

Deterioration of the security environment – implications for Sweden

Ds 2022:8



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Background

On 16 March 2022, the Government decided to set up a working group to deliberate on the changed security environment following Russia's aggression¹ against Ukraine. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde led the deliberations. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist also took part.

All parties represented in the Riksdag took part in the deliberations and were represented by the following members of the Riksdag: Kenneth G Forslund (Social Democratic Party), Hans Wallmark (Moderate Party), Pål Jonson (Moderate Party), Aron Emilsson (Sweden Democrats), Kerstin Lundgren (Centre Party), Håkan Svenneling (Left Party), Mikael Oscarsson (Christian Democrats), Allan Widman (Liberal Party) and Elisabeth Falkhaven (Green Party).

The working group secretariat was headed by Ambassador Andrés Jato as principal secretary. Deputy Director Filipa Chantereau, Deputy Director Andreas Ekengren, Desk Officer Linnéa Porathe and Director of the Stockholm Centre for Eastern European Studies Fredrik Löjdquist were the working group secretaries. State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Robert Rydberg and State Secretary Jan-Olof Lind were also involved in the work.

The working group held a total of six meetings. The inaugural meeting adopted the working methods and timetable. The second meeting discussed Russia. The third meeting discussed the response of Western actors to the changed security environment. It was also decided that the report should be finalised by 13 May. The fourth and fifth meetings discussed Sweden's defence and security policy cooperation, including the issue of a possible Swedish membership of NATO. The final meeting discussed the report.

During the course of this work, several experts and heads of relevant Swedish missions abroad were invited to brief the working group.

¹ 'Aggression' is a concept with a specific meaning in international law. In 1974, the UN General Assembly adopted a definition of 'aggression' (see UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 [XXIX]). The definition specifies what constitutes an act of aggression, for example, the invasion or attack by the armed forces of a state of the territory of another state. This definition also provides the basis for 'crime of aggression' as defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Kenneth G Forslund (Social Democratic Party), Hans Wallmark (Moderate Party), Pål Jonson (Moderate Party), Aron Emilsson (Sweden Democrats), Kerstin Lundgren (Centre Party), Mikael Oscarsson (Christian Democrats) and Allan Widman (Liberal Party) are in agreement on the contents of the report. Mikael Oscarsson (Christian Democrats) and Allan Widman (Liberal Party) submitted a statement of opinion regarding a formulation contained in the report. This is provided in Annex 1. Håkan Svenneling (Left Party) and Elisabeth Falkhaven (Green Party) endorse Chapters 1–4 but have presented statements of opinion on Chapters 5–7. These are provided in Annexes 2 and 3.

Introduction

The aim of Sweden's security policy is to guarantee the country's independence and self-determination, safeguard our sovereignty and our fundamental values, and preserve our freedom of action in the face of political, military or other pressure.

Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine, launched on 24 February, is of a nature and scope that Europe has not experienced since the Second World War. Russia's actions give rise to a structural, long-term and significant deterioration of the security environment in Europe and globally, and raise questions about how Sweden can best guarantee its national security.

The new security environment has extensive and long-term implications for the countries and organisations of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area. The consensus against Russia's actions and a common threat perception in the Euro-Atlantic area have enabled a swift, united and resolute response.

In view of the progressively deteriorating security situation, Sweden's defence capability is being strengthened, and its defence and security partnerships have been deepened.

Today, Sweden takes part in approximately twenty defence cooperation initiatives, outlined in the Government Communication on international defence cooperation *Internationella försvarssamarbeten (2020/21:56)*. Sweden's current defence and security cooperation creates the conditions for, and has contributed to, a high level of interoperability with strategic partners. It has enhanced the ability to act together in a crisis and ultimately war. It does not encompass any mutually binding defence obligations. Within the framework of current cooperation, there is no guarantee that Sweden would be helped if it were the target of a threat or attack.

Russian provocation and retaliatory measures against Sweden cannot be ruled out during a transition period in connection with a possible Swedish application for NATO membership. There is a readiness to respond to Russian threats, but it is not possible to eliminate with certainty all the risks of Russian provocation and attempts at influence.

It is not politically, financially or militarily realistic to develop bilateral defence alliances involving mutual defence guarantees outside existing European and Euro-Atlantic structures. It is clear that there is a lack of political will among EU Member States to develop collective defence within the EU.

Russia's aggression against NATO partner Ukraine has also highlighted the boundaries of NATO's commitments to non-Allies and made it clear that Article 5 applies to the defence of Allies only. NATO's collective defence does not include a partner dimension.

1 Deterioration of the security environment as a result of Russia's actions

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most extensive military aggression in Europe since the Second World War. The negative effects for European and international security are far-reaching. Russia's actions are a flagrant violation of international law and the European security order. Russia's warfare includes war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Since the war against Georgia in 2008 and the war against Ukraine that started in 2014, including the illegal annexation of Crimea, it has been clear to all that Russia has violated and opposed the European security order. Since at least 2007, Russia has expressed demands to change the European security order that has evolved since the end of the Cold War. In the meantime, Russia has strengthened its military capability and capacity to carry out hybrid attacks. Internal repression in Russia has worsened over time. In 2021 and early 2022, Russia further escalated its threats and aggression against Ukraine and confrontation with the West. In December 2021, Russia expressed far-reaching demands for a fundamentally changed European security order. The Russia crisis is structural, systematic and enduring. Correctly assessing Russia's intentions entails an uncertainty that must be taken into account in our security policy choices.

Russia's unprovoked aggression against sovereign and democratic Ukraine on 24 February 2022 demonstrates that Russia has a low threshold for violations of international law and military aggression, even on a large scale. Russia denies Ukraine's statehood and right to exist. The Russian leadership operates based on values, interests and a view of history that differ from those of the West and

include authoritarian rule with the aim of creating spheres of influence, including by military means. The conflict is therefore between an authoritarian regime and the free, open and democratic world.

To achieve its objectives, Russia takes an antagonistic approach that includes threats, military means and various forms of hybrid activities to influence and undermine the democratic decision-making process and our societies. Military force is used to achieve political goals.

Russia is violating the European security order, which, in addition to international law, is based on the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the other commitments of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and includes territorial integrity, every state's right to independently determine its security policy and the right to self-defence. Through its actions, Russia has failed to adhere to the rules-based international order despite its commitments to do so. The Russian leadership has shown that it is prepared to use military force to achieve its political objectives in countries also further afield, such as Syria.

Overall, Russia's aggression has caused the security situation in Sweden's immediate neighbourhood and the rest of Europe to deteriorate fundamentally compared with the assessment contained in the Government Bill Totalförsvaret 2021–2025 (subsequently referred to as Total Defence 2021–2025) that the Riksdag adopted on 15 December 2020.

1.1 Russia's negative political development continues

Russia is becoming increasingly totalitarian. Repression of civil society and the political opposition in Russia is extensive and growing. The space for free public debate is essentially non-existent. Free media has been shut down, social media platforms are strictly controlled and political opponents imprisoned. As a result of sanctions, the withdrawal of foreign companies from Russia and Russia's growing self-imposed isolationism, the Russian population is becoming increasingly cut off from the rest of the world and is

experiencing deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. The mutually reinforcing relationship between Russia's internal repression and external aggression has thus been made clear.

President Vladimir Putin, or a like-minded successor, will probably lead Russia for the foreseeable future. Although the long-term vision of a free, open and non-aggressive Russia must be maintained, experience shows that progress towards democracy can be reversed. The continued security response to Russia must take this into account.

1.2 Russia's nuclear arsenal and strategic deterrence

Nuclear weapons are a key component of Russia's strategic deterrence. As Total Defence 2021–2025 states, Russia has the world's largest, most diversified and most modern nuclear arsenal. Russia has nuclear weapons capability deployed in Sweden's neighbourhood, including the Baltic Sea region.

