



Press conference in light of Russia's illegal annexation of additional regions in Ukraine

On 30 September, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson held a press conference in light of Russia's illegal annexation of a further four Ukrainian regions. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist also took part.

“Illegal annexation has no legal force. Like Crimea, these four regions therefore remain within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders. Sweden condemns Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms,” said Ms Andersson.

An eighth package of sanctions is now being prepared at EU level. Sweden and the EU will continue to provide financial, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine for as long as is necessary. Russia's decision to annex additional areas will also be the focus of next week's informal meeting of the European Council.

Ms Linde announced that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will summon Russia's Ambassador to formally convey Sweden's strong condemnation.

The current caretaker government has full powers to act for the security of Sweden and the Swedish people until the new government takes office. Sweden always has a functioning government in place.



Likely deliberate act behind leaks in Nord Stream 1 and 2 Baltic Sea gas pipelines

On Tuesday 27 September, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist outlined the Government's views on the explosions that have caused leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea.

The Government considers that a deliberate act is behind the explosions, and takes a serious view of the incident given the security situation. Ms Andersson stated that Sweden is in close contact with Denmark and Germany in particular, but also with the EU, NATO, Norway, Finland and the United States.

“I will be convening the Government's security policy council, and the relevant Swedish authorities are taking all necessary measures. The Swedish Police Authority has also launched a preliminary investigation into possible sabotage. At the same time, I would like to emphasise that this is not an attack on Sweden. The explosions did not take place on Swedish territory, but rather in our economic zone,” Ms Andersson said.

The Prime Minister also urged the Swedish people to be vigilant, to seek information from credible sources and not to spread information about Swedish Armed Forces activities. The current caretaker government has full powers to act for the security of Sweden and the Swedish people until the new government takes office. Sweden always has a functioning government in place.



Control of Baltic Sea in focus during defence ministers' meeting on Gotland

Security around the Baltic Sea and enhanced defence cooperation were on the agenda when Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met his Nordic and Baltic colleagues on Gotland.

In view of the security situation in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mr Hultqvist invited the Nordic and Baltic defence ministers to a day-long meeting at the Gotland Regiment base on 2 September.

Mr Hultqvist stated that there are an average of 3 000–4 000 vessel movements in the Baltic Sea every day and that Sweden's and Finland's future membership of NATO will change the conditions for control of the Baltic Sea.

“If all the countries around the Baltic Sea, except Russia, are members of NATO, they will be in a strong position to control the sea and air routes,” said Mr Hultqvist after the meeting.

During their meeting, the defence ministers discussed how their countries could strengthen defence cooperation to jointly meet common future threats. They focused on Gotland's strategic position and the enhanced defence cooperation that will be made possible after Sweden and Finland become members of NATO.

“The countries represented here today are prepared to increase their defence cooperation in order to contribute to security in the Baltic Sea as well as in the rest of Europe,” said Mr Hultqvist.



EU defence ministers in agreement on continued support to Ukraine

On 30 August, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in an informal meeting of EU defence ministers in Prague, Czechia. The meeting focused on continued support to Ukraine.

The agenda included discussions on the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continued support from EU countries. Ukraine's Minister for Defence Oleksii Reznikov joined the meeting via videoconference and described the country's continued needs. During the meeting, it was noted that there is strong political support for the EU to continue developing a common military training initiative for Ukrainian citizens.

“The EU must continue to unite in support of Ukraine and closely cooperate with partners such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Sweden has taken a positive view of establishing a training initiative within the EU, so it is very good and important to further develop these efforts as part of long-term support to Ukraine,” said Mr Hultqvist following the meeting.

Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and representatives of NATO took part in some of the sessions. At the meeting, the EU defence ministers also discussed defence industry issues.

As part of the preparations leading up to Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the EU, Mr Hultqvist met with Czechia's Minister of Defence Jana Černočová and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell.



Strengthened Nordic defence cooperation in focus at ministerial meeting in Finland

On Thursday 25 August, the defence ministers of Sweden, Finland and Norway met at Gustaf Mannerheim's hunting lodge in southern Finland. During the day, they discussed Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation and cooperation between Sweden, Norway and Finland.

Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation has intensified over time and, in June 2022, the countries signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on host country support. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Finnish Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen stated at the meeting that bilateral defence cooperation will remain a high priority.

“The very close cooperation we already have with Finland will contribute to a stronger NATO, stronger Nordic defence cooperation and increased security in the Baltic Sea region and the Arctic. It is quite clear that the level and scope of bilateral defence cooperation is a major advantage now that we are to become members of NATO at the same time,” said Mr Hultqvist.

Together with the Norwegian defence minister, they discussed developments in the trilateral cooperation constellation between Sweden, Norway and Finland and how cooperation has developed since the Joint Statement of Intent was signed in 2020. They also discussed the conditions for cooperation in the event of Swedish and Finnish membership of NATO.

“The Cap of the North and neighbouring areas are strategically important for the defence of our countries in the event of a crisis or war. Strengthened cooperation between Sweden, Norway and Finland has thus become all the more important. The international cooperation we have successfully pursued

in recent years has generated a wealth of experience and progress that we will now be able to build on,” said Mr Hultqvist after the meeting, which took place in Gustaf Mannerheim’s hunting lodge in Loppi in southern Finland.

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Enhanced defence cooperation between Denmark, Norway and Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Denmark's Minister of Defence Morten Bødskov and Norway's Minister of Defence Bjørn Arild Gram met on 8 August in Malmö. They discussed enhanced cooperation between the three countries to contribute to security and stability in the Baltic Sea region.

The security situation in the region has deteriorated considerably in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

“We need to be prepared and equipped to act together in times of peace, crisis and conflict. Strengthened cooperation between Sweden, Denmark and Norway is important,” says Mr Hultqvist.

In September 2021, Denmark, Norway and Sweden signed a trilateral Statement of Intent on enhanced operational defence cooperation.

In April 2022, the Government decided that the Swedish Armed Forces and their Danish and Norwegian counterparts would establish a military coordination group for this purpose.

When Mr Hultqvist met his Danish and Norwegian colleagues in Malmö, they discussed how to further enhance this cooperation and what Swedish NATO membership may involve.

“The ability to conduct co-ordinated military operations gives us an opportunity to control the southern Baltic Sea, the Baltic Sea inlet and the North Sea, and take responsibility in a crisis. This ability is a vital common interest for Denmark, Norway and Sweden,” says Mr Hultqvist.

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Joint Expeditionary Force increases its presence in Sweden and Finland

A number of exercises within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) will be held in Sweden and Finland in the coming months, following the two countries' applications for NATO membership. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended a JEF exercise at Skaraborg Air Force Wing (F 7) in Såtenäs on 5 July.

When Mr Hultqvist visited F 7, the exercise was already in full swing. The Swedish and British air forces participated with JAS 39 Gripen and Eurofighter Typhoon fighter planes, conducting combat training based on various scenarios.

This exercise and a number of additional planned JEF exercises in the coming months follow the decision by the defence ministers of the JEF partner nations at their meeting in June to increase JEF presence in the Baltic Sea region while Sweden and Finland wait to become NATO members.

“The JEF contributes to regional security and stability. Joint exercises conducted by the JEF nations, like the one here in Såtenäs, strengthen our ability to operate together in response to a crisis in our neighbourhood. This is particularly important in today’s challenging security environment,” says Mr Hultqvist.



JEF partner nations express support for Sweden's and Finland's NATO applications

Russia's war against Ukraine and its consequences were on the agenda when the defence ministers of the ten Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) partner nations met in Oslo on 14–15 June. Sweden was represented by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

At the meeting in Oslo, the ministers discussed the impact of the war on the security situation in northern Europe and Sweden's and Finland's applications for NATO membership.

“The ministers from the other nations expressed strong support for Sweden's and Finland's applications to join NATO. They also promised an increased presence in the Baltic Sea region while Sweden and Finland await a decision on NATO membership,” says Mr Hultqvist.

At the meeting, the ministers also discussed support provided or planned by the JEF partner nations to Ukraine, including in the form of defence materiel. They also discussed cooperation over the previous year and future activities within the JEF.

Published 15 June 2022



Sweden and Finland enhance defence cooperation

At a meeting in Reykjavik on 7 June, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding on host country support. The memorandum of understanding enhances the capacity of the two countries to act together in times of peace, crisis and war.

At a defence ministers meeting in Iceland on 7–8 June, the two defence ministers signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding on host country support. It further enhances bilateral defence and security cooperation between Sweden and Finland. A memorandum of understanding on host country support provides both countries with better conditions to conduct military operations in times of peace, crisis and war.

“With regard to defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland, the aim of host country support is to create better conditions for operating on each other's territory, including within the framework of joint operations. Being able to give and receive military support is therefore central. The memorandum of understanding will improve our capacity to act here and now, but also after we become NATO members,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

A bilateral memorandum of understanding on host country support is a concrete measure to improve Sweden's and Finland's capacity to take responsibility for their common security. Host country support concerns the activities that a host country conducts, under a specific agreement, to support and enable the operations of another state's forces.



Peter Hultqvist in meeting with defence ministers from northern Europe

The defence ministers of the countries participating in the Northern Group defence policy forum met in Reykjavik on 8 June. On the agenda was Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its impact on the security situation in the region.

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist travelled to Reykjavik, Iceland, to participate in the meeting with his ministerial colleagues from the other countries of the Northern Group – the Nordic and Baltic states as well as the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and Germany.

The ministers visited the Keflavik air base and discussed the current situation in Europe following Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

“All countries represented here have been very clear about the threat to the European security order posed by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. All defence ministers here have also expressed strong and clear support for Sweden's and Finland's applications to join NATO,” says Mr Hultqvist.

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Peter Hultqvist took part in Bratislava Forum

On 3 June, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in a panel discussion at the Bratislava Forum security conference. In connection with this, he also had a bilateral meeting with his Slovak counterpart, Jaroslav Nad'.

The Bratislava Forum is organised annually by the GLOBSEC think tank in Slovakia's capital. The panel discussion that Mr Hultqvist took part in on 3 June focused on European security.

“Slovakia and Sweden enjoy very good cooperation bilaterally and also in the EU and other international forums. We share the same values on issues such as the importance of democracy and the rule of law, and we condemn Russia's illegal and brutal war against Ukraine,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The panel discussion was followed by a meeting with Slovak Minister of Defence Jaroslav Nad'. Slovakia is planning to purchase new combat vehicles this autumn, and an evaluation committee of the Slovakian Ministry of Defence has recently recommended purchasing the CV90 vehicle from Swedish Hägglunds.

“I am confident that the CV90 would be a very good solution for Slovakia, and I consider a possible business deal to be a good opportunity to further deepen cooperation between our countries,” says Mr Hultqvist.

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Government Offices of Sweden

US Secretary of Defence expressed strong support for Sweden's NATO application

On 18 May, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met with US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin in Washington DC to discuss Sweden's application for NATO membership and the security environment in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

During their meeting, which took place at the invitation of the Pentagon, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin also discussed Swedish-American bilateral cooperation.

“Sweden and the US have a longstanding defence cooperation and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin expressed strong support for both Sweden's and Finland's application for NATO membership,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Mr Hultqvist travelled to Washington DC on Monday 16 May. The following day, he met with members of the US Congress. In connection with the meeting with Lloyd Austin, M Hultqvist also met with US Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall and US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

Published 18 May 2022



Nordic defence ministers met at Russian border

On 11–12 May, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in a meeting in northern Norway with his counterparts from the other Nordic countries. The defence ministers visited the Norwegian-Russian border and discussed strengthened Nordic cooperation.

The security policy situation in the High North and the rest of Europe has gradually deteriorated and fundamentally changed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February this year. It poses new challenges to NORDEFECO, a Nordic defence cooperation established in 2009.

When the Nordic defence ministers met in Kirkenes in Norway, discussions centred around strengthened cooperation between the Nordic countries.

“In light of today's very serious security situation, solidarity and cooperation between the Nordic countries is essential. Close Nordic cooperation is fundamental for the security of Sweden and the security in our neighbourhood,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Within NORDEFECO, ministerial meetings are held twice a year and focus on further enhanced cooperation and the latest security policy developments. This meeting took place in Kirkenes as Norway holds the chairmanship in 2022. The NORDEFECO chairmanship rotates between member states and Sweden is set to hold the chairmanship in 2022.



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist in Latvia for bilateral meeting with Latvia's defence minister

On 12–13 April, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Latvia's Minister of Defence Artis Pabriks and the Adazi military base. The focus of the visit was Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the importance of Swedish-Latvian defence cooperation.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February changed the security situation in Europe. The Swedish Government's response rests on three pillars: pushing for sanctions against Russia, supporting Ukraine and strengthening Sweden.

The discussions between Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Latvia's Minister of Defence Artis Pabriks centred around Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine. The ministers also discussed bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation. This includes cooperation within the EU, the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, and military exercises and cooperation within the framework of Sweden's partnership with NATO.

“In light of the very serious security situation, cooperation with other countries is essential. Close cooperation between the countries of the Baltic Sea region is fundamental to strengthening security in our neighbourhood,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Importance of joint exercises

Mr Hultqvist and Mr Pabriks also discussed the importance of continued joint military exercises with the countries around the Baltic Sea and visited the Adazi military base together on Wednesday.

“The current situation further highlights the importance of enhancing our bilateral defence cooperation, and joint exercises are an important part of this. It’s more important than ever to conduct joint exercises and demonstrate unity between close partner countries,” says Mr Hultqvist.

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Nordic and Baltic ambassadors in Sweden met with Sweden's Minister for Defence

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed the European security situation. This was the main focus when Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended a meeting at the Lithuanian Embassy in Stockholm on 8 April with ambassadors from the Baltic and Nordic countries.

Lithuania's ambassador hosted the meeting. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist described how the deteriorating security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood has led to new military and civil defence initiatives. He also emphasised the importance of Sweden's defence cooperation with other countries:

“It's important that the Nordic and Baltic countries stand united during this very serious security situation. Our defence and security policy cooperation is well-established and contributes to stability in the Baltic Sea region.”

Sweden collaborates with the Baltic countries in a number of areas. Among other things, Sweden is represented by Swedish staff members at the Baltic Defence College and the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Estonia. Additionally, the Swedish Psychological Defence Agency is a member of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia.

The Nordic and Baltic countries also collaborate closely in the Joint Expeditionary Force, the Nordic Defence Cooperation and within the framework of Sweden's partnership with NATO.



Russia's aggression against Ukraine and EU Strategic Compass discussed at EU defence ministerial meeting

On 21 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended a meeting of EU defence ministers devoted to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In a joint session with the foreign affairs ministers, the EU Strategic Compass was approved.

EU defence and foreign affairs ministers met in a joint session and approved the EU Strategic Compass, which is intended to provide direction and guidance for EU security and defence cooperation over the coming 5–10 years.

“The Strategic Compass strengthens EU security and defence cooperation and helps ensure that Europe can take greater responsibility for its security while also strengthening our cooperation with partners. It sets the direction for the next few years and that is important, particularly in light of Russia's aggression against Ukraine,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The EU Strategic Compass is also expected to be discussed at the European Council meeting on 24-25 March.

Defence minister meeting on Russia's aggression against Ukraine

The EU defence ministers devoted their meeting to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In connection with the meeting, an informal meeting was also held via video link with Ukrainian Minister of Defence Oleksii Reznikov.

“Sweden condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked

aggression against Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a flagrant violation of international law and the European security order,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The Minister for Defence said that the EU has acted in unity and with forceful action during the ongoing crisis, including decisions on the use of the European Peace Facility as an instrument for supplying arms to Ukraine.

