates itself from Western values.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order since it was established 25 years ago.

The Russian actions are not only an aggression on Ukraine but constitute a threat to the right to make free policy choices of all countries in Russia's neighbourhood. This is a cornerstone in the EU and the European security order.

Therefore, the Russian aggression against Ukraine is a concern to us all and makes our response all the more important.

We need to increase our common understanding of Russia's actions. Russia is continuously using a broad spectrum of means to assert influence over neighbouring countries. Russia is also active in dividing Western countries in order to complicate our decision-making.

Europe and the USA need to stand together on our policy towards Russia.

- Firstly, we need a united Europe, in cooperation with the USA, in order to be resilient to Russian pressure and vigilant to Russian inducement.
- Secondly, we need a policy towards Russia which makes aggressive actions more difficult and expensive but leaves the door open for a peaceful solution. The EU must meet

Russia's actions with firmness as well as with dialogue. The sanctions policy is the expression of the first, while our support to a diplomatic solution is proof of the latter.

- Thirdly, we need a successful Europe that can show how open societies

work, demonstrate cooperation and show a democratic alternative to Russia.

The success of the Ukrainian reform process is of strategic importance - to Ukraine, to the broader region and to Europe. A successful, democratic and prosperous Ukraine can serve as a powerful rebuttal of Russia's policy to exercise influence over its neighbours, using force and coercion. A successful development in Ukraine will serve as a role model for other countries aspiring to build a democratic and economically sound future.

It would be a serious blow to Europe, the EU, European and transatlantic security if European core values are not defended and if we cannot stand up against Russia and support Ukraine.

The Swedish neighbourhood is a tangible border area between Russia and the West. The significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security has increased. Russia is clearly seeking to increase influence over, what it considers as its area of interest. I believe this area includes parts of the Baltic Sea region.

There are clear signs of Russian military activity intensifying in the Baltic Sea region. Russia is showing a more challenging behaviour and violations of territorial integrity are more frequent than before. The military-strategic situation has deteriorated and the region has become less secure.

Russian military capability has increased since 2008. To my judgement this is a continuing process. By investing almost 5 percent of GDP in the Russian Armed Forces Russia sends a clear message about their priorities. Investments in the Armed Forces are at the highest level since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Let me give you a few examples to illustrate developments in the Baltic Sea region:

- During the last two years we have seen a steady increase in Russian military exercises and intelligence operations in the Baltic Sea Region. Russian exercises are more complex and of higher quality than seen before. All branches are included – land, sea, air.
- We have seen an increase since 2011 in Russian strategic bombers (Backfire) flying over the Baltic Sea. For the first time since the breakup of the Soviet Union we identified long-range strategic bombers (Bear) flying over the Baltic Sea in 2013.

Sweden believes that challenges to European security must be met through cooperation and joint action. But on the national level, every country must take their share of the responsibility.

Sweden is pursuing a two-tiered defence policy: reinforcing our military capability by increasing defence spending by 11 per cent from 2016 to 2020 and building increased security in our region and Europe as a whole by cooperation with other countries and organisations.

The most recent Swedish Defence Bill was agreed by a broad majority in Parliament early this summer. The bill was produced in the context and in light of the developments in Russia and the Russian aggression towards Ukraine and developments in the Baltic Sea Region.

The Swedish government has decided to make substantial increases in defence spending for the first time in many decades. This is a clear sign of how serious my government assesses the developments in our region and a deteriorated military-strategic situation for Sweden.

The key priority is to enhance the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces, as well as to develop a new Total Defence concept which includes both military and civilian defence.

After many years of substantial contributions to international crisis management the new defence bill calls for a renewed regional focus, with emphasis on national defence and planning for wartime scenarios.

Sweden builds security together with others. This is a core principle in Swedish security and defence policy. We are deepening our cooperation with our Nordic countries, in particular with Finland, the Baltic States, the EU, NATO and the USA. The transatlantic link is of key importance, as well as a unified European response to the events challenging European and global security.

International exercises play an essential role in upholding operational capability and by sending a distinct political signal about our determination to defend ourselves as well as about our solidarity with Western countries and NATO.