In 2020, for the first time, a policy document was published regarding Russia's basic principles of state policy on nuclear deterrence. The publication of this policy is part of Russia's security policy signalling and deterrence. According to this Russian deterrence policy, nuclear weapons can be used to respond to nuclear attacks or to attacks with the use of conventional weapons if the "very existence of the state" is in jeopardy. The decision to use nuclear weapons is made by the Russian president, in consultation with the General Staff.

Recent references by Vladimir Putin and other Russian representatives to nuclear weapons use are worrying. The Russian population is being primed for a scenario in which it will be considered legitimate for Russia to use nuclear weapons. The threshold for threats of nuclear weapons use has been lowered.

Russia has used chemical weapons, including in the assassination attempts on Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny, despite the fact that stockpiling and use of chemical weapons are prohibited under international law. False Russian accusations that other actors are preparing chemical attacks lower the threshold for Russia to use chemical weapons.

1.3 Russia's actions in Sweden's neighbourhood and the rest of Europe

As far as Sweden's security is concerned, Russia's role and actions in the neighbourhood are particularly important. Over time, military activity in Sweden's neighbourhood has increased and Russia has strengthened its capability in the Arctic and along the country's western border. For the time being, however, the majority of Russian ground forces are deployed in Ukraine. Consequently, Russia's conventional military capability is temporarily weakened along Russia's western border.

Russia's increased military presence in Belarus and the two countries' coordinated actions have security implications, including for the security environment of Poland and the Baltic countries. Gotland's strategic vulnerability has also increased.

The military-strategic significance of the Arctic region has grown, and Russia has gradually built up its military capabilities there. Sweden actively contributes to peaceful, stable and sustainable development with respect for the regulatory framework under international law.

Russia has long considered Sweden an integral part of Western security and defence cooperation. At the same time, Russia has stated that it is a Russian interest that Sweden maintain its policy of non-participation in military alliances. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu had previously stated in 2018 that there would be retaliatory measures if Finland and Sweden became NATO members. This would probably primarily involve increased deployment of military capabilities in our neighbourhood.

Russian representatives have threatened "military measures" and "retaliatory measures" if Sweden and Finland join NATO. In light of earlier Russian actions, other measures in addition to those already mentioned cannot be ruled out. Moreover, Sweden and other countries that have imposed sanctions on Russia have been categorised as "unfriendly". These and similar tactics are also aimed at Russia's domestic audience. The Riksdag's decision to send weapons to Ukraine and Sweden's cooperation within the framework of its partnership with NATO and participation in EU sanctions are factors that could contribute to triggering further Russian measures. This could involve political pressure, activities

aimed at undermining, hybrid activities, military provocations and diplomatic action.

Russia's actions also have implications for countries outside the EU and NATO. The risk of Russian antagonism against, for example, Georgia and Moldova, and influence operations against Western Balkan countries have increased. The risk of increased Russian influence and military presence has also increased for the countries of Central Asia.

In January 2022, under the Armenian Chairmanship, Article 4 of the Treaty of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was invoked for the first time. In case of an act of external aggression against one of the Member States (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan), Article 4 obliges all other Member States at the request of a Member State to provide support by the means at their disposal, including military. A Russian-led military operation was launched in Kazakhstan to deal with what was actually a domestic political crisis. Russia has not invoked the CSTO in what Moscow is calling the "special military operation" in Ukraine.

1.4 Russia-China

Russian-Chinese relations play a central role in Russia's continuing actions and the global balance of power. The Russian-Chinese relationship is characterised by a community of interests and values, and was deepened in the joint statement of 4 February 2022, which mentions a "no-limits" partnership. Although there are areas of friction and China is the stronger partner, especially economically, their common ambition to weaken the position of the United States and the rest of the West is a unifying factor and is also central to Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision. Fear of democracy and colour revolutions are additional unifying factors. Beijing's stance against NATO's expansion in Europe and support for Russia's security interests in our part of the world are evidence of the present security tensions between Europe and China and between the United States and China.

Russia is dependent on China to a greater extent than previously, and the balance of power is shifting even more in China's favour.

Russia needs China's support not least to offset the impact of the sanctions. In effect, China has not opposed Moscow's narrative on the invasion of Ukraine, but it has avoided taking a position for or against the invasion in international organisations. Nor has China openly provided military support and thus far it has chosen not to assist Russia by circumventing the sanctions in a way that would put itself at risk of also becoming a target of Western sanctions. Russia's isolation from the West could consolidate China's dominant role in their partnership.

In this context, the Taiwan issue is important for China, and Beijing is carefully studying the political and military-strategic consequences of Russia's war.

2 European and transatlantic reactions to Russia's aggression

2.1 Security policy in a fundamentally changed world

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine fundamentally changes European and transatlantic security policy. As noted earlier, Russia has demonstrated that it has a low threshold for violations of international law and military aggression and lacks any respect for the European security order. The new security environment entails extensive and long-term implications for the countries and international cooperation forums of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area. There is agreement in the EU and among transatlantic partners on how to respond to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The common threat perception has enabled a swift, united and resolute response. The EU and the NATO countries have taken far-reaching measures against Russia, in support of Ukraine and to strengthen their own defence capabilities. Cooperation between the EU and NATO has worked well.

The Russia crisis has reaffirmed the importance of the EU and other like-minded partners defending international law and the European security order consistently and in unison. Extensive diplomatic efforts have garnered broad international support for a condemnation of Russia's violations of international law. A total of 141 countries voting in favour of the resolution in the UN General Assembly condemning Russia's aggression is a highly significant global stance. Continued diplomatic efforts by the EU and transatlantic partners are needed to ensure continued and broadened international condemnation of Russia's actions.

The crisis underscores the critical role the United States plays in European security policy. This is manifested by its central role in

NATO, and ultimately by NATO's defence guarantees. Since the launch of Russia's invasion, the United States has contributed economic and military support to Ukraine. There is broad political consensus in Washington on the importance of US engagement in Europe in general and for Ukraine in particular.

2.2 Deterioration of the European security environment

The countries of Europe are reviewing or redefining their policy on Russia. Long-standing security policy positions have been revised in a number of European countries in response to Russia's actions. Defence investments are increasing in Europe and, like Sweden, a number of countries have adapted practices and regulatory frameworks related to arms exports following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The German Government's policy statement of 27 February 2022 marked an epochal shift in the country's security and defence policy. Prior to Russia's invasion on 24 February, the German Government had already suspended the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project.

Recent events have also confirmed the United Kingdom's willingness to take part in and enhance defence cooperation in Europe. This is reflected, for example, in the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, which includes Sweden, and its intensified exercise activities in the Baltic Sea since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Cooperation has also contributed to improved UK-EU relations.

In Finland, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted the Government and Parliament to consider the issue of NATO membership. In mid-April 2022, the Finnish Government presented a report to the Parliament on the changes in the security environment. This report does not include a direct recommendation, but a Finnish NATO membership appears from the analysis as the primary option to best safeguard Finland's security.

Denmark holds a defence opt-out that excludes it from participation in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. A referendum on abandoning this opt-out will be held in June 2022.

2.3 European Union

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. The EU is a political union encompassing cooperation in almost all sectors of society. The EU's foreign and security policy significance to Sweden has increased in the new security environment.

The EU has responded resolutely and in unison against Russia's aggression and in support of Ukraine. Through prompt action and its broad toolbox, the EU has demonstrated its relevance as a security actor.

The EU has imposed sweeping sanctions on Russia aimed at limiting its ability to continue its war against Ukraine. Sanctions have also been imposed on Belarus. The EU sanctions have helped to inflict significant costs on Russia. They are also consistent with the sanctions imposed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and other like-minded countries, such as Japan and South Korea.

The EU has contributed billions of euros to finance the transfer of Member States' military equipment to Ukraine under the European Peace Facility (EPF). This has been an important way to contribute to Ukraine's defence. The EPF has also been a channel for support to strengthen Moldova's and Georgia's resilience. In addition to political and military support to these countries, the EU has provided economic and humanitarian support.