Swedish Government action following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February focuses on three areas: pushing for sanctions against Russia, supporting Ukraine and strengthening Sweden.

Published 22 March 2022



Defence appropriation to increase to two per cent of GDP

Sweden's military defence funding is to increase to two per cent of GDP. This was conveyed by Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson at a press briefing with Minister for Finance Mikael Damberg and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Prime Minister said that the Government has a three-track approach in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The first track involves supporting Ukraine and the Ukrainian people by providing financial and humanitarian support, but also support to strengthen Ukraine's resilience. The second track involves the Government, together with other countries, imposing sanctions against the Russian regime, and the third track involves taking measures to strengthen Sweden.

“Tensions are high in our neighbourhood – the situation is worse than for several decades and we need to keep strengthening our defence capabilities,” said Ms Andersson.

Further military defence reinforcements

The Prime Minister noted that Sweden's ongoing military scale-up is the largest since the 1950s, and reinstating national military service is one of the measures.

“Including the current defence resolution, expenditure on defence will have increased by 85 per cent between 2014 and 2025,” said Ms Andersson.

She also stated that there will be further reinforcements. Even before Russia's aggression against Ukraine, following talks with the Defence Commission, Mr Hultqvist had decided to strengthen national defence capabilities in the short term. In addition to this, the Government will decide on additional resources.

“Military defence funding will increase to two per cent of GDP. We will meet this objective as soon as it is practically possible. That is, when it’s possible to translate these increases into strengthened defence capabilities.

“We must also establish stable, long-term and solidarity-based financing for the scale-up that the majority of the Riksdag will support. It must have a stable basis if we’re to have a strong and secure defence,” she concluded.

Published 11 March 2022



Sweden to provide direct support and defence materiel to Ukraine

On Sunday 27 February, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist held a press conference on Sweden's support to Ukraine.

The Government announced at the press conference that it would present proposals for direct support to Ukraine's armed forces totalling SEK 500 million. Sweden plans to provide 5 000 anti-tank weapons of the model 'Pansarskott 86', 5 000 body shields, 5 000 helmets and 135 000 field rations with a total value of SEK 400 million.

"Europe, and even Sweden, now finds itself in an exceptional situation, which means that exceptional decisions must be taken," said Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and continued:

"It is not Swedish practice to send military equipment to conflict zones. The last time Sweden did so to any great extent was when the Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939."

Ms Andersson stated that Sweden's security is best served by Sweden supporting Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russia. The extensive support to Ukraine's armed forces that the Government is moving forward with is taking place in close coordination with other countries.

In addition, Sweden will increase its humanitarian aid to Ukraine by SEK 500 million.

Published 28 February 2022



Focus on the situation in and around Ukraine as Peter Hultqvist took part in NATO's defence ministers meeting

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the meeting of NATO defence ministers in Brussels on 17 February. During the meeting, Mr Hultqvist attended a special session on cooperation between the EU and NATO at which attendees also discussed the situation in and around Ukraine.

Mr Hultqvist, along with Finland's Minister for Defence Antti Kaikkonen and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, took part in the session on cooperation between the EU and NATO.

The main focus of the session was the situation in and around Ukraine and the deteriorating security situation that arose after Russia's military escalation. The ministers, the EU High Representative and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also discussed how the EU and NATO and their members can cooperate further by supporting each other's efforts in managing the deteriorating security situation.

“The situation in and around Ukraine is serious and a clear threat to the European security order. Together with our partners in both Europe and North America, we are working to maintain and defend the European security order, in which cooperation between the EU and NATO is crucial,” says Mr Hultqvist.



Serious security policy situation in focus at informal meeting of EU defence ministers

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the informal meeting of EU defence ministers in Brest, France on 12–13 January. The meeting was dominated by the serious security policy situation, with focus on the situation in and around Ukraine. In addition, the influence of state and non-state actors in areas of operation such as Mali was discussed, along with the continued work on the EU Strategic Compass. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell took part in the meeting. UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix also took part via video link.

The meeting began on 12 January with a general discussion with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix. Both the security situation and the influence of state and non-state actors in areas of operations were discussed. The common view was that the EU and other international actors must take cohesive action to prevent the Wagner group becoming established in Mali. Sweden is deeply concerned about the reports that the Wagner group is conducting operations in Mali.

Security policy situation in Europe

The serious security policy situation in Europe, with focus on the situation in

and around Ukraine and Russia's external actions, as well as the meetings that the US, NATO and the OSCE had with Russia during the week, dominated the informal defence minister meeting.

“Russia's actions threaten the European security order, which is unacceptable. The European security order is not negotiable,” says Mr Hultqvist and continues:

“International law must be respected and complied with. This includes the right of every country to make its own security policy choices. Our strategy is to build security together with others. Today we are a respected partner that helps to deliver security. What we do is our own choice and is based on decisions taken by the Swedish Riksdag. This is how it will remain. On this point there is no room for compromise,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Security and defence issues related to space

Issues related to space were also on the agenda. Sweden supports the continued efforts to produce an EU strategy for space security and defence, and looks forward to moving the process forward during the Swedish Presidency of the EU in spring 2023.

Continued discussion on the EU Strategic Compass

The meeting concluded on 13 January with a joint working lunch at which the defence and foreign ministers discussed the work ahead on the EU Strategic Compass. Sweden welcomes the development of the Strategic Compass to strengthen EU security and defence policy cooperation. Sweden wants to see a strong EU that can take more responsibility for its own security, but also emphasises the importance of cooperation with partners to the EU and maintaining a strong transatlantic link. The Strategic Compass is expected to be adopted in spring 2022.

Published 17 January 2022



New agreement on defence cooperation signed during Ukrainian defence minister's visit to Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist has received Ukraine's Minister of Defence, Oleksii Reznikov, and the two ministers signed a new agreement on defence cooperation between the countries. They discussed a number of urgent issues, including the serious security situation at Ukraine's border with Russia.

During their meeting, the two ministers noted that the recent Russian troop build-up at the border with eastern Ukraine poses a threat to security in Europe and Ukraine's sovereignty.

“We have long observed a gradual Russian build-up of forces and an increased level of activity in the Arctic region, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. Large, complex exercises in which military forces comprising thousands of soldiers are transported great distances are examples of the growing Russian military presence,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The new agreement on bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Ukraine, which replaces an earlier protocol from 2001, includes exchange of information and cooperation in military training.

“Ukraine's people need our solidarity and should be able to determine their future national security policy without interference. Our objective is to create peace and stability together,” says Mr Hultqvist.

During their meeting, Mr Hultqvist and Mr Reznikov also discussed the Belarusian regime's use of migrants as a threat against the EU.

“We take the Belarusian regime’s actions towards Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, and consequently towards the entire EU and Europe, very seriously. The Belarusian regime is using people in a very cynical way to achieve its political objectives and divide Europe.”

In conjunction with his visit to Sweden, Mr Reznikov also met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and representatives of the Riksdag, and visited the 4th Naval Warfare Flotilla and the 1st Marine Regiment at Berga.

Published 15 December 2021



Bilateral talks on regional security and visit in subarctic environment when UK Secretary of State for Defence visited Sweden

Regional security and development of bilateral defence cooperation were among the agenda items when UK Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace visited Sweden. Bilateral talks with Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took place in connection with the visit.

UK-Sweden defence and defence equipment cooperation is extensive and includes bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation. The two countries enjoy a close relationship that in recent years has intensified, not least through a joint Statement of Intent and the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). The JEF is a rapid reaction force made up of northern European nations that can act independently or as part of a UN, NATO or EU operation in the event of a crisis.

“Security and stability in our part of Europe is best built through cooperation with other countries, both in bilateral and multilateral forums. Sweden’s far-reaching cooperation with the UK is an excellent example of this. We cooperate in many different areas ranging from the development of defence equipment to joint military exercises,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Mr Hultqvist and Mr Wallace held bilateral talks in conjunction with Mr Wallace’s visit to Sweden, which included a visit to K4 in Arvidsjaur. They discussed the deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea region, developments in the Arctic, international missions in Mali, the JEF and cooperation on the Future Combat Air System.

“We’ve had a very rewarding meeting and fruitful discussions on the common challenges posed by the security developments in our

neighbourhood. In connection with the visit to K4 in Arvidsjaur, we were also able to demonstrate Sweden's military capabilities in a subarctic environment – capabilities that are unique," says Mr Hultqvist.

During his visit, Mr Wallace also met with representatives of the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish defence industry.

Published 09 December 2021



Strategic Compass on the agenda at the EU Foreign Affairs Council

On 15–16 November, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The Ministers discussed EU training missions and met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at a ministerial lunch. In a joint meeting with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 15 November the first draft of the EU Strategic Compass was discussed.

The defence and foreign affairs ministers held a joint meeting on 15 November to discuss the first draft of the EU Strategic Compass. The Strategic Compass will contribute to specifying the strategic direction of EU security and defence policy cooperation, and Sweden supports developing the early strategic direction of European security and defence cooperation.

EU High Representative Josep Borrell opened the defence ministers' meeting on 16 November by informing the meeting about current security and defence policy issues, work with the Community initiative concerning the restructuring of the fisheries sector, military mobility and future development of EU-coordinated presence at sea, the Coordinate Maritime Presence.

“The prevailing security policy situation around the world underscores the need for a strong EU that contributes to the promotion of peace and security in our part of the world and globally,” says Peter Hultqvist.

EU military training missions were also discussed during the meeting. Sweden takes part in EU military training missions in Mali, Somalia and the Central African Republic, missions which are key in light of the continually challenging security situation in the countries concerned. An EU military training and advisory mission in Ukraine was also discussed – a proposal that Sweden supports.

The defence ministers' meeting, like the foreign ministers' meeting, discussed the serious situation on the EU border with Belarus.

In connection with the ministerial council meeting, a board meeting of the European Defence Agency and a working lunch with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg were held. At the lunch, the ministers discussed EU-NATO cooperation and how the two organisations can collaborate to build social resilience to threats.

Published 18 November 2021



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in Nordic Defence Cooperation meeting in Finland

On 9 November, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) ministerial meeting. The meeting in Kirkkonummi, Finland was hosted by Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen in conjunction with the Finnish NORDEFECO chairmanship in 2021.

Topics discussed during the defence minister meeting included the developments in the regional security situation, continued Nordic cooperation in the defence area, and how the countries can improve conditions for cooperation at all conflict levels.

The Nordic defence ministers also discussed lessons learned and experiences from the situation in Afghanistan, and concluded that the collaboration during the evacuation operation in August had been valuable and effective.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the security of military supplies was another important issue on the agenda. The meeting participants concluded that there is a strong political will for the Nordic countries to do more together to strengthen the security of military supplies.

In connection with the meeting, the defence ministers visited Finland's Coastal Brigade in Upinniemi.

Norway takes over the NORDEFECO chairmanship in 2022.



Peter Hultqvist in bilateral meeting with Australian Minister for Defence

On 8 November, Swedish Minister for Defence met virtually with Australian Minister for Defence Peter Dutton to discuss the security situation in the countries' neighbourhoods and bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Australia.

Sweden and Australia have long-standing and very good bilateral defence relations. They also cooperate in a number of multilateral forums, among other things in the framework of EU–Australia cooperation.

“Peter Dutton and I had fruitful discussions today, especially on our bilateral defence cooperation. We also discussed security developments in our respective neighbourhoods and the impact of the challenges they pose,” said Mr Hultqvist.

Mr Hultqvist also spoke about the security situation in the Baltic Sea region that has deteriorated over time. This situation is one of the main reasons for the new direction of Sweden's total defence, including increased national military capabilities and deepened military cooperation with other countries and organisations.

“There is considerable international interest in the increased national military capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces, and today's meeting was an opportunity for me to detail the work we are doing,” said Mr Hultqvist.



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence

On 21–22 October, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence in Brussels. Mr Hultqvist was invited to a special session on cooperation between NATO and the European Union.

Along with his Finnish counterpart and EU High Representative Josep Borell, Mr Hultqvist took part in a session on common geostrategic challenges. Discussions during this session focused on opportunities for closer cooperation between the EU and NATO in light of the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept and the EU Strategic Compass.

Mr Hultqvist highlighted the importance of transatlantic cooperation and of enhancing cooperation between the EU and NATO on common security challenges.

“The partnership with NATO is an important part of Swedish security and defence policy, and we will continue to deepen it,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 22 October 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Northern Group Ministerial Meeting

On 20 October, Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will participate in a meeting with his colleagues from the other Northern Group countries. The Northern Group is a security and defence policy forum with a focus on northern Europe.

The upcoming meeting will take place in Brussels. Among the items on the agenda are aspects of green defence, the security situation in the Arctic and northern Europe, and future cooperation and priorities.

“The Northern Group is an important forum for Sweden and other countries in our neighbourhood. The regular meetings within the group provide an opportunity to discuss issues of common interest, such as recent developments in our region,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Established in 2010, the Northern Group consists of twelve countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

“The Northern Group complements Sweden's other bi- and multilateral defence cooperations,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 19 October 2021



Lithuania's Minister for National Defence on visit to Sweden

On 8 October, Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist welcomed his Lithuanian counterpart, Arvydas Anušauskas, for a bilateral meeting in Stockholm. The security situation in the Baltic Sea region and further cooperation between Sweden and Lithuania were among the items on the agenda.

The two ministers concluded that the security situation in the Baltic Sea region has deteriorated over time.

“Against this backdrop, the Swedish Government's defence policy since 2015 is intended to increase national defence capability and strengthen international defence cooperation, Swedish-Lithuanian cooperation being one example,” says Mr Hultqvist.

He and Mr Anušauskas discussed Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation as well as other forms of cooperation with a focus on northern Europe, such as the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the Northern Group.

Civil defence in the neighbourhood and coordination of civil and military defence – total defence – were also discussed.

“Sweden and the Baltic states have a long tradition of cooperation and shared views on common security challenges. We value the solidarity between us,” says Mr Hultqvist.

In addition, the two defence ministers discussed recent developments in Afghanistan, Mali and Ukraine as well as defence cooperation within the EU.



Sweden's Minister for Defence addressed Finnish-Swedish defence industry seminar

The long-standing defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland was one of the themes of a defence industry seminar held at the Embassy of Finland in Stockholm. Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist delivered a keynote speech.

Mr Hultqvist's speech, held on 29 September, was part of a two-day seminar with delegates from the Finnish defence and security industry on a visit to Sweden, arranged by the Embassy of Finland in cooperation with Business Finland, Swedish Security & Defence Industry Association (SOFF), and Association of Finnish Defence and Aerospace Industries (AFDA).

“The defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden is unique. The relationship Sweden has with Finland is our most far-reaching and long-standing. I see this conference as an opportunity to further develop our cooperation,” said Mr Hultqvist.

Maimo Henriksson, Ambassador of Finland to Sweden, also addressed the audience at the embassy while Antti Kaikkonen, Finland's Minister of Defence, delivered his speech via video conference.

The theme of Mr Hultqvist's speech was the deteriorated security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood leading to a shift in the Swedish Government's defence policy in 2015, with a focus on strengthening Sweden's defence capabilities. The current policy rests on two pillars: increased national defence capability and increased international defence cooperation, with Sweden's cooperation with Finland being the most significant.

“The two pillars in our relationship are the common geostrategic interests that we have, and our shared views on security challenges,” Mr Hultqvist

highlighted in his speech.

Published 29 September 2021



Minister for Defence visited the Joint Protector 21 exercise

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist today visited Joint Protector 21 in Älvdalen. Sweden is hosting the exercise held within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) defence cooperation.