Sweden wants to deepen regional cooperation to allow us better work together in upholding the security situation and raise the threshold for military incidents and conflicts. Cooperation must also include the Baltic

States and other countries around the Baltic Sea such as Poland and Germany.

Equally, and by necessity, the United States plays a key role. The Transatlantic link is decisive for European security and should be strengthened.

Sweden welcomes the enhanced collective defence measures taken by NATO. NATO has a key role to ensure stability in and around the Baltic Sea.

The challenges we face in the European neighbourhood point to long term destabilization. Europe has a key role in meeting the global challenges and threats we are facing. Only a united EU ready to stand up for its principles, will be able to contribute to European peace and stability in close cooperation with NATO and the USA. We should stay the course.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Speech at the U.S.-Sweden Defence Industry Conference

Speech by Minister for Defence, Mr. Peter Hultqvist, at the 15th Swedish-American Defence Industry Seminar, 3 June 2015, Stockholm Check against delivery.

Under Secretary of Defence, Ambassador, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to speak before you here today, at the 15th Swedish-American Defence Industry Conference.

I will begin by saying a few words on the importance that the Government of Sweden attaches to the Swedish – U.S. defence industrial cooperation.

I will also take a few minutes to share my views on the geopolitical security in our region as well as what the new defence bill entails in terms of new political directions.

Swedish-US relations

I just visited Washington D.C., where I had an excellent meeting with Deputy Secretary of Defence Bob Work. I also met with members of Congress, such as Senator John McCain.

The result of my meetings proved that there is a mutual interest to continue to deepen and to update our bilateral relationship in many defence related areas. Bob Work and I concluded that we shall deepen our cooperation in some targeted areas. This is very positive also for the Swedish – U.S. defence industrial cooperation.

When Prime Minister Löfven met Vice President Biden in Washington in March this year, they also discussed a need to strengthening the cooperation in regional security and defence related issues.

Security and defence policy

As for our security and defence policy, we are facing a multitude of challenges to our security today. In and around Europe, security is challenged by state and non-state actors. This is the basic fact and a reality we have to face. Thus, we have to define our strategic security and defence policy based off that.

We are facing a more provocative, unpredictable and destabilising Russia that has lowered the threshold to use military force.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in eastern Ukraine is a violation of international law. It is the greatest challenge to the European security order since it was established 25 years ago.

Russian activities in the Baltic Region and in the High North has also increased. They have increased their military exercises and intelligence activities. They are engaging in hybrid warfare, which affects all levels of society: military, police and civilian.

We now have to focus our work on three levels:

1. We have to foster a unity within Europe and together with the United States.
2. We have to increase Swedish military capability
3. We have to cooperate closely with our partners in the Nordic, the Baltics, within the NATO partnership, within the EU and we must maintain a strong Transatlantic link.

The New Defence Bill

Turning then to the "Swedish homework": in April, the Swedish Government proposed a new Defence Bill to Parliament. The bill is based on a broad political agreement and the Swedish Parliament is expected to vote on June 15th.

This defence bill sets a new trend in Swedish defence spending. The government has, for the first time in more than two decades, decided to successively increase the defence spending with 11% over the next five years.

The key priority in the Defence Bill is to enhance the warfighting capability

of the Armed Forces. This also includes the development of a new so called “Total Defence Concept” which includes both military and civilian defence.

Let me give you some concrete examples of the issues we prioritize in the bill:

- We are looking at a renewed regional focus, with emphasis on national defence and planning for wartime scenarios. For example, we will re-establish permanent units on the island of Gotland.
- We will make substantial investments in the base of the defence force such as personal equipment for our soldiers, communication equipment, radars systems, trucks and other material. Other priorities include increased training and exercises.
- The Army will be centred on two mechanised brigades. We will upgrade tanks; infantry combat vehicles and acquire new mortars for the mechanized battalions.
- The Navy will maintain surface combatants and upgrade two corvettes. Two next-generation submarines will be acquired and additional investments will be made in anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- On the Air defence side, we will keep investing in the Gripen System and arm it with the Meteor air-to-air missile. We will also invest in new short and medium range surface-to-air missiles.
- We will develop active cyber defence capabilities.

International cooperation: Nordefco, Finland and NATO

While we are not part of a military alliance, it does not mean that we act alone. We cooperate on many different levels in many international settings.