In light of the pressure that Russia is now exerting on its closest neighbours, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have chosen to apply for EU membership. Their European aspirations are welcome.

2.4 North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The transatlantic link and unity within NATO are at their strongest in decades. The United States has renewed its strategic focus on NATO as the most important forum for security and defence cooperation with Europe. This has enabled forceful action with a focus on NATO's core tasks.

Since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, NATO has strengthened its collective defence through reinforcement measures in eastern Europe, including in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and

Poland, and the deployment of four additional multinational battle groups to Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. NATO has also activated its Defence Planning Process in Europe. Moreover, individual NATO countries have provided military support to Ukraine.

Following Russia's invasion, Sweden and Finland chose to intensify their cooperation with NATO by activating Modalities for Strengthened Interaction (MSI). This activation had broad political support and was approved by all NATO countries.

Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has highlighted the boundaries of NATO's commitments. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty refers to defence of NATO countries only. NATO representatives have declared that every inch of NATO territory will be defended, but such pledges do not apply to non-NATO Allies.

NATO has stressed that its open door policy still applies.

NATO's conclusions on the new security environment will be outlined in its Strategic Concept, which will be adopted at the NATO summit in Madrid in June 2022. NATO's prioritisation of collective defence is expected to be laid down in the Strategic Concept as its primary task.

2.5 OSCE and other forums

The OSCE's principles and commitments are an important part of the European security order. The OSCE has a toolkit that was developed to reduce security risks and prevent and manage conflicts (the independent institutions, field operations and politico-military mechanisms). These are tools that should be protected.

The largest OSCE field mission, the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, has played a major role in monitoring that the OSCE's principles and commitments are followed along the contact line between government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas in Ukraine. Despite its limitations, the SMM was able to observe and report violations on a daily basis. Russia forced the SMM to cease its operations in the last week of April 2022.

The Polish OSCE Chairmanship has reacted forcefully to Russia's aggression, but the organisation's principle of consensus has limited its ability to act. Russia's actions in the OSCE are

essentially destructive. However, like-minded Western countries have, for example, used the OSCE's founding documents to launch an investigation into Russia's abuses during the invasion.

As a consequence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the EU and other Western countries have agreed to limit Russia's participation in a number of other forums. Russia is now the subject of international isolation.

Like Sweden, many Western countries have suspended bilateral cooperation with Russian government representatives and institutions. In March 2022, Russia was excluded from the Council of Europe, and in April 2022 it was suspended from the UN Human Rights Council. Cooperation in the Arctic Council has been put on hold by the seven Western Arctic states, who unanimously agreed to refrain from taking part in meetings with Russia in that forum. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Northern Dimension decided to suspend Russia (member) and Belarus (observer) from participation until further notice.

3 Sweden's security policy direction

The aim of Sweden's security policy is to guarantee the country's independence and self-determination, safeguard our sovereignty and our fundamental values, and preserve our freedom of action in the face of political, military or other pressure. Non-participation in military alliances has historically served Sweden well.

Total Defence 2021–2025 establishes that an armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. It confirmed the solidarity-based security policy as the foundation of Sweden's defence and security policy. According to this Bill, it is a Swedish interest to safeguard and strengthen solidarity and integration in the EU and to maintain a peaceful, stable and predictable neighbourhood anchored in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. As far as possible, challenges and threats must be met in cooperation with other countries.

Sweden's unilateral declaration of solidarity, adopted in 2009, means that Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack, and that we expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. On 11 May 2022, Sweden and the United Kingdom signed a political declaration that expresses corresponding solidarity between our countries.

In recent years, Sweden has deepened bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with partner countries and significantly strengthened its national defence. As a militarily non-aligned country, Sweden has not had mutually binding defence obligations with other countries.

In view of the serious global security situation following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there has been agreement on enhancing

Sweden's preparedness. The Swedish Armed Forces have adapted readiness measures and, among things, strengthened their presence on Gotland.

Since 2015, the capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces have been significantly heightened, including through the 2015 and 2020 defence resolutions, and an overall increase in appropriations of 80 per cent. In April 2022, the Riksdag decided that Sweden's defence capability will be boosted and the scale-up accelerated. According to the Riksdag decision, the appropriations to military defence for 2022 will increase by a further SEK 2 billion, while the Swedish Armed Forces authorisation framework for military equipment orders will be receive an additional SEK 30.9 billion. In the 2022 Spring Fiscal Policy Bill, the Government proposed an increase in the appropriations to civil defence of SEK 0.8 billion. The Government has also instructed the defence agencies to present proposals for a step-by-step investment plan for military defence appropriations reaching two per cent of GDP.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden has further strengthened its existing security and defence cooperation, including by deepening its cooperation with NATO. Together with international partners, the Swedish Armed Forces have increased cooperation in our neighbourhood, including through joint exercises.

Also, for the first time since the Soviet Union's attack on Finland in 1939, the Riksdag has taken a historic decision to provide direct support and weapons to another country in an ongoing international armed conflict.

As previously stated, Russia's actions have caused the security situation in Sweden's immediate neighbourhood and the rest of Europe to deteriorate fundamentally compared with the assessment contained in Total Defence 2021–2025. This requires Sweden to strengthen its defence capabilities and to deepen existing defence and security cooperation. Sweden needs to review how the country's security can be strengthened, including by taking a position on a Swedish NATO membership.

4 Sweden's security and defence cooperation

Since 2014, Sweden has deepened its security and defence cooperation with more than 20 countries by entering into various forms of agreements. Defence cooperation is essential to strengthening Sweden's military capabilities to respond to an armed attack. Cooperation contributes to a defence context that raises the conflict deterrence threshold.

Cooperation makes joint rapid action possible in a crisis, and ultimately war. Increased exercise activities contribute to interoperability. Exercises also provide an opportunity to prepare for how countries can act together in different situations.

Cooperation with partner countries is more extensive than ever. Cooperation with various partners around, and with engagement in, the Baltic Sea region is of great importance for security in our neighbourhood and thus for Sweden. These various forms of cooperation complement each other. For Sweden to be a credible cooperation partner, a prerequisite is the significant investment in national defence that is under way and that will be further strengthened in the coming years.

The participation of the Swedish Armed Forces in international operations (through the EU, the UN, NATO and coalitions) has contributed to a high level of interoperability with some of Sweden's most important partners, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The Swedish Armed Forces' expertise and ability to work effectively with others have made Sweden a sought-after partner.

4.1 Nordic and Nordic-Baltic security and defence cooperation

Since the 2009 Stoltenberg Report, the Nordic countries have further intensified their foreign, security and defence cooperation. The Bjarnason report on Nordic foreign and security policy, published in 2020, has resulted in increased cooperation in a number of areas. Sweden has led the work on developing cooperation against cyber threats. The Nordic foreign ministers meet frequently and have also worked closely since the invasion of Ukraine.

Within the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO), defence cooperation in the region has been enhanced, and the countries have a common political ambition to strengthen their capacity to act together in times of peace, crisis and conflict. The established areas of Nordic defence cooperation include extensive training activities, exchange of air surveillance information, easier access to each other's territories, a crisis consultation mechanism and secure communication systems. The Nordic defence ministers have held regular crisis consultations on the situation in Ukraine. Within the NORDEFECO framework, regular meetings are also held with the Baltic countries and the working groups are open to participation at military level.

Sweden also has close bilateral cooperation with the Baltic countries in the defence and security policy area. The Swedish Armed Forces participate regularly in exercises in the Baltic countries, and Sweden also contributes to NATO's Centres of Excellence in Riga and Tallinn.

In recent years, Sweden has developed trilateral cooperation with Finland and Norway, and with Denmark and Norway. These trilateral forms of cooperation have different geographical focus areas and aim to enable coordinated military operations in crisis and conflict. They include the objective of coordinating current and future national operational plans and opportunities for trilateral operational planning.