The JEF is a UK-led quick-response force intended to be able to act independently or as part of a UN, NATO or EU operation in the event of a crisis, with a focus on northern Europe. In addition to the UK and Sweden, the JEF partners are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway.

The Joint Protector 21 exercise is testing the JEF's ability to operate in times of crisis against a sub-threshold threat. The Standing Joint Forces Headquarters are located in the UK in reality, but in the exercise scenario the headquarters have been relocated to Sweden. The aim of the exercise is to explore how the temporarily relocated JEF headquarters can interact with a host nation, and how integration and interoperability of JEF partner nations can be strengthened.

On 25 September, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist participated in the official Joint Protector 21 Visitors Day.

“The exercise is intended to enhance cooperation between the UK and Sweden, and other JEF countries. We are signalling that the JEF has highly capable and interoperable forces. Considering the regional security situation, that's an important message to get across,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Up to 700 personnel from the partnering JEF nations are participating in Joint Protector 21, among them personnel from the Swedish Armed Forces.

“The security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood has deteriorated over time. International defence cooperation contributes to strengthening

Sweden's capabilities to be able to respond to an armed attack. The JEF is a high priority for Sweden, and it complements other forms of cooperation," says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 25 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Letter of Intent concerning The Bilateral Defence Cooperation

Letter of Intent between The Minister for The Armed Forces of The French Republic and The Minister for Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden concerning The Bilateral Defence Cooperation.

Introduction

The Minister for the Armed forces of the French Republic, and The Minister for Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden, hereinafter referred to as the “the Signatories”

Considering that the defence relationship between the Ministry for the Armed forces of the French Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden aims at building a pillar of stability in Northern Europe and beyond;

Recalling that the security situation the two countries are facing is more severe and challenges are more complex than in decades;

Recognising that the French-Swedish defence co-operation promotes stability in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe as a whole and beyond;

Reaffirming their willingness to promote international law and uphold the European security order and a strong and balanced transatlantic link;

Recalling that addressing the global and regional security challenges, requires close defence and military co-operation, particularly in the Sahel, and a strategic partnership between the Ministry for the Armed forces of the French Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden and their respective Armed Forces and Defence Agencies;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Mutual Assistance Clause - Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union;

Desiring to enhance security and bilateral defence co-operation;

The Signatories declare their intention to deepen and increase the practical co-operation between the Ministry for the Armed forces of the French Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden, their respective Armed Forces and other Defence Agencies by building on current co-operative activities and implementing new initiatives to work together more efficiently, reinforce interoperability and develop a common strategic culture in order to deploy alongside each other in military operations.

Objectives

The Signatories intend to develop new axes of bilateral cooperation, complement existing efforts and leverage existing structures, in order to:

- Intensify the strategic dialogue on security and defence issues;
- Develop strategic foresight and information sharing;
- Expand co-operation in the field of research and development;
- Expand co-operation in the field of defence capability development;
- Enhance interoperability between the Armed Forces;
- Improve the ability to conduct combined operations and
- Explore the possibility of co-operating in the fields of countering hybrid threats and grey zone activities in coordination with NATO and the EU.

Means

To achieve those objectives, the Signatories declare their common intention to conduct in particular the following co-operation:

- Regular meetings and information exchange at policy and military level;
- Increased practical co-operation between their respective Armed Forces and other Defence Agencies;
- Participation in education, training and exercises;
- Shaping exercise design to reflect bilateral co-operation priorities;
- Harnessing armament cooperation opportunities provided by the EU defence initiatives such as “Permanent Structured Cooperation” and “European Defence Fund”;
- Co-operation in multinational operations and
- Coordination of strategic communication regarding incidents.

Status

This Letter of Intent does not establish a legally binding commitment under

international or national law.

This Letter of Intent is signed in two (2) copies in the English and French languages.

For The Ministry for The Armed Forces of The French Republic
Florence Parly

For the Ministry for Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden
Peter Hultqvist

Published 24 September 2021



Common security challenges and deepened cooperation in focus at EI2 Defence Ministerial Meeting in Stockholm

Common security challenges and how the cooperation within the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) can be developed even further were some of the agenda items when EI2's thirteen member countries met in Stockholm. Sweden and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist hosted this year's annual meeting.

EI2 is a multilateral defence cooperation body with thirteen member countries. The EI2s focus is to bring European countries together to better prepare for possible future crisis' by forming a shared strategic culture. At the meeting, Ministers for Defence or delegation leaders from the thirteen countries discussed current security issues in Europe and beyond alongside with EI2's future development.

“Today we have discussed and shared views on some of the most pertinent and emerging defence and security challenges, including the situation in Afghanistan, Mali and Mozambique. We also discussed the evolving threat of disinformation and ways to develop our fruitful cooperation within EI2”, said Mr Hultqvist.

The annual meeting in Stockholm brought together the Ministers for Defence or delegation leaders from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

At the margins of the meeting, a bilateral agreement on defence cooperation between Sweden and Portugal was signed.

[The agreement is available here.](#)

Published 24 September 2021



Statement of Intent between the Ministry of National Defence of the Portuguese Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden

Introduction

Europe is facing multiple security policy challenges and geopolitical uncertainty. These complex security challenges can only be managed if we work together.

Portugal and Sweden have a shared interest in upholding the fundamental principles of international law, in preserving the European security order and security in our neighbourhood and in strengthening the transatlantic relationship.

By acting in the spirit of partnership and co-operation through the development of stronger bilateral relations in the field of defence, we can contribute more effectively to meet challenges to international peace and security and strengthen multilateral arrangements.

Aim

We intend to enhance the bilateral dialogue on defence matters, with the aim to increase the understanding and co-operation between us, the Armed Forces and defence agencies and to identify further opportunities for cooperation on defence in the EU and in other multilateral arrangements including in NATO.

Objectives

With the aim to promote our defence cooperation, we intend to strengthen the bilateral dialogue and exchange of information and views in several

areas, which may include, but not be limited to:

- Strategic dialogue on security situation/environment, European security and transatlantic relations;
- National defence policy and military doctrine;
- European Defence Co-operation (including EU Common Security and Defence Policy);
- Multilateral defence co-operation, NATO and other multilateral arrangements;
- Defence Research and technology in areas such as AI and Green Defence;
- Training and exercises;
- International operations (notably cooperation on operations in Africa);
- Gender issues and the role of women in the Armed Forces.

Increased bilateral dialogue in these areas could be carried out through meetings at ministerial level, on the level of defence policy directors and meetings of representatives of military institutions as well as through exchange of experience between our experts in defence areas and other forms of exchange of information.

Status

This Statement of Intent is not a legally binding commitment under international or national law.

The implementation of this document can be reviewed upon request by either of us.

For the Ministry of National Defence of the Portuguese Republic
João Gomes Cravinho

For the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden
Peter Hultqvist

Published 24 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement of Intent on Enhanced Operational Cooperation among the Ministry of Defence of DK, NO, SE

Statement of Intent on Enhanced Operational Cooperation among the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Denmark and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden (hereafter referred to as "the Participants").

Aim

The Nordic Defence Cooperation vision for 2025 was adopted at the Nordic Defence Ministerial meeting in Oslo on the 13th of November 2018. The vision states,

“We will improve our defence capability and cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict. We ensure a close Nordic political and military dialogue on security and defence. Acknowledging our different security affiliations, we pursue an agenda based on joint security perspectives, efficient and cost-effective cooperation to strengthen our national defences and the ability to act together.”

In light of the current security situation, cooperation and unity among likeminded nations is paramount. For this reason, we are determined to take combined measures aiming at enhancing and improving our ability to conduct military operations.

Scope

This trilateral Statement of Intent outlines the common ambition of the

Participants to be able and ready to conduct operations in crisis and conflict if so decided, noting that Denmark and Norway plans to transfer command to NATO in crisis and war as applicable. In order to improve our interoperability and readiness to give military support among us we will undertake the necessary preparations, aimed at enhancing our defence capability and serve as a deterrent from aggression.

Any military action will be subject to separate national political decision-making processes. This trilateral Statement of Intent does not entail any mutual defence obligations.

Finland and Iceland are to be informed on a regular basis as the cooperation proceeds.

Actions (not limited to)

1. Form a trilateral policy steering group with representatives from the ministries of defence.
2. Task the military authorities to form a trilateral military coordination group.
3. Conduct discussions based on common security concerns relevant for on-going and future military operations in the region.
4. Discuss relevant national operations plans among Denmark, Norway and Sweden in areas of common concern and interest, in a reciprocal manner in order to be able to coordinate national operations plans.
5. Conduct exercises and Table Top Discussions, based on the requirements of ongoing planning and existing plans.
6. Explore the possibility of coordinating future national operations planning in areas of common concern.
7. Explore the possibility of common operations planning in certain areas.

The abovementioned actions will focus on areas of common concern and interest, such as the southern parts of Scandinavia (Kattegat, Skagerrak, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Danish straits and other surrounding areas as required) as well as on improving interoperability among our armed forces that enable common military action if decided. Such common military action may include protection of sea lines of communication and air and sea surveillance.

This trilateral Statement of Intent is not a legally binding commitment under national or international law and does not substitute for or invalidate any existing defence agreements, arrangements or memoranda of understanding

among the Participants.

For the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Denmark
Trine Bramsen

For the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway
Frank Bakke-Jensen

For the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Sweden
Peter Hultqvist

Published 24 September 2021



Austrian Minister of Defence Klaudia Tanner visits Sweden

The security policy situation in Europe and bilateral cooperation in the defence materiel area were some of the agenda items when Austrian Minister of Defence Klaudia Tanner visited Sweden on 20 September. Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received Ms Tanner at Karlberg Palace.

Ms Tanner has served as Austria's Minister of Defence since 2020, and her visit to Sweden marks her first in that capacity. During Ms Tanner's visit, a bilateral meeting with Mr Hultqvist was held.

Sweden and Austria enjoy a long tradition of cooperation in the defence area, bilaterally and in the context of the EU. During the meeting, the ministers touched on developments regarding the security policy situation in Europe, EU's military defence and the bilateral cooperation between the two countries with regard to defence materiel.

“Today, Klaudia Tanner and I had very fruitful discussions on our bilateral relations in the defence area. We also discussed the challenges that follow from developments in the security policy situation in our neighbourhood, and how we can further develop our bilateral cooperation in the defence materiel area,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 20 September 2021



Minister for Defence to attend NATO Days in Czech Republic

On 18–19 September, the annual NATO Days and the Czech Air Force Days will be held in Ostrava. For the second time, Sweden will assume the role of Special Partner Nation at NATO Days. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will deliver the opening address at the event and also hold bilateral meetings with the defence ministers from the Czech Republic and, Slovakia.

The role of Special Partner Nation (SPN) allows a selected country to give an extensive presentation of its armed forces and its defence industry. Sweden was SPN at NATO Days in 2015 and is the only country to be selected twice for this role.

“NATO Days in Ostrava is an important format for Sweden. I am proud that Sweden is participating as a Special Partner Nation and contributing substantially in terms of number of participants and capabilities from our armed forces and defence industry. NATO Days is an opportunity for our defence industry to showcase its systems and expertise,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Sweden will participate in the Czech Air Force Days show with the Gripen, Tunnan, Draken and Viggen aircraft. The Swedish self-propelled mortar system GRKPBV90 Mjölner will also be showcased at the event. In addition to representatives of the Swedish Ministry of Defence, representatives of the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Defence Material Administration will also participate in the events in Ostrava.



Government Offices of Sweden

Iceland and Sweden sign Joint Declaration on defence cooperation

Today Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence of Sweden, and Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, signed a Joint Declaration on defence cooperation.

The signing ceremony was held via video conference.

“The Joint Declaration underlines the intent of both parties to strengthen our defence cooperation on matters of mutual interest to better respond to the evolving security environment”, Peter Hultqvist says.

Cooperation areas identified in the declaration include cyber security, resilience against hybrid threats, strategic communications and promoting and developing joint projects to strengthen the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

“There is a strong bond between our two countries, and we share the aim to enhance dialogue and practical cooperation in complementarity to our efforts within NORDEFECO and other multilateral fora”, Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson says.

The ministers also took the opportunity to discuss issues of common interest concerning regional security.

Published 15 September 2021



Peter Hultqvist spoke at seminar on the future of Crimea

On 23 August, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist participated in a panel discussion in Kyiv, Ukraine on the security situation in the Black Sea and the future of Crimea.

Together with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Peter Hultqvist visited Ukraine for the inauguration of the Crimean Platform. The seminar on 23 August was part of the inauguration, in which delegates from more than 40 countries and organisations participated.

At the seminar, the Swedish Minister for Defence discussed the future of Crimea and the security situation in the Black Sea surrounding the peninsula.

“We have to continue to stand up for international law, democracy and be persistent in our long-term support to Ukraine”, Mr Hultqvist said during the panel discussion.

Among other panellists were NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana, Estonian Minister of Defence Kalle Laanet, Ukraine’s former Minister for Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ogrysko, and Oleksiy Danilov from the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine.

The Crimean Platform, inaugurated on Monday in the presence of Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven among others, is aimed at improving the effectiveness of the international response to the ongoing Russian occupation of Crimea. The initiative is put forward by the President of Ukraine and Sweden is one of the countries supporting the platform.



Bilateral meeting with British Minister for Defence Procurement

On 5 August, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met with British Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin in Stockholm. Current security policy issues and deepened Swedish-British defence research, capability and industrial collaboration were on the agenda.

Sweden has extensive defence and defence equipment cooperation with other states. In 2019 Sweden signed an agreement with the UK on joint development of combat aircraft called the Future Combat Air System (FCAS).

Sweden is also a member of the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Focused on northern Europe, the JEF is intended as a quick-response force that can act independently or as part of a UN, NATO or EU operation in the event of a crisis.

“By working together with others, both bilaterally and multilaterally, we are building security and stability in our part of Europe. Sweden’s defence cooperation with the UK has intensified over the past seven years, since the signing of the joint Statement of Intent, and the FCAS is one example of our close cooperation,” says Mr Hultqvist.



Formalisation of Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) defence cooperation

On 30 June–1 July, Sweden’s Minister for Defence met his colleagues from the other member states of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) defence cooperation. During the ministerial meeting in Helsinki, Finland, they officially signed the JEF Policy Direction document, which sets key principles for further cooperation.

JEF is a British-led quick-response force intended to be able to act independently or as part of a UN, NATO or EU operation in the event of a crisis, with a focus on northern Europe.

JEF was initiated by the United Kingdom in 2014 and also comprises Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

During the ministerial meeting on 30 June–1 July, ministers from the JEF member states signed the JEF Policy Direction document, which provides an overarching policy framework for the JEF and sets key principles for cooperation, such as the principal geographic area of interest for the JEF being the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The meeting also included a table-top exercise where the participating ministers were faced with a fictional scenario requiring joint action.



NORDEFECO ministerial meeting in Helsinki

On 29–30 June, the defence ministers of Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, met in Tuusula just north of Helsinki, within the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). The deteriorated regional security situation and further enhanced cooperation was the focus of discussions during the first physical NORDEFECO ministerial meeting since the outbreak of the pandemic.

NORDEFECO forms the structure and format of both defence policy and military cooperation in the areas of capabilities, human resources and education, training and exercises, operations and defence equipment.

The NORDEFECO Chairmanship rotates between the member states. Finland holds the Chairmanship in 2021 and therefore hosted the ministerial meeting on 29–30 June.

NORDEFECO was established in 2009, and the cooperation has gradually expanded. Meetings are held at various levels within the NORDEFECO framework, and ministerial meetings are held twice a year.