NORDEFECO is the primary platform for discussions on security and defence related issues between the Nordic and the Baltic States. Within NORDEFECO, we have 158 different cooperation projects, many being in the defence acquisition areas. Our priorities as the Chairman of NORDEFECO are to strengthening cooperation on joint air surveillance among the Nordic countries.

I would also like to point out the deepened cooperation between Sweden and Finland. Our Armed Forces will be able to act together beyond peacetime if necessary and after parliamentary decision has been made. This brings one piece to the puzzle when it comes to creating security in our region.

Our deepened relationship with NATO also plays a central role for Sweden

when it comes to increasing the Armed Forces interoperability as well as creating security in our region. We are part of the Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP), we contribute to Nato Response Force (NRF) and we will present the bill to parliament regarding Host Nation Support (HNS) in the spring of 2016.

NATO's reassurance measures, as well as the unilateral US support through the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), are both important for building security. While the US has a renewed focus towards Asia, in the so called Asia Pivot, I do want to underscore that we see a need for continued US presence in Europe in order to have a balance.

Sweden's defence industry

The defence industry in Sweden has a long history dating back to the 16th century. Sweden's neutrality policy, as it was formulated after the Second World War, required a strong armed force, which in turn required a strong national defence industry. Today, neutrality is not part of our defence policy and while we have chosen a military non-alignment, it does not mean that we stand alone. As I explained earlier, we have chosen to be a close partner to many countries and organizations.

Our industry has moved from predominantly government-owned companies to a majority of private companies, many of which have presence on the international market. Taking into account the history we have had, it has made it possible for Sweden to develop a strong defence industry, with for example fighter aircrafts, military vehicles, sensors, weapon systems and ammunition, submarines and frigates. For being a rather small nation, I am very proud to be the Minister for Defence with these domestic capabilities. The Swedish government has also announced fighter aircraft and submarine technology as areas of Swedish national security interests.

The Swedish defence industry has always been present on the international market, but the export share has increased during recent decades. There is a need for export and international cooperation in order to be able to maintain high competence in our country. Within the industry, we have seen that a huge number of Small Medium Enterprises (SME) companies also have had an important role with innovative thinking and entrepreneurship. Many of the SME-companies focus on the domestic market, both directly to the defence authorities and as sub-suppliers to other companies.

The companies that are here today are represented in the US and Swedish

market or are planning to enter either market. From my perspective, I think it is important to support these companies in their efforts.

I am glad that the Swedish Security and Defence Industry Association and the National Defence Industry Association have arranged this seminar and that so many of their SME as well as larger member companies are here today. I hope that the members will establish new contacts for future cooperations.

Swedish – U.S. defence material cooperation

As for Swedish-American bilateral cooperation concerning defence material we have seen that it is built on interests to achieve common goals.

Today, we face a situation where the old rationales are once again coming to the forefront. Economy of scale^[1], smart defence and burden sharing are increasing in significance both on a practical level when it comes to procurement, but also on a political level as it is linked to the strategic partnership of strengthening the transatlantic link. A strong bilateral relationship between the US and Sweden also ensures the stability of the Baltic Sea Region.

The continued work in the US on achieving *Better Buying Power*, on pursuing the *Defense Innovation Initiative* and on meeting the challenges of finding that *Third Offset Strategy*, will all be facilitated by, if not dependent on, international cooperation.

We must therefore take use of the full potential of our bilateral relationship. We must be open minded to finding new models of joint research cooperation and procuring defence equipment. And we must realize that it is in our common interest to identify challenges together and to find common solutions on our way forward.

Conclusion

Finally, we cannot forget that our strong partnership is underpinned by a joint commitment of fundamental beliefs: we both believe that sustainable peace, development and prosperity is only possible when grounded upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

I would like to thank the National Defence Industry Association and the Swedish Defence Security Industry Association for organizing this event.

Seminars like these are a vital component and a valuable arena for our continued and our upgraded cooperation. An open and honest discussion is crucial, not only for procurement, but also for our work to build security in cooperation with others.

I sincerely hope you will enjoy the seminar and I wish you good luck with your work.

Thank you!

[\[1\]](#) Definition: a proportionate saving in costs gained by an increased level of production.

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