Sweden also maintains close defence cooperation with Norway and Denmark on a bilateral basis, which includes joint exercises and a close security policy dialogue. At the same time, NATO membership is the foundation of Danish and Norwegian defence and security policies.

4.2 Finland

Our defence cooperation with Finland is of particular significance; in the deteriorating security environment, the importance of Finnish-Swedish cooperation has become increasingly clear. Specific areas of cooperation include joint operational planning, exercises, combined military units, establishment of secure communication systems, air and maritime surveillance, defence materiel, mutual use of military infrastructure, personnel exchange, etc.

In 2020, the Riksdag granted the Government extended rights to provide and receive operational military support within the framework of defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland. Since the invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland have conducted joint exercises, for example on Gotland, in Stockholm's southern archipelago and in the central Baltic Sea, including the Gulf of Finland.

4.3 United States

A strong transatlantic link and US engagement in Europe are crucial for stability in the neighbourhood. Sweden and the United States have a largely similar view of the security challenges in northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region. It is important that Sweden deepen its bilateral security and defence relations with the United States. Sweden and the United States have a shared interest in improving their ability to act together in a crisis. Following the signing of a bilateral Statement of Intent (SoI) in 2016, cooperation between the United States and Sweden has developed and been concretised, including through cooperation on materiel and exercises. The Swedish Armed Forces regularly conduct joint exercises primarily with US air force and marine units. In addition, Sweden and the United States engage in close cooperation on security issues, including in the cyber domain.

Trilateral cooperation between Sweden, Finland and the United States is complementary to bilateral cooperation between these countries. The areas of cooperation include defence policy dialogue, exercise activities and increased interoperability.

The Swedish and Finnish armed forces and the United States European Command (USEUCOM) are increasingly expanding

their cooperation. This trilateral cooperation has increased in scope, and a small but significant part of Finland's and Sweden's defence policy dialogue and defence cooperation with the United States is in a trilateral format.

4.4 United Kingdom

Sweden and the United Kingdom have deepened their security and defence cooperation in recent years. The political declaration of solidarity adopted on 11 May 2022 is an expression of the will to continue to develop the relationship in these areas. A new format for security policy dialogue between foreign and defence ministry representatives has been launched. The basis for UK-Sweden defence cooperation is the Statement of Intent signed in 2014. The Statement of Intent was updated with a list of activities for the period 2022–2023 comprising 44 activities. Examples of these activities include policy dialogue and cooperation in areas such as exercise activities, international operations, research and development, bilateral defence industry cooperation and doctrine development.

The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) is also an important platform for cooperation. The JEF is a UK-led coalition comprising – in addition to Sweden – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway. The JEF can be used across the full spectrum of military activity, but is particularly focused on our neighbourhood. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the JEF has intensified its dialogue and conducted several exercises in the Baltic Sea.

4.5 France

Sweden's defence cooperation with France has deepened in recent years. Close cooperation in the Sahel, not least in the Task Force Takuba in Mali and the Coalition for the Sahel, has been valuable for the French-Swedish security and defence relationship. Sweden and France cooperate in the development of the EU's common foreign and security policy, including the implementation of the Strategic Compass.

Sweden also takes part in the French-led European Intervention Initiative (EI2) defence cooperation. The aim of the cooperation is to develop a common strategic culture and thereby strengthen Europe's capability to act in crisis management operations.

4.6 Other cooperation

Sweden also maintains defence and security cooperation with other countries in Europe, including Germany and Poland. Cooperation with these countries includes a political dialogue and cooperation at military level, for example through exercise activities, information exchange, staff talks and international efforts.

4.7 European Union

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. Close European security and defence policy cooperation has helped to build common security and contributed to the more efficient use of resources within the EU as a whole.

Since the invasion of Ukraine, the EU's influence has become more obvious. The EU's key role in the transatlantic community has been consolidated. Cooperation with strategic partners is essential and has become even more important since Russia's aggression. This applies both to bilateral partners such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Norway, and to cooperation with NATO.

The strength of the EU's extensive toolbox – from economic and diplomatic instruments to civilian and military crisis management – has been demonstrated. The EU's Strategic Compass, which sets the direction of EU security and defence policy cooperation over the next five to ten years, was approved in March 2022. The Strategic Compass, which is complementary to NATO, will make the EU stronger and more capable in the security and defence area, and contribute to global and transatlantic security. The Compass also includes wording about the EU strengthening its cooperation with various bilateral, regional and multilateral defence initiatives.

The EU will probably become a more prominent geopolitical actor and Sweden has reason to welcome this development.

Cohesion, cooperation, solidarity and integration in the EU need to be preserved.

Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) has received renewed attention. If invoked, it obliges EU Member States to aid and assist one another in the event of an armed aggression, but it is not a collective defence obligation. As set out in Article 4(2) TEU, matters of national security and defence are fundamentally the responsibility of each Member State. Sweden has emphasised that the credibility of Article 42(7) needs to be ensured. This applies, not least, in relation to different types of hybrid threats to Member States.

There is nothing in the Article itself that precludes a shift towards collective defence; rather, the limitations lie in the way the Article is applied in practice and the fact that for the 21 allied Member States, and the militarily non-aligned Member States, it is NATO that is responsible for collective defence. Nor have the militarily non-aligned Member States wanted to build parallel structures within the EU.

There is no political will among the EU Member States to change this state of affairs; nor do the EU Member States on their own have the military capability required in this context. It can therefore be concluded that the conditions for a shift towards collective defence within the EU are lacking.

4.8 United Nations

The United Nations (UN) plays a central role in the multilateral, rules-based international order. The principles and rules of intergovernmental cooperation set out in the UN Charter form the basis of the global collective security system.

The UN's ability to act to resolve crises affecting permanent members of the Security Council is limited by the right of veto, which has been evident following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sweden has a tradition of supporting the UN and has reason to continue to be active in all areas of the UN's work, such as peace and security, development cooperation and human rights.

The UN and NATO cooperate on peacekeeping operations, training, mine clearance, the fight against terrorism and in the area

of women, peace and security. In a Joint Declaration in 2018, the two organisations set out plans for their joint efforts in these and other areas. The UN Security Council has given a mandate for NATO crisis management operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya, as well as the NATO Training Mission in Iraq.

4.9 Partnership with NATO

The foundation for Sweden's partnership with NATO is Sweden's status as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP), which is a framework for an individually designed partnership that focuses on political dialogue, training and exercises, and information exchange.

Cooperation with NATO is key to developing the capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces, both for national defence and for operations in our neighbourhood and beyond. Among the different forms of international defence cooperation, it is primarily our cooperation with NATO that contributes to the development of the Swedish Armed Forces' ability to respond to a qualified opponent and to cooperate with other states to counter an armed attack. NATO exercises held in Europe contribute to stability, and the Swedish Armed Forces' participation in NATO exercise activities sends an important security policy signal.

Sweden's cooperation with NATO, especially through crisis management operations and exercises, has contributed to strengthening the ability to provide and receive military support in accordance with our security doctrine. The 2016 agreement between NATO and Sweden on host country support has simplified and created additional conditions for this.

Following Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, NATO's cooperation with Sweden and Finland has deepened, for example through joint assessments of the security situation in the Baltic Sea and closer practical cooperation.

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and within the framework of their partnerships, Sweden, Finland and NATO activated Modalities for Strengthened Interaction (MSI), which has intensified information exchange and coordination of activities and strategic communications linked to the current crisis.

Sweden has strengthened its relationship with NATO's military headquarters and staffs. However, the same starting point applies for MSI cooperation as for the other partnership; that is, Sweden does not participate in decision-making and is not covered by the collective defence obligations.

5 Possibilities for, and limitations of, Sweden's current security and defence cooperation frameworks

Global developments require an active, broad-based and responsible foreign and security policy. Challenges and threats should, as far as possible, be met in cooperation with other countries and organisations. Political, diplomatic and international dialogue contributes to Sweden's security and national interests.