Finnish NORDEFECO Chairmanship in 2021

Finland assumed the Chairmanship of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) on 1 January. Finnish priorities include strengthening and improving Nordic cooperation on peace, crises and conflict, as well as continuing work to implement NORDEFECO's Vision 2025.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic shows the importance of being able to consult with the other Nordic countries in connection with different types of crises. On several occasions during 2020, the Nordic defence ministers made use of the crisis consultation and information exchange mechanism that was established the previous year, including to exchange information on the consequences of COVID-19 in the defence area.

The pandemic has also sharpened the focus on issues surrounding society's crisis management capacity, including security of military supplies and the military aspects of total defence. Dialogue on these areas between NORDEFECO and the 'Haga' cooperation will be strengthened during 2021. The Haga cooperation is a form of Nordic cooperation on civil preparedness that was initiated in 2009.

“Close Nordic cooperation strengthens our military defence, and capability to take joint action in times of peace or crisis in our neighbourhood. NORDEFECO is a central platform for security and defence policy dialogue between our countries and has evolved into an effective tool,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Four Finnish priorities

Further steps will be taken in the cooperation during the Finnish Chairmanship in 2021. Four priorities dominate the work during the year:

1. Continued implementation of NORDEFECO's Vision 2025

The vision concerns, for example, improving cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict. In concrete terms during 2021, this will involve advancing a test project in military mobility and investigating opportunities for cooperation, including during crisis and conflict. Scenario-based discussions and exercises will also be held to identify how and where cooperation can be strengthened.

2. Improved cooperation on military aspects of society's crisis management capacity and total defence

For example, strengthened dialogue between the military and civil structures (NORDEFECO and the Haga cooperation).

3. Improved information exchange linked to European instruments

Dialogue and exchange of information between the Nordic countries on the newly established European Defence Fund.

4. Continued cooperation on long-term project management and capability development

During the years 2019–2020, a round of tests were carried out at military level to develop a concept for long-term project management. The purpose of the concept is to improve Nordic military capability development through the exchange of information and coordination between the cooperation areas.

In NORDEFECO, the Nordic countries cooperate in the defence area. The cooperation is conducted at both military and political level and includes cooperation on training and exercises, logistics, international operations and military equipment. The Chairmanship rotates between the countries (except Iceland) and the country holding the Chairmanship is responsible for leading and developing the cooperation in accordance with the targets in Vision 2025, NORDEFECO's long-term political guidance document. Sweden most recently held the Chairmanship in 2019.

In 2021, several meetings will be held at ministerial, state secretary and official level. At military level, a number of projects are underway to improve Nordic cooperation and strengthen military capabilities. A ministerial meeting will be held on 29–30 June in Helsinki.



Mikael Damberg and Peter Hultqvist visited national cyber security centre

Sweden's security, competitiveness and prosperity rest largely on digital foundations. For the Government, it is important that the opportunities of digital transformation are harnessed while the risks are managed. On Wednesday 16 June, Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited the national cyber security centre to see how the new centre is taking shape.

Cyber threats to Sweden and Swedish interests are significant. With the rise of technological development and digital transformation, threats and vulnerabilities are increasing, requiring security to be strengthened.

In December 2020, the Government decided to instruct the National Defence Radio Establishment, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the Swedish Security Service to establish a national cyber security centre.

The cyber security centre's mandate is to:

- coordinate the work to prevent, detect and manage cyber attacks and other IT incidents;
- provide advice and support on threats, vulnerabilities and risks;
- be a national platform for cooperation and information exchange with private and public actors in the cyber security area.

By 2023, the centre will progressively develop in areas including:

- Targeted and coordinated warnings about threats and cyber attacks.
- Coordination of the support to preventive protective measures, for

example cyber security assessments and mapping of operational preparedness in the event of IT incidents.

- Exchange of knowledge, skills and information and cooperation with public and private actors, for example on detection, vulnerabilities, threats, risks, analysis, tools and methods, as well as international cooperation.
- Provision of skills enhancement initiatives, for example exercises and training of identified target groups.
- The overarching objective of the cyber security centre is to strengthen Sweden's overall ability to prevent, detect and manage hostile cyber threats. Cooperation with private and public actors will be a central part of the mandate to strengthen cyber security in society.

“The national cyber security centre will make Sweden safer by increasing the overall ability to respond to cyber threats, reduce vulnerabilities and increase the ability to effectively support public and private actors,” says Mr Damberg.

“With the establishment of the national cyber security centre, an important step has been taken to strengthen the protection of Sweden and Swedish interests against hostile cyber threats. The cyber security centre has come a long way in a short period of time. The Government will cooperate closely with relevant government agencies on the centre's continued development and work,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The cyber security centre is to regularly report to the Government on its activities, and in 2023 the Government will decide on its continued direction.

Published 17 June 2021



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to visit international air exercise in Luleå

On 7–18 June 2021, Denmark, Finland and Norway and Sweden, together with the United States, will host the recurring international air exercise Arctic Challenge Exercise 2021 (ACE 21). It will be the fifth year the exercise is held within the framework of Nordic cooperation. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will visit the exercise in Luleå on 15 June.

The aim of ACE 21 is to strengthen the interoperability and operational capabilities of the participating countries' air forces. The combined Nordic air space offers unique training opportunities for realistic air combat training in a vast flying area, containing several air bases and a firing range.

“Defence cooperation between the Nordic countries strengthens our joint military capabilities and contributes to stability in our part of Europe. The Nordic countries share basic values and security interests. We cooperate in several formats, both bilaterally and multilaterally,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The ACE exercises are held every other year and ACE 21 is a further development of previous exercises. During ACE 19, the exercise reached ‘flag level’ for the first time, which is the highest level of complexity and difficulty that an international air exercise can offer. During ACE 21, the goal is to again reach ‘flag level’. ACE 21 will be conducted from four air bases in three countries: Norrbotten Wing in Luleå, Sweden, Bodö Air Base and Örland Air Base in Norway, and Lapland Air Command in Rovaniemi, Finland.

“ACE 21 is Europe’s largest air exercise held at ‘flag level’ and is a concrete example of Nordic-transatlantic cooperation in the defence area,” says Mr

Hultqvist.

Between 7–18 June, two air exercises will be conducted each weekday. In the mornings, flights will take place in three exercise areas – one in Norway, one in Sweden and one in Finland. In the afternoons, all nations will fly in the unique ACE 21 exercise area in Sweden, Finland and Norway.

Published 15 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Northern Group defence ministers took part in a video conference

The defence ministers of the Northern Group, a security and defence policy forum, took part in a video conference on 9 June. The security situation in northern Europe was the main item on the agenda.

The Northern Group is a forum for discussion on security and defence issues between representatives of the twelve participating countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK).

On 9 June, the defence ministers of the Northern Group took part in a video conference to discuss the regional security situation, as well as aspects of green defence.

“The Northern Group is a strategically important forum for Sweden that contributes to a better understanding of the security situation in our region” says Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Northern Group was launched by the UK in 2010.

Published 09 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Swedish Minister for Defence spoke at Indian-Swedish defence industry seminar

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and his Indian counterpart, Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh, today participated in a digital seminar focusing on defence industry cooperation between India and Sweden. In his speech, Peter Hultqvist stressed the countries' close and long-standing bilateral relations and their growing strategic partnership, not least on defence issues.

Diplomatic relations between India and Sweden date back to 1949 and have been characterised by frequent high-level interactions between their senior officials. It is a partnership that forms a robust platform for expanding relations of mutual benefit.

“The Swedish Government attaches great value to the close and cordial partnership that has developed over many decades between Sweden and India. Through our combined efforts, we can bring solutions to the problems of the future,” Mr Hultqvist said in his speech.

Sweden and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation in 2009. In 2018 Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Löfven decided on a Joint Action Plan and a Joint Innovation Partnership to further advance bilateral cooperation, including in the area of defence. More recently, at the India-Sweden Virtual Summit in March this year, Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Löfven highlighted defence as an important area for enhanced bilateral relations.

“Our interaction here today is crucial for a better understanding of each other's interests in defence and industry policies. Interacting in the defence

domain is not only an important delivery on the Joint Action Plan, it's a way to create real connections and build future cooperation," said Mr Hultqvist.

The seminar on India-Sweden defence industry cooperation was jointly hosted by the Indian Department of Defence Production, the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Swedish Security and Defence Industry Association.

Published 08 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Swedish Minister for Defence highlights deteriorating security situation in Baltic Sea Region in opening speech to NATO Parliamentary Assembly

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly's 2021 Spring Session, hosted by the Swedish Riksdag, opened today with introductory remarks from Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. He emphasised the importance of transatlantic relations to the security of Europe, and how Russia is challenging the European security order.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly's mission is to facilitate understanding of key issues affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. The Parliamentary Assembly holds two sessions each year – in the spring and autumn.

The Swedish Riksdag is hosting the 2021 Spring Session as a virtual event on 14–17 May. In his opening remarks, Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist highlighted the deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea Region.

“We are all witnessing the situation. Russia is intentionally challenging the European security order and breaking international law. Russia's actions in Georgia in 2008, and in Ukraine since 2014, demonstrate its willingness to use military means to achieve its objectives,” said Mr Hultqvist.

He explained that the deteriorating regional security situation has prompted Sweden to strengthen its national defence and international defence cooperation.

“Sweden is not a member of any military alliance, but we work together with others to build security,” said Mr Hultqvist.

“Strong transatlantic relations are critical to Europe’s security. The United States, Canada, and Europe must work together to uphold and defend the European security order.”

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly is a forum for members of parliament from NATO Member Delegations and Associate Delegations. The Swedish Riksdag has been an Associate Delegation since 2003.

Published 14 May 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

High-level panel discussion on European security and the Joint Expeditionary Force with the Swedish Minister for Defence

On 13 May, Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist participated in a panel discussion on the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and European security. The Minister highlighted the importance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to building security and stability in Europe, and underlined the role of JEF in this.

The JEF was initiated by the United Kingdom in 2014. In addition to Sweden, the UK-led JEF now includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway.

A high priority for Sweden

– The Joint Expeditionary Force is a high priority for Sweden as it is a coalition of likeminded partners who share the same view of security challenges in northern Europe. We see that the security situation in our neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. When Moscow shows preparedness to use military force, even if it would violate international law, it inevitably affects us all, said Peter Hultqvist at the digital event arranged by the public policy think tank American Enterprise Institute.

Mr Hultqvist was joined by Artis Pabriks, the Latvian Minister for Defence, Martin Herem, the Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, Nick Carter, the Chief of the Defence Staff at the UK Ministry of Defence, and Mike Turner from the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee.

Complements other forms of cooperation

– By working together with others, both bilaterally and multilaterally, we are building security and stability in our part of Europe. By making it clear that an attack would entail a high cost for the attacker, a stronger defence is a deterrent to those who would wish to attack or exert pressure with military force, Mr Hultqvist continued.

– With the JEF, we are signalling that we are taking responsibility for the security situation in our neighbourhood.

The Swedish Minister for Defence emphasised that the JEF is a quick reaction force, able to respond to sudden crises, which complements other forms of cooperation such as within the EU or NATO.

– JEF can also, when needed, be used as a basis for cooperation with the United States or Canada, said Mr Hultqvist at the event.

The seminar was live-streamed on 13 May.

[A recording is available to view here.](#)

Published 14 May 2021



First bilateral meeting with Estonia's new Minister of Defence

A first meeting has taken place in a digital format between Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and his Estonian counterpart, the new Minister of Defence Kalle Laanet. Among the items on the agenda were the security situation in the neighbourhood and development of the bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Estonia.

Sweden was the first country to open an embassy in Estonia when the country became independent in 1991. The two countries have maintained a close relationship, not least regarding security policy. As the security situation in the Baltic Sea Region has deteriorated in recent years, Swedish-Estonian defence cooperation has further deepened. The two countries have increased their military exercises, for example.

Furthermore, both Sweden and Estonia are part of EU defence cooperation, and both countries participate in international military missions and operations led by the EU and other actors, such as the UN. International missions were also on the agenda of the meeting between Mr Hultqvist and Mr Laanet.

Mr Laanet took office as Estonia's Minister of Defence on 26 January 2021 and is also a member of the Estonian Parliament.



International meeting on Task Force Takuba in Mali

On 7 April, the Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, together with defence ministers from several other participating countries, took part in an international digital meeting on Task Force Takuba, a multinational special forces task force to which Sweden is contributing a 150-strong unit.

The meeting was led by French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly, and the topics discussed included the security policy situation in the Sahel region and the status of the multinational task force. The ministers also discussed the possibilities of extending the task force's operations beyond 2021. Task Force Takuba, which has full operational capacity with the majority of the force on the ground in the area, includes military units from France, Estonia, Czechia, Italy and Sweden.

“Now that the task force is in place, we have reached an important milestone in the shared commitment within the framework of Task Force Takuba. Our troop contributions are intended to make a difference in Mali and the Sahel, and also help increase security in Europe,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The Swedish contribution

In March 2020, the Riksdag approved the Government's proposal to send a Swedish unit to join Task Force Takuba in Mali. The unit has been in place since February 2021 and consists of a maximum of 150 troops on the ground in the deployment area. The Task Force has its own helicopters and capabilities for protection and surveillance. The contribution will also be able to provide assistance such as transport aircraft and qualified medical resources.

The Task Force works closely with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the European

Union Training Mission (EUTM) Mali, as well as the regional G5 Sahel Joint Force, which is also in the area.

“From a Swedish perspective, we are committed to trying to help increase security and sustainable development in the Sahel. Respect for human rights in all activities is essential for a successful mission,” said Mr Hultqvist during the meeting.

On 8 April, the Danish Government announced that Denmark intends to send a 150-strong unit to Task Force Takuba. The Danish contribution will consist of a special forces unit, medical staff and staff officers. If Denmark’s Parliament approves the proposal, the Danish troops will be deployed to Mali in early 2022.

Published 08 April 2021



Minister Hultqvist explained the roadmap toward the future Swedish defence at press briefing

An increase of the annual defence budget by 85 percent from 2015 to 2025. A new and larger war-time organisation, six new training establishments and new procurements. The Swedish Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist, presented the largest investment in Sweden's defence capabilities in 70 years to international media on April 7.

The Minister started the press briefing by pointing to the fact that the security situation in the northern part of Europe has deteriorated over time.

– Russia breaks international law and acts to change the established European security order. Add to this, we see 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, Peter Hultqvist said.

The Minister reminded that the Swedish Government has stated that an armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. He explained that the new defence policy implemented by the Swedish Government rests on two pillars; increased national military capability and increased international defence cooperation.

– Sweden is, as you are all aware of, a member state of the European Union, firmly committed to the UN and an Enhanced Opportunities Partner with NATO. Sweden will contribute to security, stability and predictability in Europe by expanding defence cooperation with other nations and organisations.

The increase in national defence capabilities entails, among other things, that the number of conscripts called up for training every year will double from 4,000 to 8,000. Sweden's new war-time organisation will increase from 60,000 individuals to 90,000 in total by 2030.

– The increased spending constitutes the most substantial strengthening of Swedish defence, both military and civilian defence, since the 1950s. It is a clear signal to the Swedish people and the European community that we take the security situation seriously, Peter Hultqvist concluded the virtual press briefing.

Published 07 April 2021

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in NATO meeting

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence on 17 February held via videoconference. Mr Hultqvist and Finland's Minister for Defence Antti Kaikkonen were among those specially invited to attend one of the sessions.