The significant deterioration of the security environment has highlighted the importance of continuing to deepen Sweden's defence and security cooperation frameworks. Cooperation with the Nordic countries and other partner countries with engagement in the Baltic Sea region is especially important. However, a common feature of Sweden's bilateral and regional defence cooperation frameworks is that they do not entail mutually binding defence obligations.

Sweden and Finland continue to deepen their cooperation, for example, through an agreement on host nation support. They are also looking into the possibility of expanding their cooperation to comprise joint or coordinated peacetime operations, such as territorial surveillance and measures to preserve territorial integrity. However, as noted in the Finnish Government report on changes in the security environment, proceeding to a possible Swedish-Finnish defence alliance would not be comparable to or be able to replace NATO membership.

Sweden welcomes the development of the EU's civil and military crisis management capacity, as well as the cooperation to strengthen resilience and capability development in the Member States, in line

with the objectives of the Strategic Compass adopted in 2022. At the same time, the lack of political will to establish a collective defence arrangement and the Member States' limited military capability within the framework of the EU mean that the necessary conditions are not in place to enable defence obligations to be provided within the EU.

Regardless of security policy starting points, several European countries have driven the development of multilateral cooperation formats with increased intensity in recent years; these include NORDEFCO, the JEF, EI2 and the Framework Nation Concept (FNC). Cooperation contributes to security in Europe and strengthens Sweden's relations with leading players, i.e. the United Kingdom, France and Germany. For NATO Allies, these cooperation formats are complementary to NATO membership.

Possibilities for closer cooperation, including planning for situations outside of peacetime conditions, are basically limited, as Sweden does not commit to mutual defence obligations. NATO member countries' possibilities for joint planning with Sweden are limited by where the threshold lies for mutual defence obligations.

NATO members will not allow NATO to rely on a non-Ally in order to resolve issues within the scope of the collective defence obligations. Nor will NATO permit these obligations to be extended to a non-member state. Ultimately, this is to avoid undermining confidence in the organisation's collective defence commitments, which would not be in Sweden's interests either. Sweden's defence cooperation frameworks have a limited deterrent effect, as they do not contain mutual defence obligations.

Article 5 has always been intended to defend Allies only. The United States and other Allies' policy of issuing security guarantees to NATO members only has been reiterated during the war in Ukraine. Therefore, no individual NATO country has intervened militarily in Ukraine. It has been emphasised that NATO's collective deterrence and defence guarantees do not include a partner dimension.

6 Perspectives on potential Swedish NATO membership

6.1 Collective defence guarantees

For Sweden, the primary effect of NATO membership would be that Sweden would become part of NATO's collective security and be covered by the security guarantees enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Russia (or the Soviet Union) has never attacked a NATO Ally, but it has recently attacked non-NATO countries. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the measures NATO has taken highlight the distinction between the countries that are covered by NATO's defence guarantees and those that are not. The importance of being covered by guarantees has increased as Russia has shown its readiness to carry out a large-scale military attack on a neighbouring country.

As a NATO member, Sweden would be obliged to consider an armed attack on an Ally as an attack on Sweden, and to assist that Ally by taking such action as it deems necessary, including military, should a situation in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter arise.

NATO takes decisions by consensus and, if Article 5 is invoked, each individual member country reserves the right to determine the form of assistance to provide to other Allies. Sweden would be expected to contribute to NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Like all Allies, Sweden would be expected to contribute in a spirit of solidarity to operations to defend individual NATO countries. Given its strategic geographical location, Sweden would primarily contribute to NATO through defence of Swedish territory and its neighbourhood. Swedish NATO membership would raise the

threshold for military conflicts and thus have a deterrent effect in northern Europe.

If both Sweden and Finland were NATO members, all Nordic and Baltic countries would be covered by collective defence guarantees. The current uncertainty as to what form collective action would take if a security crisis or armed attack occurred would decrease. From a security perspective, the Baltic Sea region and the Cap of the North constitute a single area, and, as members, Sweden and Finland would be fully involved in NATO defence planning for that area. Through NATO membership, Sweden would not only strengthen its own security, but also contribute to the security of like-minded countries.

As a partner, Sweden has had long-standing cooperation with NATO within the framework of NATO's operational planning. Membership would substantially improve the conditions for integrated defence planning. NATO has a command structure with a unique capability to lead large-scale and demanding military operations. The integrated command structure enables the Allies to operate together more effectively and swiftly than what would otherwise be possible. NATO also provides an infrastructure that incorporates air surveillance and defence and advanced logistics cooperation.

The United States is the most important actor for security in Europe. The United States has made clear that European countries outside NATO do not receive bilateral defence guarantees. Regardless of administration, the United States has pushed for European countries to assume greater responsibility for their own security. Even if Sweden does not receive formal guarantees or become a NATO member, the United States is important for Sweden's defence.

Swedish NATO membership would make Sweden – as a member of a multilateral organisation with formal collective commitments – less dependent on its bilateral, and in this context, non-formalised relationship with the United States. NATO membership would mean that Sweden would receive collective defence guarantees from NATO's member countries under the North Atlantic Treaty.

NATO membership also entails committing to the organisation's nuclear doctrine and strategic deterrence policy. At the same time, NATO decisions are taken by consensus, and every member has the right to take a position on decisions concerning the

deployment or use of nuclear weapons on its own territory as, for example, Denmark, Lithuania, Norway and Spain have done. NATO has stated that the Alliance will work to reduce strategic risk as long as nuclear weapons exist.

A number of NATO countries are committed to disarmament and non-proliferation. Whether or not Sweden joins NATO, Sweden's engagement for disarmament could continue, and Sweden could continue to emphasise all obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the need for concrete progress towards full implementation of Article VI, with the ultimate goal being the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

6.2 Military-strategic considerations

Due to military-strategic and military-geographical factors, Sweden would inevitably be involved if a military conflict arose in northern Europe. NATO would expect support and collaboration, based on Sweden's partnership and Modalities for Strengthened Interaction (MSI) that were activated in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Similarly, Russia's defence and security structures essentially include Sweden in NATO's sphere. Russia assumes that Sweden will cooperate with NATO on a deep and broad basis if a crisis or war involving both Sweden and NATO countries arose (or only NATO countries in Sweden's neighbourhood). On the other hand, Sweden would lack the defence guarantees that NATO membership provides, which would potentially be associated with a low risk for Russia if it took unilateral action against Swedish territory early in a conflict, for example by attempting to take control of Gotland. The national, security-heightening effect that Finland would seek through NATO membership would be enhanced if Sweden also became a member.

Finland is Sweden's closest security and defence partner and our neighbour. If Finland chose to apply for NATO membership but Sweden did not, Sweden's security situation would be adversely impacted. Sweden would be the only non-NATO country in the Nordic and Baltic regions and would therefore be of military

strategic interest to Russia if a conflict arose. Our military and security vulnerabilities and exposure would increase.

A crisis or war situation in Sweden would then entail a number of uncertainty factors, such as how long it would take for Sweden to receive support and the form and scope of such support.

In a security crisis, support depends on further security developments and engagement and decision-making in other countries and organisations. Support also depends on available resources, transport times and infrastructure capacity. These and other limiting factors mean that it may take a relatively long time for the necessary decisions to be taken on international support and before this can reach Sweden to any substantial extent.

Sweden would therefore need to have greater military capability to defend itself and assert its territorial integrity without NATO support. This would require major investments and, in addition to the announced two per cent of GDP, an increased defence budget for years to come.

6.3 Development of existing defence cooperation if Sweden joined NATO

If both Sweden and Finland became NATO members, their bilateral cooperation would also develop within the framework of NATO, where bilateral operational planning for certain situations or specific geographical areas could complement or become part of NATO defence planning. Interoperability with NATO members countries would increase further if Sweden were fully integrated in different NATO structures. Ongoing cooperation would continue, including on air surveillance information exchange, territorial surveillance and the assertion of territorial integrity, but it would need to be adapted – to varying degrees – to new circumstances.

NORDEFECO could be deepened within NATO. This applies to joint planning, capability development and logistics solutions within both NORDEFECO and Nordic trilateral and bilateral cooperation. Nordic-Baltic cooperation could also be deepened and include a greater focus on practical collaboration and joint planning.

Sweden would be able to maintain the same bilateral security cooperation arrangements under the military leadership of Western

countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Sweden's bilateral cooperation with the United States would benefit through greater scope for advancing bilateral defence cooperation. This is especially important, as Sweden has ambitions to, and is interested in, furthering its cooperation with the United States.

Bilateral defence cooperation with leading European countries, such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany could deepen. If Sweden and Finland joined NATO, regional defence cooperation initiatives such as the JEF and EI2 would only comprise NATO countries, which could facilitate coordination and complement NATO's other operations in times of conflict.

All in all, it can be said that Sweden's existing bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation could be enhanced if Sweden joined NATO. Cooperation with countries in Sweden's neighbourhood could serve as a platform for shared responsibility within NATO for the Baltic Sea region and the Cap of the North. Sweden's extensive defence and security policy dialogue and high level of interoperability with other countries in the neighbourhood would contribute to this.

6.4 Russia's views on a Swedish NATO membership

NATO is a defence alliance whose purpose is to defend its members. NATO does not seek confrontation with Russia, nor does it constitute a threat to Russia. In recent years, however, Russia has chosen to increasingly view NATO as a geopolitical competitor and opposes the addition of new members.

Russia would react negatively to a Swedish NATO membership. If Finland joined, the Alliance's direct border with Russia would be significantly longer. This also affects Sweden. For Russia's part, Swedish membership would be described as NATO advancing its position.

Sweden has already taken a position against Russia in the war, including through the provision of weapons to Ukraine, close alignment with NATO through the activation of MSI and through EU-channelled support and sanctions. This also entails the risk of a backlash from Russia.

The assessments of how, and at what stage, Russia could react are influenced at the same time by the current preoccupation of the Russian state apparatus with the war against Ukraine. The most probable Russian course of action involves various types of influence activities. These could be directed against the Swedish general public and specifically against Swedish decision-makers. They could be in the form of threatening statements from Russian representatives, through Russian state-controlled media or on social media platforms, where Russia can attempt to create and exacerbate divisions in the Swedish debate.

Russia could also carry out cyber attacks and other forms of hybrid attacks, violate Swedish air space or territorial sea, or act aggressively in some other way in Sweden's neighbourhood, including strategic signalling with nuclear weapons. Movements of military units or weapons systems in the neighbourhood are also conceivable.

Russia will be weakened militarily by its war of aggression against Ukraine for some time to come. Consequently, Russia's capacity to carry out a conventional military attack against other countries is limited. However, Russia has the capacity to also carry out limited acts of violence against Sweden, such as sabotage by Russian special forces units or operations using long-range weapons.

A country's letter of intent to join NATO is followed by a transition period from the time of submission to the formal accession of the applicant country as a full member. Only then do NATO's collective defence commitments begin to apply. Pressure on Sweden during this transition period could be managed through a host of national measures to protect against potential Russian reactions. It would also be important that Sweden receive security assurances from some Allies during the transition period. Increased exercise activities with international partners and the presence of Allies on Swedish territory and in the neighbourhood would raise the threshold. Therefore, there is a readiness to respond to Russian threats, but it is not possible to eliminate with certainty all the risks of a Russian backlash.

6.5 Impact on Sweden's foreign and security policy

NATO is a key actor for European and transatlantic security. NATO has made a major contribution to international crisis management. As a member, Sweden would participate fully in security policy discussions and decision-making in NATO and the development of NATO as a security policy actor and, at the same time, would be able to stand up for Swedish interests and values. In the current environment, it should be a priority to strengthen Sweden's diplomatic capability to protect Swedish interests and security. Sweden's analytical capacity regarding foreign, security and defence policy should be enhanced.

NATO's working methods are multilateral and create space for diplomacy. With Sweden as a member, security in northern Europe would be higher on the NATO agenda. Sweden would also be part of NATO discussions on its security architecture, including issues concerning arms control and military confidence-building measures in Europe. Diplomatic means are an important part of Sweden's overall deterrence capability.

NATO membership in itself would not affect Sweden's ability to continue to promote the basic values of Swedish foreign and security policy. Membership would be complementary to Sweden's engagement in the EU, the UN and the OSCE. In those organisations and in NATO, Sweden would continue to be able to push for security-related issues based on its own decisions and respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, women's political and economic participation, and the fight against climate change. Sweden would be able to remain a driving force in international efforts for gender equality and the women, peace and security agenda.

NATO membership would mean abandoning Sweden's non-participation in military alliances, as the collective defence commitments under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty are incompatible with non-participation in military alliances. On the other hand, NATO membership would be in line with the solidarity-based security policy that is the basis of Sweden's security policy – that is, that Sweden must build security together with others and therefore be able to both provide and receive support. Sweden would gain greater influence on security and defence issues in Europe.

Participation in and contributions to NATO's international crisis management operations are voluntary. As a partner country, Sweden has also participated in a number of NATO-led operations, including the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, and Kosovo Force (KFOR). As a NATO member, Sweden would also take part in decision-making regarding NATO operations.

It can be noted that developments with respect to human rights and democracy vary among NATO members. This is also a challenge for other international organisations Sweden is a member of, including the UN, the EU and the OSCE.

Russia's actions will determine whether it is possible, together with the EU, to achieve constructive cooperation, regardless of a Swedish NATO membership.

Even as a NATO member, Sweden would be able to maintain its commitment to nuclear disarmament. Norway and Germany exemplify how this is compatible with NATO membership. Germany is one of Sweden's closest partners in the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament, which aims to renew engagement in nuclear disarmament. NATO does not own any nuclear weapons. The nuclear weapons owned by the United States, the United Kingdom and France are national assets. NATO has no right to plan for or use those weapons. Nuclear weapons are a capability under national control, subject to national decisions and processes.

6.6 Costs associated with Swedish NATO membership

At the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, NATO confirmed the stated target that Allies spend a minimum of two per cent of GDP on defence; this is consistent with Sweden's decision. If Sweden joined NATO, it would also need to contribute to NATO's common budget, which includes administrative costs and critical infrastructure. A comparison with other countries indicates that the costs for Sweden would preliminarily amount to approximately SEK 600–700 million per year. The Swedish Government Offices would also have new tasks to manage.

7 Conclusions

Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine is of a nature and scope that Europe has not experienced since the Second World War. Russia's actions give rise to a structural and long-term deterioration of Europe's security environment.

The new security environment entails extensive and lasting consequences for the countries and organisations of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area. The broad consensus against Russia's actions and a common threat perception in the Euro-Atlantic area have enabled a swift, united and resolute response.

The new security environment requires a position to be taken on how best to guarantee Sweden's security. In light of the serious security situation, Sweden's defence capability is being strengthened, and its defence and security partnerships have been deepened. Sweden has underscored the right of all States to make independent security policy choices.

Sweden's current defence and security cooperation creates the conditions for, and has contributed to, a high level of interoperability with strategic partners. It has enhanced the ability to act together in a crisis and ultimately war. It does not include mutually binding defence obligations. Within the framework of current cooperation, there is no guarantee that Sweden would be helped if it were the target of a serious threat or attack.

As stated in Total Defence 2021–2025, it is in Sweden's interests to be perceived as a credible, reliable and solidary partner. This will also apply in the future, and in the formats that the current serious security situation demands.

It is not realistic to develop bilateral defence alliances involving mutual defence guarantees outside existing European and Euro-Atlantic structures. It is clear that there is a lack of political will among EU Member States for collective defence within the EU.

The security crisis has also highlighted the boundaries of NATO's commitments to non-Allies and made clear that Article 5 applies to the defence of Allies only. NATO's collective defence does not include a partner dimension.