The main theme of the session attended by Sweden, Finland and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borell was transatlantic security and how NATO, in collaboration with the EU, can respond to common security challenges. The NATO meeting was the first with the new US Administration and Defence Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III reaffirmed US commitment to NATO. At the meeting, Mr Hultqvist emphasized the importance of a strong transatlantic link and close collaboration between the EU and NATO. Mr Hultqvist also presented the main features of the Defence Bill.

In a separate session, NATO defence ministers discussed the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq and NATO's 2030 initiative, which aims to strengthen political cohesion within the alliance.

Since 2014, Sweden and Finland have been NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partners, and political dialogue with NATO is prioritised, for example, via participation in the defence ministers' meetings.

The partnership with NATO is an important component of Sweden's security and defence policy and serves, among other things, to develop the capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces for both national defence and international operations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Swedish-Ukrainian defence ministers meeting

On 17 February, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in a video conference with Ukrainian Minister of Defence Andrii Taran. Items on the agenda included bilateral cooperation and the state of the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The security situation in the Baltic and Black Sea regions was also discussed at today's video conference .

Planning is under way for an exchange of visits between the ministers, which will be carried out as soon as the situation allows, taking account of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the ministers meet physically, a new agreement on defence-related cooperation will be signed.

Cooperation between Sweden and Ukraine in the area of defence dates back over 20 years. Through the Swedish Armed Forces, Sweden has helped Ukraine since 2007 with capacity support and security sector reform. Since 2018, the Swedish Armed Forces has been conducting most of its activities in Ukraine through participation in the Operation UNIFIER training mission, led by Canada.

Published 17 February 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Swedish-Portuguese defence ministers meeting

A bilateral meeting via video link was held on 16 November between Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Portugal's Minister of National Defence João Gomes Cravinho. The agenda included regional security, the Sahel and bilateral cooperation.

Portugal will hold the Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2021, and Mr Cravinho outlined his country's priorities for the Presidency.

The discussions also covered regional security in Europe and the operations in the Sahel, in which Sweden and Portugal are both participating. The two ministers also discussed areas in which bilateral relations could be deepened.

Mr Hultqvist also outlined the contents of the Defence Bill for his Portuguese colleague, along with the initiatives proposed by the Government for the coming five-year period.

Published 17 November 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received the Commander of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum

On Wednesday 14 October, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received the Commander of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Jörg Vollmer, at the Ministry of Defence.

Mr Hultqvist and General Vollmer discussed the security situation in the Baltic Sea area and the High North, and Sweden's partnership with NATO.

General Vollmer assumed command of Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum in the Netherlands on 22 April 2020. General Vollmer's visit in Stockholm was hosted by Lieutenant General Michael Claesson, Chief of Operations at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters.

Published 14 October 2020



Riksdag adopts legislation that improves opportunities for operational military support between Sweden and Finland

On 8 September, the Riksdag decided to grant the Government greater rights to give and receive operational military support within the framework of defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland. The Government will be able to take decisions on matters such as assisting Finland militarily to prevent violations of Finnish territory, and receiving military support from Finland to prevent violations of Swedish territory or respond to an armed attack against Sweden. Decisions to assist Finland militarily to respond to an armed attack against Finland must still be approved by the Riksdag.

The enhanced defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland is intended to strengthen Sweden's and Finland's national defence and the countries' capabilities for joint military action.

“The enhanced defence cooperation with Finland is based on similar interests, values and priorities. The legislative proposals now adopted by the Riksdag deal with creating the conditions necessary for implementing defence cooperation with Finland,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Enhanced cooperation with Finland of particular importance

Defence cooperation with Finland is of particular importance to Sweden's defence and security policy, and has become even more important in light of security policy developments in our neighbourhood.

Finland and Sweden share geostrategic interests and have a common view of the security policy challenges in the Baltic Sea region. Both countries' security policies are based on a strong national military capability in combination with the principle that security is built together with other countries and organisations.

Cooperation has deepened so that it also covers bilateral operational planning and preparations for the joint use of civilian and military resources in a variety of scenarios, including scenarios beyond peace.

An inquiry appointed in 2017 was tasked with reviewing certain parts of the legal conditions for Sweden's defence cooperation with Finland. In April 2018, the inquiry presented its report, 'An act on operational military support between Sweden and Finland' (SOU 2018:31).

New legislation enables faster decisions

In March 2020, the Government presented a bill to the Riksdag based on the inquiry's proposals. The aim of the legislative proposals includes enabling faster decisions on providing and receiving operational military support within the framework of Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation.

The central legislative proposal is greater rights for the Government to give and receive operational military support within the framework of defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland. The proposal means that the Government will be authorised to:

1. deploy Swedish armed forces to assist Finland in preventing violations of Finnish territory; and
2. receive military support in the form of military forces from Finland, in part to prevent violations of Swedish territory and in part to respond to an armed attack against Sweden.

The bill also contains certain legislative proposals considered necessary to create the conditions for Finnish forces to provide support in Sweden. Decisions to deploy Swedish armed forces to help Finland respond to an armed attack against Finland must still be approved by the Riksdag, since this could lead to Sweden entering into a state of war.

Agreement on host nation support

Apart from the current legislative proposals, further steps in the cooperation will be taken through the agreement on host nation support now being

negotiated with Finland. One such agreement deals with deciding in advance the practical, administrative and legal conditions to enable Swedish and Finnish units to operate in each other's territory.

Published 08 September 2020



Multilateral defence ministers meeting about the situation in the Sahel

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist has taken part in a multilateral video meeting on 2 September concerning support to the countries in the Sahel region of Africa. The meeting was led by the French Minister for the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, and attended by defence ministers from about ten nations, as well as representatives from the European Union, the United Nations and the United States. The discussions focused mainly on the recent political developments in Mali.

During the meeting, the ministers and representatives discussed the security policy consequences of the military coup in Mali on 18 August 2020, which resulted in a forced resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta.

The participating countries stressed their ambition to continue with peacekeeping support to Mali and the Sahel region, as well as anti-terrorism efforts in the area within the framework of the operations carried out by the United Nations and the European Union.

Published 02 September 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended the 100th anniversary of the Polish Armed Forces Day

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Poland on 14–15 August on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Polish Armed Forces Day.

During the visit, Mr Hultqvist held a bilateral meeting with Poland's Minister of National Defence Mariusz Blaszczak to discuss the deepening of Swedish-Polish bilateral cooperation and the current security situation.

Published 15 August 2020



COVID-19 related issues discussed at NATO meeting

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist attended a meeting of NATO defence ministers on 18 June concerning the affect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the Alliance's members and partner countries. The meeting was also attended by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, as well as the defence ministers of Finland and Australia.

The NATO defence ministers meeting was conducted via video link, and the agenda included the support contributed by NATO to its allies and partners during the COVID-19 crisis. The defence ministers also discussed how the pandemic affected NATO's missions and operations, and the geopolitical challenges presented by the crisis.

Other matters discussed were efforts to counter disinformation and false information in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and how to maintain the resilience and civil preparedness in society.

Published 18 June 2020



Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist met defence ministers from Germany and the Nordic countries

On 18 June, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met German Minister of Defence Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer and the defence ministers of the Nordic countries via video link. From Denmark Minister of Defence Trine Bramsen took part, from Norway Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen and from Finland Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen.

Issues discussed during the meeting included security in the region, the transatlantic link and the coming German Presidency of the EU.

“I welcome the fact that Germany’s defence minister initiated a meeting of the Nordic defence ministers. We share common interests concerning the security situation in northern Europe,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Earlier in June, Mr Hultqvist met Ms Kramp-Karrenbauer via video link to discuss bilateral defence cooperation, the security situation in northern Europe and security issues in the context of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Joint international missions in Mali and Afghanistan were also discussed.

Germany and Sweden have a long tradition of defence cooperation. In June 2017, Sweden’s and Germany’s defence ministers signed a joint declaration of intent to deepen and increase cooperation between the countries.

“Germany is an important actor and partner to Sweden not only in Europe, but also in the Baltic Sea region. We have good and well-developed cooperation that both countries would like to further expand,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 18 June 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist's speech at UK NATO Heads of Mission's Forum

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist attended the UK NATO Heads of Mission's Forum on Monday 15 June 2020. The event was hosted by the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Sweden and Ambassador Judith Gough. The main theme of the conference focused on disinformation and cyber security.

In his speech, Defence Minister Hultqvist's key messages touched upon disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, on cyber security and psychological defence, the Swedish defence bill and the steps taken to increase the operational capability of the Swedish Armed Forces, the importance of international defence cooperation as well as exercises in the High North. [Ska det vara High North eller Baltic Sea region? Det står närområdet i den svenska versionen.]

Remarks were also made by NATO representative Dr Antonio Missiroli, Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, who underscored the importance of NATO's cooperation with close partners such as Sweden and the EU in tackling disinformation and cyber threats.

Published 16 June 2020



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on military efficiency and strength discussed at Northern Group ministerial meeting on 20 May

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met his colleagues in the Northern Group security and defence policy forum on 20 May. On the agenda was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national and allied military capabilities and preparedness.

Chaired by Latvia, the Northern Group ministerial meeting was conducted via video link. The main point was the COVID-19 pandemic and how it is affecting the military capabilities and preparedness of the Northern Group countries. The need to restart the cycle of military exercises as soon as possible was particularly highlighted.

Ministers also discussed how to deal with disinformation and attempts to divide the Northern Group members. Russia's actions and relations vis-à-vis Belarus were also a subject of discussions.

During the meeting the defence ministers also issued a joint statement in which they saluted the work of the respective armed forces in support of civil authorities in managing the crisis.

Published 20 May 2020



NATO defence ministers meet to discuss response to COVID-19 crisis

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended a video conference meeting of NATO defence ministers on 15 April to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Finland's defence minister and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell also attended.

The defence ministers and High Representative Josep Borrell discussed how NATO allies, partner countries Sweden and Finland, and the EU can work together to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and to continue to build resilience.

They also discussed further collaborative efforts to counter disinformation about COVID-19.

Published 15 April 2020



Video conference of EU defence ministers on responses to COVID-19

The EU defence ministers held a video conference on 6 April. They discussed the latest developments and national responses to COVID-19. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the video conference from Stockholm.

The defence ministers held informal discussions on the defence implications of COVID-19, including the assistance provided by the armed forces in managing COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic on EU missions and operations.

The ministers informed about the assistance provided by respective member state's armed forces in their national response to COVID-19, such as providing field hospitals, support from military medical staff, transport of COVID-19 infected patients, and logistical support. They also exchanged views on how the European External Action Service and the EU Military Staff could assist the Member States, for example by supporting exchange of information and sharing best practices among Member States.

Furthermore, the defence ministers discussed the impact of COVID-19 on EU missions and operations. In this context, the need for continued presence in areas of deployment was highlighted, and the ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring the health and security of deployed personnel.

The defence ministers highlighted the importance of countering other actors seeking to promote their agendas through disinformation, propaganda, and other hybrid threats. The defence ministers emphasised the importance of long-term resilience and coordinated strategic communication.

Published 08 April 2020



The Nordic defence ministers conferred within the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO)

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist participated on March 30 in a teleconference with the other Nordic defence ministers within the framework of the Nordic defence cooperation NORDEFCO. The Danish Defence Minister Trine Bramsen hosted the meeting. The focus of the ministers' discussions was on the current COVID-19 pandemic.

During the teleconference, the ministers discussed efforts made to overcome the epidemic and its consequences for the national defence forces. The countries agreed on the importance of a continued close cooperation.

Furthermore, the ministers discussed the implementation of the common Nordic Vision 2025 including on enhancing cyber security, the Nordic-Transatlantic relations and a strengthened Nordic cooperation in crisis or conflict. The ministers also discussed Nordic contributions to international operations.

Published 30 March 2020



Sweden plans to participate in a new task force in Mali

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended on 27 March a telephone conference with five other European Defense Ministers and the Defense Ministers in Mali and Niger to discuss a Task Force in the southeastern Mali - operation Takuba. The meeting, which was chaired by the French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly, was held remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The governments of Mali and Niger have sought international help to strengthen the countries' efforts to stabilize the security policy situation in the Sahel region and to counter terrorist groups in the area.

The Takuba Task Force will be placed under operation Barkhane's command and operate in the Liptako region. It will be mainly composed of European Special Operation Forces from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France and Portugal and will advise, assist and accompany Malian and Nigerien Armed Forces, in close coordination with G5 Sahel partners, the UN mission (MINUSMA) and EU missions (EUTM Mali, EUCAP Mali and EUCAP Niger), with a robust legal basis in compliance with international law.

The Swedish Government has submitted a bill to the Riksdag with a proposal regarding Swedish participation with parts of the Swedish Armed Forces Special Forces.

Task Force Takuba is planned to have an initial operational capability (IOC) by the summer of 2020 and expected to become operational (FOC) by early 2021.



Bilateral defence meeting between Sweden and Finland in Karlskrona

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Karlskrona together with his Finnish counterpart Antti Kaikkonen on 9–10 March. The ministers discussed the security situation in the Baltic Sea region, bilateral defence cooperation, coming exercises, international missions and other issues of common interest.

During their visit to Karlskrona, ministers Peter Hultqvist and Antti Kaikkonen held a bilateral meeting and discussed issues such as the security situation in the Baltic Sea region, deepened defence cooperation, exercises and cooperation in the area of defence equipment. International missions and current issues linked to cooperation within the EU and within the framework of the countries' partnership with NATO were also discussed.

The ministers were received by Chief of the Swedish Navy, Rear Admiral Ewa Skoog Haslum, and were given a presentation of operations at the Karlskrona Naval Base. The ministers also went on board one of the Swedish Navy's submarines and the submarine rescue ship HMS Belos.

Steps towards closer cooperation

The main point on the agenda was the continued development of bilateral defence cooperation. Defence cooperation is conducted in a large number of areas, including bilateral operational planning, exercise cooperation, mutual use of military infrastructure, cooperation in the area of defence equipment and staff exchanges. Cooperation covers a large number of activities that are conducted on a regular basis in all branches of the armed forces, not least within the framework of national and international exercises.

On 5 March, the Government decided a bill containing a number of legislative proposals on operational military support within the framework of Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation. The legislative proposals are aimed at

enabling faster decisions on providing and receiving operational military support within the framework of Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation, for example by the Government being authorised to take more decisions than is currently possible.

“In recent years we have taken important steps to strengthen defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland. We are taking joint responsibility both in peace time and in the event of crisis or war, which on the whole has a stabilising effect and raises the threshold for military incidents in our neighbourhood. Deepened defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland will continue to be crucial when dealing with current and future security challenges,” says Peter Hultqvist.

Published 10 March 2020



Peter Hultqvist received Hungary's Minister of Defence Tibor Benkő at Karlberg Palace

On Wednesday 19 February, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received Hungary's Minister of Defence Tibor Benkő at Karlberg Palace for a bilateral meeting.

During the meeting, the ministers discussed regional security, current European defence issues and bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Hungary. Sweden and Hungary have a long-standing strategic partnership, not the least within the partnership of the Gripen programme.

“Hungary's contribution and presence in the Baltic Sea region, through the country's participation in the Baltic Air Policing mission, contributes to stability in our part of Europe. This sends an important security signal,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Hungary also hosts Pápa Air Force Base, where Sweden has around 20 Air Force officers stationed. Hungary also takes part in defence cooperation, through which the country provides Strategic Airlift Capability.

“Hungary's Strategic Airlift Capability is a good example of how countries can support each other by sharing military resources,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 19 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Discussions on the challenges of the West was at focus during the Munich Security Conference 2020

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended the Munich Security Conference (MSC) from 14 to 16 February. This year's theme was "Is the world becoming less Western?".