Russian provocation and retaliatory measures against Sweden cannot be ruled out during a transition period in connection with a Swedish application for NATO membership. There is a readiness to respond to Russian threats, but it is not possible to eliminate with certainty all the risks of Russian retaliatory measures.

Swedish NATO membership would raise the threshold for military conflicts and thus have a deterrent effect in northern Europe. If both Sweden and Finland were NATO members, all Nordic and Baltic countries would be covered by collective defence guarantees. The current uncertainty as to what form collective action would take if a security crisis or armed attack occurred would decrease.

It is of considerable value that Finland and Sweden continue to act in close cooperation in response to the changed security environment. As the Finnish report states, close cooperation would also be important during possible accession processes.

Statement of opinion – Allan Widman (Liberal Party) and Mikael Oscarsson (Christian Democrats)

As the report makes clear, Sweden's non-participation in military alliances has lacked credibility in Russia's eyes. In terms of security policy, Sweden has been considered as being part of the west.

On the other hand, Sweden has lacked security guarantees outside NATO. Being in such a no-man's land has not provided any security, only vulnerability. Ukraine's fate is, unfortunately, clear proof of this.

For this reason, we cannot conclude that non-participation in military alliances has served Sweden well.

Statement of opinion – Håkan Svnenling (Left Party)

The basic premise of Sweden's defence and security policy must be to safeguard Sweden's security. Sweden's defence and security policy must be based on independent analysis and strategy that aims to create security for Sweden and our citizens.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is unprovoked, illegal and unjustifiable, and entirely in violation of international law. The attack is a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and is causing enormous human suffering to the Ukrainian people. The invasion means that we have a full-scale war in the heart of Europe. This challenges the European security order and makes new demands of the individual nations of Europe. Russia's aggression cannot be tolerated, Ukraine must have international support, and Sweden must strengthen its total defence.

The Left Party endorses the descriptive parts of the ministry communication concerning Russia's actions. We want to continue to see far-reaching sanctions and reduced dependence on Russian gas and oil throughout Europe.

The Left Party has long had a clear policy and view with regard to the negative developments in Russia under Putin's regime. We have frequently observed that Putin's regime in Russia constitutes a security threat. Not least to everyone in Russia who opposes the regime or who does not fit into the society that Putin wants to build. Their own regime poses a daily security threat to Russian LGBTIQ people, feminists, indigenous peoples' representatives, environmentalists and left-wing activists. Russia's imperialist policy also constitutes a direct threat to the people of a number of neighbouring countries, including Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the countries of Central Asia. But also to us and our

neighbouring countries. Naturally, this threat must not be underestimated, and must be counteracted and prevented.

However, we do not endorse the analyses and conclusions drawn in the ministry communication. Sweden's defence and security policy builds on a doctrine whereby our non-participation in military alliances means that we have better prospects of creating security for our population and keeping Swedish territory outside wars. We have maintained Sweden's non-participation in military alliances and our military autonomy specifically so as to be able to take independent decisions in the best interests of Swedish safety and security in just such security situations as we are seeing today.

In September 2016, the inquiry report *Security in a new era – a report on Sweden's international defence and security policy cooperation* (SOU 2016:57) was submitted to the Government. The inquiry was tasked with analysing and reporting on the implications of Sweden's cooperation with other countries and organisations in the area of defence and security policy, today and in the future. The ministry communication we are now considering stands in opposition to the analysis in that report on several crucial points. While security policy may be constantly changing, the principles of NATO as a military alliance remain the same. The same goes for the foundations of the Swedish security policy doctrine.

For the Left Party, the territorial defence of Sweden is of central importance. Our land, waters and airspace must not be violated by other states. For this reason, the Left Party will always support proposals and decisions that increase the protection of Sweden and of Swedish citizens. Sweden must have a strong total defence that enjoys popular support and has the capability to deal with the various types of threat that our country may face – including, ultimately, armed conflict.

Sweden's non-participation in military alliances has served us and our neighbours well, and could continue to do so for a long time to come. Our non-participation in military alliances has helped ensure that generation after generation in Sweden has been able to live in peace. It has also given us unique foreign policy latitude that has meant that Sweden has been able to play an important international role for peace and disarmament – where there has been the political will to do so.

Faced with a full-scale attack by a major power, Sweden cannot be defended through national military defence alone. In that situation, cooperation with countries in our neighbourhood would be critical. Diplomacy and various forms of international cooperation would be necessary. We believe that Sweden is best placed to decide for itself what form this cooperation would take, and with whom. Creating a lasting military alliance with a group of states that are already involved in wars and conflicts that we do not endorse is counterproductive and will lead to increased risks for our country.

Handling the threats we face requires good cooperation with our neighbours, particularly our closest Nordic neighbours, but also the countries around the Baltic Sea. International cooperation must always be based on Sweden taking independent decisions, but also on close contacts and, in some cases, joint planning and exercises with other countries.

The Left Party says no to Sweden joining NATO. Membership of a nuclear alliance would considerably worsen our security situation. We believe it could lead to increased risks to Sweden, and to Sweden becoming involved in the wars and conflicts pursued by NATO. Sweden's security would thus be jeopardised more by membership of NATO than by continued national autonomy. Moreover, allowing the process to proceed with extreme speed, without debate and without securing popular support, in the state of shock that has descended on Europe, is downright irresponsible.

NATO describes itself as both a political and a military alliance. If Sweden applied for NATO membership, it would inevitably mean deferring a large part of our security policy to the United States. The United States has a special status within NATO. Although decisions within the organisation are largely taken by consensus, there can be no doubt that NATO is built on US military capacity. In practical terms, the US has a veto over NATO's actions and can make other countries act in line with its interests within the organisation. The Swedish Defence Research Agency report *Transatlantic doubts* (2021) outlines how NATO member countries strive to maintain close relations – or to create closer relations – with the US. According to the report, in the face of increased uncertainty regarding US engagement for European security under the Trump administration, countries sought to maintain US engagement by

increasing their own engagement and trying to demonstrate their value to the US. This was done through support for US positions on various issues and other more concrete actions, such as increased contributions to US-led anti-terrorism operations.

NATO membership also implies an expectation of various kinds of participation in other countries' wars and operations, particularly those of the US. Although there are no binding clauses in the Washington Treaty, there is an expectation of loyalty. The Swedish Defence Research Agency report outlines, for example, how Denmark has historically "compensated for low defence spending with responsiveness to allied requests for contributions of military capabilities and personnel". At the same time, NATO and NATO member countries have waged three extremely unsuccessful wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya that have substantially contributed to the refugee crisis that the EU is currently failing to handle and to the emergence of the terrorist organisation Daesh/IS. It must also be noted that the political situation in the US is unstable and highly polarised. In combination with the special role that the US occupies in global politics and in NATO, this creates uncertainty.

NATO does not consist only of countries that are closely aligned with us in their view of human rights and democracy. Turkey, Hungary and other countries that have major problems with their view of human rights are members. In the last decade there has been major democratic backsliding in a number of NATO member countries. NATO's second-largest member country, Turkey, is currently pursuing a military offensive in neighbouring Iraq.

The above-mentioned inquiry report SOU 2016:57 noted that Russia would probably respond to any build-up of military capability on Swedish territory with military adjustments with a view to maintaining a perceived balance. This is the direct opposite of the easing of tensions that is so desperately needed. The report also questions the implications for Sweden's national operational capabilities if it were to join NATO. The first line of defence for every member country is its own defence efforts, and NATO membership is thus not a shortcut to solving deficiencies in national capabilities.

The Left Party does not intend to allow another country's military to have permanent operations on our territory, and so foreign bases with non-Swedish jurisdiction will never be an option.

Unilateral declarations, such as those made by Denmark and Norway excluding NATO bases and nuclear weapons, are fragile. A change of political majority in the country could be enough for such an agreement to be cancelled. There is likewise no possibility to verify whether other NATO countries are really conforming to such declarations.