Around 500 leaders attended the 56th Munich Security Conference 2020. Among the participants including heads of state and government, foreign and defence ministers, were the ministers for defence from United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the Baltic countries and Finland.

Minister for defence Peter Hultqvist participated in three panels on the security situation in Ukraine, on military capability gaps between the western countries and on cyber security. Peter Hultqvist also held several bilateral meetings with defence minister colleagues such as with Australia, Canada, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Munich Security Conference is a yearly forum for debating international security policy. It is a venue for diplomatic initiatives to address the world's most pressing security concerns.

Published 16 February 2020



EU-NATO Cooperation at NATO Meeting in Brussels

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended a working dinner of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels on 12 February. EU-NATO cooperation and common security challenges were on the agenda.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg chaired the meeting, which also saw participation from Finnish Defence Minister Antti Kaikkonen, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. The discussions focused on EU-NATO cooperation and how these organisations can support and strengthen each other to tackle common security challenges.

Bilateral Meeting with Czech Minister of Defence

Peter Hultqvist also met with Czech Minister of Defence Lubomir Metnar during the visit in Brussels. Hultqvist confirmed that Sweden has accepted a Czech invitation to be Special Partner Nation at the NATO Days in Ostrava in September 2020.

- I am pleased to announce that Sweden has accepted the Czech invitation to be Special Partner Nation at the NATO Days in Ostrava 19-20 September 2020. The NATO Days in Ostrava and the Czech Air Force Day are the most important event in Central and Eastern Europe showcasing NATO's cooperation with partners outside the Alliance. It is a central meeting point for a broad dialogue on defence cooperation, in which Sweden has participated for many years, says Peter Hultqvist.

Agreement on Munition Supply

In conjunction with the NATO meeting, Sweden and the Czech Republic signed an agreement that affiliates the countries to a NATO Smart Defence initiative on munition supply. The agreement, Land Battle Decisive

Munitions (LBDM), currently led by France, makes it possible for participating countries to jointly acquire and warehouse a wide range of land munitions. For Sweden, joining LBDM is an opportunity for effective acquisition and increased security of supply of munitions within the land domain.

Published 13 February 2020



Enhanced Nordic dialogue and information exchange in the event of crisis and conflict – summary of defence ministerial meetings on 19–20 November

Sweden's year as chair of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) was summarised when the Nordic defence ministers met in Stockholm on 19 November. "In 2019, Sweden and our Nordic neighbours have jointly laid the foundation for closer dialogue in the event of a serious crisis or conflict in our region. We have strengthened our ability to reach a common understanding of the security situation during a crisis", says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The ministerial meeting was held at Karlberg Palace in Stockholm on 19 November. It was the largest meeting in the NORDEFECO format during the year. In connection with the meeting, the Nordic defence ministers also met their colleagues from the Baltic states in a Nordic-Baltic meeting. A meeting in the defence policy forum the Northern Group was held on 20 November, which in addition to the Nordic and Baltic countries includes Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom.

Further development of Nordic defence cooperation

The NORDEFECO ministerial meeting summarised the Swedish chairmanship and the accomplishments during the year. The objective of the Swedish chairmanship has been to improve the potential for cooperation at all levels of conflict. At the meeting, the Nordic defence ministers agreed on a

mechanism for crisis consultations and information exchange between defence ministries, which can be used in the event of crisis or conflict.

Cooperation has also been deepened in several other areas.

The multinational air power Arctic Challenge Exercise – most recently held in May-June 2019 – was conducted as a European Flag Level Exercise.

The Nordic countries' chiefs of air force signed an agreement on 9 November 2019 regarding the possibility of using alternate landing bases in another Nordic country for armed aircraft. The capability to exchange air situation and radar data have also been further developed.

Sweden took the initiative to include total defence issues as a NORDEFECO area of cooperation.

Denmark will assume the chairmanship of NORDEFECO on 1 January 2020.

Nordic-Baltic defence ministerial meeting

A Nordic-Baltic defence ministerial meeting was also held on 19 November. The defence ministers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the Nordic ministers to discuss the security situation in the region, EU-related issues and how Nordic-Baltic cooperation can be further developed.

Northern Group meeting discussed regional security

At a meeting in the defence policy forum the Northern Group – which in addition to the Nordic and Baltic countries includes Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom – the security situation in the Arctic and northern Europe was discussed, as well as military mobility and strategic communications related to exercises. The participants also conducted a table-top discussion on a hybrid threat scenario.

Latvia will assume the chairmanship of the Northern Group in the first half of 2020, followed by Denmark the second half of the year.

NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander US European Command General Tod D. Wolters attended the Northern Group meeting

NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Tod D. Wolters, who is dual-hatted as Commander US European Command, participated in the Northern Group meeting. During the meeting, General

Wolters, Minister Hultqvist and the other ministers of defence emphasized the importance of the Northern Group and the desire to continue the dialogue in the future. The discussions also highlighted the importance of transparency, and joint exercises and operations.

General Wolters praised the group for its resilience and contribution to the overall campaign for security.

“We must continue to do what’s right for our global security,” said General Wolters. “Thank you for your near and far term commitments.”

Published 21 November 2019



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to host Nordic defence minister meeting

The Nordic defence ministers will meet on 19–20 November within the framework of the common Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). Sweden holds the chair in 2019, and the ministers are expected to agree on matters such as a mechanism for crisis consultations between defence ministries.

The meeting will be held in Stockholm and is the second meeting at ministerial level during Sweden's year as chair. Mr Hultqvist will host Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen, Norway's Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen, Denmark's Minister of Defence Trine Bramsen and a representative of Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The meeting will summarise the objectives of the Swedish chairmanship, improve NORDEFECO as a common platform for dialogue on security and defence policy, and streamline practical cooperation.

At the meeting, the Nordic countries will agree on routines for consultations in the event of a crisis or conflict, a mechanism that will increase the ability to reach a common understanding of the security situation.

A Nordic-Baltic defence ministers meeting will also be held on 19 November, at which the defence ministers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will participate.

On 20 November, the defence ministers from the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom, and the German State Secretary for Defence, will arrive for a meeting within the Northern Group defence policy forum.



Denmark's Defence minister visited Sweden

Denmark's new Defence minister Trine Bramsen visited Sweden on August 30 for bilateral talks with Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. The ministers discussed bilateral defence cooperation, the security policy situation in Northern Europe, international operations and other defence policy issues of common interest.

In January 2016, Sweden and Denmark signed a memorandum of understanding on enhanced defence cooperation within the air and maritime domain. The Danish and Swedish Armed Forces are currently working on the implementation of the agreement. For instance, there is since 2016 a technical arrangement within the framework of the MoU on mutual access to Swedish and Danish air space. Enhanced Swedish-Danish cooperation strengthens the national defence and the ability to carry out operations in our close vicinity.

During the meeting, initiatives within the framework of the Nordic defence cooperation NORDEFECO were discussed, as well as joint participation in the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and cooperation within the framework of international military operations. The agenda also included orientations on the countries' national defence policies.

Published 30 August 2019



Continued deepening of defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland

When Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist hosted his first official meeting with Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen, continued deepening of Finnish-Swedish bilateral defence cooperation and the security situation in the Baltic Sea region were on the agenda.

The meeting at Karlberg Palace was the first official meeting between the two defence ministers. Deepened defence cooperation with Finland continues to hold a special position in Swedish defence and security policy. An important starting point in this cooperation is that Sweden and Finland have a shared interest in promoting stability and predictability in this part of Europe. Developing military capability to act together reduces the risk of military incidences.

“Sweden's defence cooperation with Finland is far-reaching and a top priority. It is of major importance to security in the Baltic Sea region. By deepening our cooperation we create a common understanding and ability to manage the security situation in our neighbourhood. This is a clear contribution to our cooperation with other close partner countries in the region and in our transatlantic relations,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Sweden and Finland's bilateral defence cooperation has been systematically deepened over the years and will be further enhanced. It includes very far-reaching and extensive cooperation on joint exercises and joint operational planning. An important goal of defence cooperation is to ensure that Sweden and Finland are able to respond to situations across a range of scenarios and levels of conflict, including crisis and war. The Swedish Ministry of Defence is also drafting a legislative proposal on more rapid decision-making

procedures for giving and receiving operational military support within the framework of Finnish-Swedish defence cooperation.

Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen stressed the importance of deepening cooperation in all areas mentioned in the Finnish-Swedish memorandum of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation, signed in July last year. The MoU aims to create continuity, predictability and sustainability in defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland.

Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen took office on 6 June 2019. He represents the Centre Party of Finland and has served as Chair of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and Chair of the Centre Party Parliamentary Group.

Published 02 July 2019



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist hosted a Nordic defence ministerial meeting on Gotland

Between 9 and 10 April a Nordic defence ministerial meeting was held on Gotland as part of Sweden's Chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2019. During the meeting, issues such as total defence, regional security, exercise cooperation and the follow-up of the political vision for the Nordic defence cooperation were discussed. In conjunction to the meeting Finland, Norway and Sweden signed an annex concerning security of supply, which constitutes a part of a wider Nordic defence materiel cooperation agreement. At the same time, Denmark declared its intent to sign the annex at a later stage.

There is a broad political consensus in Sweden to further deepen and broaden Nordic defence cooperation, with the aim of strengthening Sweden's military capabilities and improving the security situation in our vicinity.

Denmark's Minister of Defence Claus Hjort Frederiksen, Norway's Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen, Permanent Secretary at Finland's Ministry of Defence Jukka Juusti and Director General of the Defence Directorate at Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs Arnór Sigurjónsson attended the meeting on Gotland.

During the meeting, ongoing joint projects within NORDEFECO were discussed, including regional security, potential cooperation on total defence issues, Nordic armaments cooperation and the follow-up of the political

vision for the Nordic defence cooperation that was adopted last year.

A part of the meeting was held at the Gotland Regiment, where the focus was discussions and briefings on total defence issues. The Gotland County Administrative Board and the Swedish Armed Forces were present to update the ministers on the ongoing work with developing the total defence system on Gotland.

Vision 2025

At the defence ministerial meeting in Oslo on the 13 November 2018, the Nordic defence ministers agreed on a new vision for Nordic defence cooperation that covers the period up until 2025. The vision states that Nordic defence cooperation should cover activities in peacetime, as well as cooperation in potential crisis or conflict situations.

Sweden holds the Chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2019 and one of the priorities is to start implementing the vision. The Nordic countries have for example taken the initiative to strengthen NORDEFECO as a platform for consultation and crisis management. An initial step is the development of mechanisms and guidelines for consultation between the Nordic countries in the event of a potential crisis or conflict.

Signing of annex concerning security of supply

Sweden, Finland and Norway have negotiated an agreement on security of supply for the defense area. The agreement is an addition to the Nordic defence material cooperation agreement that was signed in 2015.

The agreement serves as a framework for cooperation on security of supply issues and will contribute to increased coordination between defense industries in the Nordic countries and facilitate the exchange of information.

The agreement also provides for more efficient use of resources during peacetime and, in the event of a potential crisis or conflict, strengthened endurance and safer stocking.

Published 10 April 2019



Minister for Defence took part in defence ministers meeting in London

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in a ministers meeting in London on 3 April within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). The meeting included a scenario-based discussion and discussions related to the upcoming JEF exercise Baltic Protector, in which Sweden will participate.

“The meeting was a very clear acknowledgement of the UK’s interest in being active in the Baltic Sea and Nordic regions. It is important that the UK remains involved in, and takes responsibility for, security in Europe, and the JEF is part of that responsibility,” says Minister Hultqvist.

The scenario-based discussion was an exercise in decision-making and joint communication in the event of a situation requiring joint action, presenting the representatives of the participating countries with various strategic scenarios.

Sweden to take part in JEF exercise in the southern Baltic Sea

The defence ministers also discussed the upcoming JEF exercise Baltic Protector, scheduled for May and June 2019. Baltic Protector is a maritime exercise to be conducted in Denmark, the southern Baltic Sea and the Baltic States, involving around 3 000 soldiers and some twenty warships from all JEF countries. Sweden is contributing two Visby-class corvettes to the second phase of the JEF exercise, which will be conducted as part of the parallel Baltops 2019 maritime exercise.

The JEF is a British-led multinational force consisting of the UK, the Nordic and Baltic countries and the Netherlands. As required, it is intended to be able to act independently or as part of a UN, NATO or EU operation, and

can involve units from all of the armed forces. Units are selected and included depending on the operation to be undertaken. The participating countries decide in each case whether and how they wish to take part in an exercise or operation.

Published 05 April 2019



India's Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman visited Sweden

India's Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman visited Sweden on 13 February for meetings with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. The purpose of the visit was to sign a security protection agreement between Sweden and India.

Since 2009, Sweden and India have had a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the area of defence, and they have subsequently conducted a number of bilateral meetings, most recently in December 2018 in New Delhi. In April 2018, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Stockholm to confirm both countries' mutual commitment and to jointly sign an action plan for future cooperation.

– The agreement that I and Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman signed today is an important step in implementing the action plan on deeper cooperation with India, says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The signing of the security protection agreement between Sweden and India will enable both countries to share classified information with each other. For 50 years now, Sweden has had similar agreements with over 30 countries around the world, as well as with the EU and NATO.



Government agencies and authorities respond to effects of drought and heat

Rescue services, government agencies and local authorities are engaged in intensive efforts in response to the forest fires raging around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heat wave. More information about these efforts is available below. Crisis preparedness is part of the remit of every government agency and authority.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) manages coordination and national priorities for international support. The MSB maintains constant preparedness and can provide reinforcement resources, both equipment and expertise, if requested by rescue operations leaders or county administrative boards. The MSB is also in regular dialogue with neighbouring countries and the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre concerning international resources.

The MSB has forest fire depots (with hoses, motor pumps and six-wheel ATVs) located around the country, which are being used for several of the fires.

The MSB can also provide personnel with collaboration and leadership expertise to reinforce actors' management functions.

The MSB reinforces relevant county administrative boards' staffing and their reception of international support. Moreover, the MSB can provide housing solutions, hygiene facilities such as showers and toilets, and high-capacity pumps – resources that include accompanying expertise.

[More information about ongoing events and measures relating to the forest fires is available on the MSB website](#)

Information about the forest fires from county administrative boards, municipalities and rescue services is gathered at www.krisinformation.se, the national website for emergency information. Important public announcements (in Swedish only) are published on this website.

- [Krisinformation.se website](#)

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard
The Swedish Armed Forces is providing continued support in the form of personnel and equipment, in response to expressed needs.

[More information is available on the Swedish Armed Forces website](#)

Swedish Transport Administration

The Swedish Transport Administration is assisting with firefighting equipment and staffing resources, especially tracked vehicles equipped with water tanks and fire suppression equipment, and personnel to staff this equipment. At the moment, the Swedish Transport Administration is supporting rescue services at forest fires in Gävleborg, Dalarna and Jämtland counties. Traffic is impacted in the affected counties and traffic information is being updated regularly.

[More information is available on the Swedish Transport Administration website](#)

Swedish Coast Guard

The Swedish Coast Guard has specially equipped marine patrol aircraft, two of which are now being used to assist rescue services and the MSB with patrolling, documentation and directing other aircraft resources in connection with the forest fires. The Coast Guard has also produced special maps of the fires.

[More information is available on the Swedish Coast Guard website](#)

Swedish Police Authority

The Swedish Police Authority is providing local support from each region

and police from unaffected regions. The Police Authority's main task in connection with the fires is to save lives and reduce injuries. This involves cordoning off areas, directing traffic and evacuating residents in accordance with rescue service decisions. The National Operations Department has taken decisions concerning nationwide special events in order to support regions with national resources, where necessary, and prepare for potential decisions concerning nationwide special events. The fires are primarily affecting the Mitt, Nord and Bergslagen police regions. The Police Authority has decided to reinforce resources in the central police region Mitt with a number of police officers from the Öst, Väst Syd and Stockholm police regions.

[More information is available on the Swedish Police Authority website](#)

County administrative boards

The county administrative boards are monitoring the forest fires and coordinating efforts between local actors and national level. They are also coordinating county information to the media and the public. County administrative boards also take decisions about fire bans and provide information to the public. All county administrative boards are closely monitoring access to animal feed and water in each county. The grazing and hay harvesting situation is extremely serious in several counties. Some county administrative boards have provided resources to other affected counties. The MSB's assessment is that resources to deal with the ongoing forest fires are currently available at county administrative board level.

[County administrative board website](#)

Municipal rescue services

All municipal rescue services are providing assistance based on their capacity. The number of firefighters and other personnel working to contain the ongoing fires in Sweden is constantly changing. A large number of volunteers, Home Guard personnel, police, and others are also assisting.

Svenska kraftnät

Svenska kraftnät is the government agency that ensures Sweden has a secure electricity supply. Its remit includes ensuring that the country's electricity supply is prepared to handle extreme events, such as fires, that may entail serious strains on society. The electricity system is monitored around the clock. Svenska kraftnät is monitoring the ongoing forest fires closely and is

in dialogue with rescue services on the ground and, when necessary, can provide emergency equipment to restore the power grid. This includes tracked vehicles equipped with wireless communications, such as the Rakel system. These mobile command and communication units (MOLOS) are operated by Sweden's Voluntary Radio Organisation as instructed by Svenska kraftnät.

[Svenska kraftnät website](#)

Swedish Board of Agriculture

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is working actively to find solutions to alleviate the situation for affected farmers. These solutions include exemptions from regulations, higher advance payments from support funds to help liquidity, and more. For example, the Board has granted an exemption allowing farmers to take feed from grassland that otherwise must not be harvested.

[More information is available on the Board of Agriculture website](#)

National Food Agency

The protracted drought in large parts of the country is creating major problems for agriculture. This also means that everyone must conserve drinking water. At present, around 80 municipalities have introduced a ban on watering. Thus, it is equally as important to save municipal drinking water as private well water. Water is needed for many important activities, such as food production, hospitals and agriculture.

The National Food Agency is cooperating with the Swedish Board of Agriculture and other authorities to manage the difficult situation of farmers.

[More information is available on the National Food Agency website](#)

Swedish Forest Agency

The Swedish Forest Agency is supporting firefighting efforts by providing map data, landowner contact information and equipment such as hoses, pumps and drones. The Agency can also provide staffing resources and coordinate the exchange of information between the forestry sector, the MSB and other government agencies and actors, as well as provide status reports to landowners and the public. The Agency can also conduct inventories and offer support and guidance to affected forest owners.

[More information is available on the Swedish Forest Agency website](#)

Swedish Work Environment Authority

Heat can impact employee attentiveness and judgement, which can lead to an increased risk of accidents. The Swedish Work Environment Authority is responsible for issues regarding work environment and working hours, and monitoring legal compliance. At present, the Authority is providing information about relevant risks, work environment responsibilities, preventive measures and applicable regulations. For example, the Authority has gathered information on its website about temperature and climate conditions at workplaces. The Authority is monitoring and analysing developments to prepare for additional measures.

More information is available on the Swedish Work Environment Authority website.

The social partners are monitoring compliance with labour legislation such as the Annual Leave Act and collective agreements that may regulate working hours, for example.

[Swedish Work Environment Authority website](#)

SOS Alarm

Response times for the emergency number 112 are increasing, and the system is under pressure. SOS Alarm has heightened its level of preparedness, producing status reports each day (at 06.00, 09.00, 15.00 and 20.30) and enabling measures to be taken when necessary. SOS Alarm is urging people to refrain from calling the emergency number 112 if they are not in acute or immediate need of help.

[More information is available on the SOS Alarm website](#)

National Board of Health and Welfare

The National Board of Health and Welfare works to strengthen the preparedness of health, medical care and social service providers before, during and after serious incidents. In light of the ongoing heat wave and the many serious forest fires in the country, the Board is working with other government monitoring agencies.

[More information is available on the National Board of Health and Welfare](#)

[website](#)

Public Health Agency of Sweden

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides targeted advice for municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors to use in their efforts to reduce health risks associated with heat waves. This advice is then passed on to the individuals concerned.

[More information is available on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website](#)

Lantmäteriet

Lantmäteriet, the government agency that produces maps of Sweden, is currently using its expertise to support other agencies. It has established a 'geo cell' in Färila, Sweden, staffed by Lantmateriet personnel with GIS expertise, and equipped with hardware such as computers, printers and plotters that can compile, analyse and print out maps based on the needs of rescue services, the police, county administrative boards and the MSB. Lantmäteriet takes part in regional collaboration conferences and the national collaboration conferences for government agencies.

[Lantmäteriet website](#)

Swedish Post and Telecom Authority

The Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) is collaborating with other government agencies and societal actors, providing regular status reports on electronic communications. PTS is in regular contact with sector actors and has convened a meeting of the National Telecommunications Coordination Group (NTSG). PTS has also assigned a radio frequency permit to Polish rescue services.

[More information is available on the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority website](#)

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is reaching out to businesses and organisations in the hospitality industry to enable them to inform tourists about the serious situation in Sweden and current conditions.

[Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth website](#)

Swedish Maritime Administration

The Swedish Maritime Administration has had an ongoing dialogue with the MSB for the past week concerning the type of support the Administration can provide to fight the fires raging around Sweden. The Administration is supporting the MSB by coordinating society's combined resources. This involves overall planning, leadership and strategies for system managers, staff functions and prioritising society's resources from a national perspective. It also includes aircraft coordination and logistics support, which may entail optimising fuel supplies of the aircraft resources taking part.

[More information is available on the Swedish Maritime Administration website](#)

Meteorological and Hydrological Institute

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) issues heat warnings when a period of high or extreme temperatures is expected. High temperatures put a strain on the body, creating problems particularly for risk groups.

[Heat warnings on the SMHI website](#)

SMHI and the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) collaborate and provide continuous updates on the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

[Water shortage risk service \(in Swedish\) on the SMHI website](#)

Geological Survey of Sweden

The Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) monitors groundwater trends and publishes up-to-date maps showing how much groundwater levels differ from normal monthly levels.

[Groundwater levels on the SGU website](#)

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has national responsibility for supervision guidance on drinking water and groundwater protection, and water-related activity (including withdrawing water for watering/irrigation).

[Water guidelines on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website](#)

[Information about water shortages on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website](#)

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and actions individuals can take.

[Information about water shortages \(in Swedish\) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website](#)

Medical Products Agency

The Medical Products Agency is responsible for approving and regulating medicinal products and natural remedies, and for the supervision of medical devices. Advice from the Medical Products Agency about storing medicinal products during periods of prolonged heat is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website.

[More information is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website](#)

Published 09 August 2018



Cooperation to combat effects of drought and heat

The prolonged heat and drought have impacted many sectors of society. There have been numerous forest fires, the agricultural sector has been severely affected by the drought and groundwater levels have dropped. The extreme temperatures can also cause health problems, especially among older people and the sick. The Government is following developments closely and taking the necessary decisions. The Government Offices is in continuous contact with the responsible government agencies.

In view of the forest fires around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heatwave, intensive efforts are under way among rescue services, government agencies and municipalities.

Efforts to stop the forest fires

At present, several forest fires are raging around the country and the rescue services are making tremendous efforts to protect people, property, forests and the functioning of society.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is coordinating relevant agencies and supporting municipal rescue services, together with the Swedish Armed Forces and the county administrative boards, by providing reinforcements in terms of equipment, staff and expertise.

Via the EU, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has requested assistance in the form of firefighting aircraft from other European countries.

The work of the authorities is crucial to combating the fires. But everyone also carries a personal responsibility. In many parts of the country, fire bans

are in place. Remember to check whether a fire ban is in place where you are.

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#)

[Information about the forest fires at krisinformation.se](#)

[Information about the forest fires on the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency website](#)

Efforts to support agriculture

The Government is closely following developments in the agriculture sector and continues alongside government agencies and other actors to seek solutions to the challenges emerging so as to alleviate the situation for farmers. For example, the Government will provide SEK 1,2 billion in national funds to strengthen the liquidity of our farmers. Sweden is also an active dialogue with the EU about exemptions and other solutions to alleviate the situation for Swedish farmers.

Heatwave and health

The heatwave can cause problems for people's health. Exposure to heat carries with it different risks for different individuals. Risk groups are above all elderly people, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, young children, pregnant women and people on medication.

The Government has ongoing contact with the relevant government agencies and local authorities. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs holds weekly meetings with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. These meetings bring the Government up to date on what the government agencies are doing to help older people and others cope with the heat. The meetings will continue as long as the current situation persists.

Private individuals can contact their county council and 1177 Vårdguiden for information and advice about various heatwave-related health risks.

[Advice about the heatwave \(in Swedish\) on the 1177 Vårdguidens website](#)

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides advice for different target groups that can be used by municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors in health and medical care services.

High temperatures can influence the growth of bacteria in drinking water and food. The National Food Agency website has information and advice.

Water levels and water supply

The Government is closely following developments in groundwater levels and water supply and has continuous contact with the responsible agencies. Municipalities are responsible for the public supply of drinking water.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and what measures people can take themselves.

[Information about water shortages \(in Swedish\) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website](#)

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Geological Survey of Sweden collaborate and provide continuous updates about the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

[Water shortage service \(in Swedish\) on the SMHI website](#)

Published 20 July 2018



Northern group defence ministers met in The Hague

Defence ministers of the Northern Group security and defence policy forum held a meeting in The Hague on 6 June. Among other things, ministers discussed the security policy situation in Northern Europe.

During the Northern Group meeting, defence ministers discussed the security policy situation in the Baltic Sea and the North Atlantic.

– There is a common understanding on the security policy development in our neighbourhood and the importance of cooperation between the countries to meet existing challenges, said Peter Hultqvist after the meeting.

The Defence ministers also discussed future exercises, the relationship with Russia, military mobility and the NATO Summit in Brussels in July. Also updates regarding national defence planning was presented at the meeting.

The meeting was hosted by the Minister of Defence of the Netherlands, Ank Bijleveld-Schouten. During their last meeting in Helsinki in November 2017, ministers agreed to create a rotating chairmanship and a standing agenda for future meetings. The Netherlands chairs the Northern Group during the first half of 2018 and Norway during the second half.

Published 07 June 2018



The Minister of Defence of the Netherlands visited Stockholm

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received his Dutch colleague Ank Bijleveld-Schouten in Stockholm on 24 May. The ministers discussed bilateral defence relations and the security situation in the Baltic Sea region, among other themes.

The Netherlands and Sweden have had diplomatic relations since the 17th century and participate in several multilateral cooperation in the defense field. Both countries are part of the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the Security and the defence policy forum, the Northern Group, which conducts meetings at the defence ministerial level twice a year.

The countries also cooperate in international efforts within the framework of the UN and the EU, such as the ongoing EU operation Operation Atalanta off the coast of Somalia in east Africa.

- Sweden and the Netherlands are closely linked in several defence issues. This was also noted in the meeting, when we discussed a number of areas to develop further and questions to pursue, not least within the EU, Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist said after the meeting.

Published 24 May 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Peter Hultqvist met Denmark's Minister of Defence Claus Hjort Frederiksen

On 22 May, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met Denmark's Minister of Defence Claus Hjort Frederiksen in Copenhagen. During their meeting the ministers discussed bilateral defence cooperation, regional security and multilateral cooperation.

Cooperation between Sweden and Denmark

In January 2016, Sweden and Denmark signed a memorandum of understanding on enhanced defence cooperation within the air and maritime domains. During the meeting in Copenhagen, the ministers received an update on the status of implementing this cooperation, which aims at achieving synergetic and increased operational effect between our air forces and navies in peacetime air operations.

In preparation of the meeting, the armed forces of the two countries signed an agreement on air force cooperation. In brief, the agreement means streamlined access for military state aircraft, such as combat aircraft and state aircraft, for overflights of each other's territories. This includes overflights regarding air policing and Quick Reaction Alert (QRA).

From an air force perspective, the cooperation provides Denmark with added value by speeding up access to areas of operations in the Baltic Sea. For Swedish military combat aircraft, the agreement speeds up access to Danish territory and will offer increased flexibility and operational freedom of action. Moreover, interoperability between the air forces of Denmark and Sweden will increase through the establishment of standard operating procedures for overflights.

"Enhanced Swedish–Danish cooperation strengthens our national defence

and the capability to conduct air operations in our vicinity," said Mr Hultqvist.

At the meeting, the ministers also agreed on further developing bilateral cooperation in the maritime domain, for example regarding alternative marine deployment and exchange of information. Discussions on how expanded maritime cooperation could be best implemented continue at military level.

Issues concerning regional security

During the meeting the ministers discussed the security situation in the Baltic Sea and Öresund region. The discussion also touched upon cyber defence, as well as psychological defence and measures to counteract influence operations and disinformation.

Multilateral cooperation

The ministers also discussed multilateral defence cooperation within the framework of NORDEFCON, the Northern Group, the Joint Expeditionary Force, as well as international operations.

Published 23 May 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister of Defence attended multinational crisis management exercise Viking 18

On 24 April, Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist attended the ongoing multinational crisis management exercise Viking 18 in Uppsala. Viking 18 is the world's largest exercise of its kind and gathers 2 500 participants from over 60 countries.

The aim of Viking 18 is to promote mutual understanding, confidence, co-operation and interoperability among all contributing and affected forces, organisations and personnel by training and educating civilian and military participants to meet the challenges of current and future multidimensional crisis response and peace operations. This includes planning and conducting a UN mandated Chapter VII peace operation in an unstable environment, focusing on co-operation and co-ordination between all relevant actors.

The exercise is led from Sweden and conducted from sites in Sweden, Brazil, Bulgaria, Finland, Ireland, Serbia.

Published 24 April 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

State Secretary Jan Salestrand met Minister of National Defence of the Central African Republic Marie-Noëlle Koyara

On 16 April, State Secretary Jan Salestrand received Minister of National Defence of the Central African Republic Marie-Noëlle Koyara. Matters discussed at the meeting included the EU training mission that Sweden has taken part in since early 2017.

In late 2017, the Government decided that the Swedish Armed Forces could place a maximum of 15 personnel in the European Union's Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA).

The overall aim of EUTM RCA is to support the country's ongoing reform of the defence and security sector. A substantial part of the training programme is dedicated to training soldiers and includes shooting, body combat, infantry skills such as individual and collective movements, and first aid skills.

"For Sweden, it is important to support democracy-building in the Central African Republic. We are doing this by contributing to the EU training mission EUTM RCA," says State Secretary Jan Salestrand.

The mission, which is made up of some 170 personnel from several European countries, was launched on 16 July 2016, following a decision by the Council of the European Union to replace the EU Monitoring and Advisory Mission.

Marie-Noëlle Koyara is primarily in Sweden to take part in the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute, in partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Published 16 April 2018



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Georgia

On 7 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist concluded a two-day visit to Georgia. Mr Hultqvist met Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili and his Georgian defence minister colleague Levan Izoria. During the meetings, bilateral defence cooperation between the countries was discussed.