Nuclear weapons are a fundamental part of NATO, and NATO is a nuclear alliance in the sense that US nuclear weapons are the ultimate guarantor of the Allies' security; this is also a conclusion of the inquiry report SOU 2016:57. Joining NATO means committing to the organisation's nuclear doctrine. The tense relations between Russia and NATO risk contributing to increased faith in the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, with rearmament and a balance of terror as a result.

In its 2021 Yearbook, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) observes that although the number of nuclear warheads in the world is declining slightly, all states that possess nuclear weapons continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals. That the US and Russia – who between them hold 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons – are continuing to modernise their warheads creates insecurity elsewhere. In early 2021, both countries were estimated to have around 50 more nuclear warheads deployed with operational forces than a year earlier. But the UK and France also possess nuclear weapons. In early 2021, the UK reversed its previous policy of reducing the country's nuclear arsenal and instead increased the nuclear weapon inventory ceiling.

The ministry communication addresses this issue in sweeping terms, and claims that regardless of NATO membership, Sweden would be able to pursue the issue of nuclear disarmament. However, the fact that Sweden has still not ratified the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons following pressure specifically from NATO proves the opposite. Naturally, it will be considerably more difficult to pursue nuclear disarmament issues as a country that is a member of a military alliance whose very pillars are based on the possibility of using nuclear weapons. The inquiry report SOU 2016:57 also observes that “being a member of NATO would probably make it difficult to pursue the idea of an international ban on nuclear weapons”. As long as major powers and defence alliances

base their security policy on nuclear deterrence, humanity is threatened with total devastation.

In 2017, Sweden participated in the negotiations on the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). When the voting took place, Sweden chose to vote in favour, albeit explaining its vote with reservations relating to shortcomings that Sweden perceived in the design of the TPNW. Sweden has announced that we intend to attend the meeting of the states parties (i.e. the states that have signed the TPNW) in Vienna later this year as an observer. The Left Party considers that Sweden should pursue its demands for clarification as part of its role as observer. We believe that Sweden should reserve the right to join the TPNW and to not endorse NATO's statements criticising the TPNW.

Sweden must never be involved in planning, preparations or exercises for the use of nuclear weapons. To make this line clear, Sweden should legislate against nuclear weapons on Swedish territory in both peacetime and wartime, as Finland, Lithuania and Spain have done for their respective territories. Sweden should also sign the TPNW so as to remain one of the countries that most strongly advocates for a world free of nuclear weapons.

To reduce the risk of a nuclear war in our vicinity, in negotiations with others Sweden should press for nuclear-free zones in our neighbourhood. These should include the Nordic region, the Arctic region, the Baltic region, the EU and Europe, to serve as a risk-reduction measure.

It is important that Sweden does not support the use of nuclear weapons. For this reason, the Left Party considers that Sweden must never participate in exercises that include the use of nuclear weapons, such as SNOWCAT. Furthermore, we consider that if Sweden joins NATO, like France it should not participate in the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). We believe that Sweden must reserve the right not to support NATO's statements regarding nuclear weapons, and should actively use footnotes to emphasise its rejection of nuclear weapons in all forms of cooperation with NATO.

Norrbottnen and Västerbottnen are in the Arctic region, and the Arctic must be considered our country's immediate neighbourhood. Security policy conflicts in the Arctic will thus have a direct impact on our country. If Sweden joins NATO, the Arctic can no longer be

considered an area of low tensions. Northern Sweden would instead become a natural area for exercises for other states, which in the longer term would lead to an increased risk of conflict in the north.

Åland has historically had a special status with regard to any military presence. Under a provision of the 1856 Treaty of Paris, Åland was demilitarised and later neutralised. Sweden must stand up for a demilitarised and neutral Åland and make this clear to the world. The ministry communication does not mention that Åland is a demilitarised zone. The Left Party considers that it is important to make it clear – not least to the world – that Åland must maintain its status as a demilitarised zone.

Finland would prefer not take part in the Swedish discussions on NATO. The Inquiry on Sweden's defence and security policy cooperation concluded that an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of Swedish membership of NATO in relation to Finland should be made from an overall regional perspective and not with respect to Finland alone. That is the opposite of what is happening now. Sweden's relations with NATO have historically stood in relation to Finland's actions. This was intended to avoid Finland being caught between the western and eastern blocs during the Cold War and this in turn leading to the Soviet Union forcing Finland into closer military cooperation. It would be entirely unfounded to claim that the reverse would be true, either then or now. Sweden must take its security policy decisions independently, based on what most benefits security in our country and our neighbourhood.

The question of whether Sweden should apply for membership of NATO is a fundamental one in terms of our country's security. The inquiry report SOU 2016:57 observes that "joining an alliance – like membership of the EU – would in a sense restrict Sweden's political and diplomatic room for manoeuvre. Belonging to an alliance would be a new element in Swedish foreign policy and an additional dimension to take account of in the ongoing design of that policy." It is not reasonable for a question of the same magnitude as membership of the EU or the EMU to be rushed through without popular support or public debate. The Left Party has proposed holding a referendum. Unfortunately, the report does not consider the Swedish people's support for or against membership of this nuclear alliance at all.

The report mentions several of the bilateral military cooperation arrangements in which Sweden is engaged. These include the French-led Task Force Takuba, the Joint Expeditionary Force, and the trilateral cooperation between Sweden, Finland and the US. The Left Party says no to military cooperation that jeopardises our non-participation in military alliances. For further reading, see our motion to the Riksdag in response to Govt Communication 2020/21:56 International defence cooperation (motion 2020/21:3814).

Statement of opinion – Elisabeth Falkhaven (Green Party)

The Green Party mainly supports the report produced by the security policy analysis group. We share the analysis made in the report regarding the deterioration of the security environment due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in violation of international law, and also the consequences that it has had, and will continue to have, for security policy in Europe and, of course, Sweden.

However, the Green Party has drawn different conclusions regarding NATO membership than those contained in the communication. Many formulations in the analysis imply a clear position that NATO membership would best serve Sweden's security, but we do not share those conclusions.

The Green Party is, and will always be, a driving force for Sweden to take preventive action to maintain democracy and peace, and to work for a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that this is best done without joining NATO and we want Sweden to continue to be able to choose our own partners in security policy matters.

Joining NATO would mean that Sweden agrees to use nuclear weapons as a threat, as part of a defence strategy. This would make actively working for nuclear disarmament – while our defence is based on nuclear weapons – much more difficult.

Membership of NATO could also affect Sweden's ability to continue to promote our fundamental values, such as democracy and human rights, in Swedish foreign and security policy. We would no longer operate from a militarily non-aligned platform, but from a completely different platform as a NATO member country, and Sweden's role as mediator in certain contexts would probably be called into question.

We are also concerned about the democratic backsliding we see in a number of countries today, including countries that are members of NATO. Fundamental human rights are also increasingly being challenged. This is a worrying trend that must be reversed. The feminist foreign and development policy that Sweden has as a tool in its preventive work for peace could be called into question.

Finally, the Green Party believes that such a decisive decision needs to be preceded by a deeper analysis with longer and broader democratic support, whereby the Swedish people have also had the opportunity to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of membership through social debate during the election campaign, and then express their opinions when we all go to the polls in a few months' time.

Should an application be submitted, the Green Party also wants to make it clear that we believe it to be of great importance that Sweden continues to pursue nuclear disarmament and work for peace, even as a member of NATO.

As part of this work, we want the following points to be included in the deliberations and included in the agreement that NATO will conclude with the nation of Sweden.

- Sweden must not participate in training exercises that include training in the use of nuclear weapons.
- Sweden does not intend to participate in the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG).
- Sweden must reserve the right to not support NATO statements on nuclear weapons and must actively emphasise rejection of nuclear weapons.
- Sweden should introduce legislation against the introduction of nuclear weapons onto Swedish territory, or otherwise clearly express that nuclear weapons may not be placed on Swedish land or brought into Swedish territory.
- Sweden must increase its efforts for nuclear disarmament and accede to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons before submitting an application for membership of NATO.