During his visit to Georgia, Mr Hultqvist met Georgian Minister of Defence Levan Izoria, who visited Sweden in January 2017. Also on the agenda, alongside bilateral cooperation, was the two countries' participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. Georgia and Sweden have deeper cooperation with NATO through the enhanced opportunities partnership for dialogue and cooperation (EOP). Since 2017, Sweden has contributed instructors to the Georgian Joint Training and Evaluation Centre, which is part of NATO's capacity-building efforts in the country.

Defence cooperation with Georgia

Defence cooperation between Georgia and Sweden began in 2009 and mainly concerns the exchange of expertise on mine counter measures and mine clearance. Sweden also provides support to Georgia for security sector reform on issues concerning issues of ensuring rule of law and human rights after armed conflicts.

The programme also included meetings with Georgia's President Giorgi Margvelashvili and Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili.



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met with Ukrainian colleague

On 5 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Ukraine. Mr Hultqvist met with President Petro Poroshenko and his Ukrainian defence minister colleague Stepan Poltorak. During the meetings, deepened bilateral defence cooperation between the countries was discussed.

During the visit to the Ukrainian capital Kiev on 5 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met with the Ukrainian Minister of Defence Stepan Poltorak. Peter Hultqvist also had a meeting with the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko.

Discussions were held on greater involvement of Sweden in promoting the issue of deploying a UN peacekeeping mission in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Since 2015, Canada's military training and support mission in Ukraine, Operation UNIFIER, has been under way. The Swedish Armed Forces plans to conduct similar training support activities in Ukraine within the framework of Operation UNIFIER. From September, the Swedish Armed Forces intends to have personnel on site under Operation UNIFIER to assist with the training of military police and soldiers for amphibian and mechanised units, and training in ammunition management, the environment and gender.



Government Offices of Sweden

The Minister for Defence attended the Munich Security Conference

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended the Munich Security Conference Munich Security Conference on 16-18 February. This year's conference highlighted the threat to the democratic world order, new prerequisites for a common European defense policy and analyzes of regional development in Africa, Eastern and Central Europe and the Middle East.

Munich Security Conference is a forum for international security policy. Over 500 senior decision-makers from around the world attended this year's conference. The participants were Heads of State, Ministers, Leaders of International Organizations, and Leaders for Industry, Media, Academics and Civil Society.

During the conference, Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist held bilateral talks with colleagues from Finland, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Germany and the United States. Peter Hultqvist also made remarks at the "Munich Ukrainian lunch".

Published 19 February 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Peter Hultqvist met Japan's State Minister for Defence

On Wednesday, 17 January, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received Japan's State Minister of Defence Tomohiro Yamamoto. The meeting is part of a two-day programme in Sweden.

At the meeting, Mr Hultqvist and Mr Yamamoto discussed the forms for bilateral defence cooperation with particular focus on defence materiel. The meeting also included presentations about and discussions on each country's regional security situation and their national defence policy approaches.

During his visit to Sweden, Mr Yamamoto also met State Secretary Jan Salestrand and representatives of Saab. He also visited a civil defence shelter that can withstand a nuclear blast.

Published 17 January 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

The transatlantic link in focus at the security conference Snow Meeting

On 11-12 January the Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist, took part in the security conference Snow Meeting in Trakai, west of Vilnius. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius, hosted the conference.

The participants, consisting of representatives from governments, ministries, agencies and civil society, discussed the importance of the transatlantic link, EU-NATO cooperation and the future of European Defence. Peter Hultqvist gave a keynote speech where he addressed the significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security and the importance of a unified European response to the events challenging both regional and global security.

In conjunction to the conference Peter Hultqvist had bilateral meetings with Minister for Defence in Lithuania, Raimondas Karoblis, and Minister of Defence of Estonia, Jüri Luik. Peter Hultqvist also made a visit to one of NATO's local headquarters, NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU), located in Vilnius.

Published 12 January 2018



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist gave an opening address at the Berlin Security Conference

On 28 November, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in the 2017 Berlin Security Conference in the German capital. This year's theme was 'Europe under pressure – security and defence in unpredictable times'. Sweden was a partner in this year's conference, alongside the organiser, and Sweden's Minister for Defence held the opening address.

In his speech, Mr Hultqvist addressed the importance of cooperating to meet the threats to Europe, and spoke about cooperation within the EU and with NATO. The Minister for Defence also presented Sweden's view on the security situation in Europe in a broad sense, and with a focus on our neighbourhood in northern Europe.

The Berlin Security Conference is one of the largest security and defence policy conferences in Europe, bringing together around 1 000 participants from countries both in and outside Europe, as well as representatives of EU institutions and NATO. This year's conference was the 16th so far since its launch in 2001. Chief of Defence Staff of the Swedish Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Dr Dennis Gyllensporre, Chief of Army, Major General Karl Engelbrektson, and Chief of Air Force, Major General Mats Helgesson also took part in this year's conference.



Peacekeeping mission in focus at the UN conference in Vancouver

On 14-15 November, the Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist, participated in the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference in Vancouver. At the meeting, the Minister for Defence emphasised Sweden's broad UN commitment.

The initiator of the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial was Canada's Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan. The conference was the second following the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping that was organised in September 2015. This year, ministers of defence and international organisations from some 70 countries participated.

The conference was centred on four different themes, which through innovative measures aimed to raise the quality of UN missions. All four themes contained an integrated gender perspective.

During the conference Peter Hultqvist participated in a panel where they discussed innovation in training and capacity building. During his speech, he stressed Sweden's broad UN commitment and supported the communique that was presented after the meeting.

In addition, Peter Hultqvist announced the intention of the Nordic countries to provide a joint Mobile Training Team to the UN mission in Mali (Minusma), where Sweden will have the Lead Nation role within the Nordefco framework.

"By focusing on the basic training of UN soldiers in the field, we will be able to simply and effectively increase their capabilities and skills. In this manner, the Nordic contribution will have a direct impact on the continued mission," says Peter Hultqvist.

During the conference Sweden also endorsed the Vancouver principles. The

principles are a political set of political commitment regarding the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers in a peacekeeping context.

Published 16 November 2017



The Government authorises FMV to enter into negotiations with the United States on the purchase of a new medium-range air defence system

The Government has today authorised the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration (FMV) to send a Letter of Request to the United States, and to enter into negotiations for procurement of the Patriot air defence system.

The aim of the negotiations is for delivery to have commenced in 2020 and for the system to be operational within the next defence framework period, i.e. by 2025 at the latest. The basis for the decision is the agreement on defence between the Government parties, the Moderate party and the Center party, of 16 August 2017.

The Armed Forces have advocated Patriot as a new air defence system, as it is a proven system with good delivery reliability and anti-ballistic missile capability. The acquisition is also in line with what is expressed in the Defense Policy Bill and adheres to the implementation of the Statement of Intent (SOI), signed by Sweden and the United States in June 2016.

The decision means that the negotiations with the United States can formally begin. A formal tender through a Letter of Offer and Acceptance is expected in spring 2018. Based on this tender and the decision of the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) on the proposal to acquire a new medium-range air defence system in the 2018 Budget Bill, the Government will make a final decision on the acquisition during 2018.



Government Offices of Sweden

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist visited TechNet conference

Cyber capabilities in hybrid warfare scenarios were the theme of the TechNet Europe 2017 conference in Upplands Väsby outside Stockholm 10th of October. Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist visited the conference and held an opening speech.

The conference in Upplands Väsby was organised by AFCEA Europe. With the increasing tensions in the European area, civil-military cooperation is more important than ever. This emphasises the need for an appropriate civil-military cooperation to master any rapid and antagonistic development.

Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist mentioned in his opening speech, how Swedish authorities, Swedish industry and critical infrastructure are exposed to cyber threats. Hultqvist also raised the question of how international law deals with increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks targeting states and how these attacks can be addressed.

Published 10 October 2017



Government's measures during the electoral period in the area of defence

During this electoral period, the Government has worked on implementing the Defence Resolution adopted by the Riksdag. During the 2016–2020 defence period, the operational capabilities of military units will increase and the overall operational capability of the total defence will be ensured. A great deal has already been achieved and we can see that the Resolution has already had an impact in a number of areas.

The single most important measure of the 2016–2020 defence period is to strengthen the operational capabilities of military units and ensure the overall operational capability of total defence. The Government is working on implementing the Defence Resolution adopted by the Riksdag. The additional funding to the defence budget and the investments included in the Defence Resolution of 2015 are in the process of being implemented.

Enhanced operational capabilities of military units

The most significant objective in the coming defence period up to 2020 is to enhance the operational capabilities of military units. It must be possible to use defence in times of peace, crisis and war. The military units are primarily designed to be able to counter an armed attack.

- The three inquiries appointed by the Government concerning personnel supply for the military sector, logistics for increased defence preparedness, and research and development in the area of defence have presented their reports and are now being processed.
- In autumn 2016, the Government decided to allocate an additional 12

Archer systems for the artillery to the Swedish Armed Forces.

- Contingency adaptations have been carried out in response to the global situation and the high level of military activity in our surrounding, e.g. enhancing and bringing forward the presence on the island of Gotland. The Swedish Armed Forces have reactivated land-based coastal missiles.

Reactivation of national military service

In December 2014, the Government decided to once again start calling in personnel in wartime postings for refresher training as part of the process to secure personnel supply. The Government also appointed an inquiry on personnel supply for the military sector (SOU 2016:63).

In spring 2017, the Government decided that the Swedish Armed Forces would start planning for the implementation of basic national military service training for a minimum of 4,000 individuals per year in 2018 and 2019. This decision means that the Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency was tasked with calling total defence conscripts for enrolment as of autumn 2017.

- On 11 December 2014, the Government decided to give the Swedish Armed Forces the option of calling in personnel in wartime postings for refresher training.
- On 2 March 2017, the Government decided that total defence conscripts would be obligated to enrol and complete basic national military service training.
- On 17 August 2017, the Government decided to double compensation to total defence conscripts.

Overall operational capability of total defence

Sweden needs to re-establish a modern total defence to be able to address the challenges and threats resulting from the changing security situation in the surrounding. This means a new planning concept for the entire total defence, i.e. both military and civil defence.

Total defence includes recreating psychological defence with the aim of safeguarding an open and democratic society with freedom of opinion and free media. The new security situation will also place great demands on Swedish foreign intelligence and cyber defence capabilities.

The Government is monitoring developments in total defence very carefully and will take the measures that are necessary and possible under existing legislation. The Government has made a number of decisions on coherent total defence planning.

- On 10 December 2015, the Government decided to task the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency with presenting proposals for a joint basic outlook for cohesive total defence planning.
- On 11 May 2017, the Government decided to instruct the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency to continue promoting and developing coherent total defence planning during the period up to and including 2020. The area of total defence also received an additional SEK 500 million in the 2017 Spring Budget.

Moreover, the Government has tasked the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency with helping to increase people's knowledge of how to prepare for crises and state of emergencies, and ultimately war. The remit includes producing and disseminating national information material.

- Work has been done to implement the Government's decision on all personnel within the Swedish Armed Forces needed in the event of a state of emergency being assigned a wartime posting.
- Measures have been taken to achieve modern and coherent planning for total defence. In December 2015, the Government decided on a number of remits and instructions for various authorities.
- On 23 March 2017, the Government adopted the committee's terms of reference entitled 'Improved protection for total defence activities'.

Deepening international cooperation

Threats to peace and to Swedish security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries. Sweden must be able to work with others and provide and receive support, which can also be of a military nature.

Cooperation with others is essential for long-term stability and peace in our part of Europe. The Government is working to ensure deeper cooperation with other democratic states and organisations. In addition to the cooperation entered into with Finland and the United States, the strong community with the Nordic and Baltic countries, and cooperation with Poland and the United Kingdom, the relationship with Germany will be strengthened during 2017.

In 2016, the Government adopted the 'Memorandum of understanding on host nation support' bill. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to ensure that Sweden, as a host nation, can provide effective support for military activities on Swedish territory in connection with exercises, crises or

military operations in Sweden and in our surrounding.

Cooperation with Finland is particularly important. By further strengthening defence cooperation with Finland, we will enhance each nation's capability and generate better security in our surrounding. Sweden's objective for defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland is to improve the Swedish Armed Forces' operational capabilities and enable joint operational action with Finland.

- Defence policy cooperation with the US, Germany, the UK and others has been enhanced through agreements and declarations of intent.
- Defence cooperation with Finland has deepened.
- On 17 March 2016, the Government adopted the 'Memorandum of understanding on host nation support' bill.

On 9 January 2017, the Government decided that the Defence Commission should begin work to produce material for the Government for future Defence Resolutions. The Defence Commission comprises members of the eight parties represented in the Riksdag, advisers and experts, and a secretariat. By 14 May 2019, the Commission must present a defence and security policy report to the Government. On the basis of the Defence Commission's reports, and other material, the Government will draft a new defence policy for the period 2021–2025, which the Riksdag will then decide whether or not to adopt.

Published 02 October 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Peter Hultqvist visits the Hungarian Defence Minister

On September 26, Hungarian Defence Minister István Simicskó received Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist in Budapest. The ministers discussed the military-strategic situation in the Baltic region and Eastern Europe, as well as the ongoing cooperation on JAS 39 Gripen.

During the meeting in the Hungarian capital, Mr Hultqvist presented Sweden's assessment of the deteriorating security policy situation in our neighbourhood. With its latest defence decision, Sweden has increased its focus on national defence and the neighbourhood.

Ministers also discussed defence-related cooperation between the countries. Hungary leases fourteen JAS 39 Gripen from Sweden, and Mr Hultqvist also visited the Kecskemét air base where these aircraft are based.

Published 27 September 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Swedish-Croatian defence ministerial meeting

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met Croatian Defence Minister Damir Krstičević in Zagreb on 25 September. The ministers discussed EU cooperation in the area of defence, and contributions to EU operations in Africa.

During the meeting, the defence ministers discussed Swedish defence policy and work, as well as strengthening national defence capabilities in light of the deterioration of security in our area. Mr Hultqvist was also able to provide information about the ongoing Aurora defence forces exercise.

The defence ministers also discussed the EU and UN initiatives taking place in Africa, in which Sweden participates, as well as the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, which includes both Swedish and Croatian troops

Published 26 September 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Visit to Slovenia

On 25 September, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Slovenia and his Slovenian colleague Andreja Katič. The ministers discussed European security policy, as well as peacekeeping operations.

Mr Hultqvist met with Ms Katič in Ljubljana, where they discussed the changing security policy situation in the Baltic region and Eastern Europe and how the situation in North Korea is developing.

Mr Hultqvist also affirmed that the Swedish Government welcomes the ongoing efforts to strengthen the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Sweden wants to ensure that the EU's permanent structured cooperation on defence (PESCO) is inclusive and contributes to the right level of ambition for the CSDP.

Published 26 September 2017



Swedish Armed Forces Exercise Aurora 17 will increase military capability

Exercise Aurora 17 will be conducted on 11–29 September. The exercise is the largest armed forces exercise held in Sweden for over 20 years. Its aim is to increase the defence capabilities to meet an attack against Sweden. A total of some 19 000 men and women from the Swedish Armed Forces and staff from some 40 other agencies will take part in the exercise. Military units from Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Norway and the United States will also take part.

The Government considers Aurora 17 to be important for achieving the Defence Resolution's ambitions of increasing the military capabilities of the Armed Forces, and so raise the deterrent threshold against attack or threat against Sweden. According to a Government decision from 2015, the Armed Forces are required to carry out 'major, qualified exercises involving joint operations of the armed forces' during the Defence Resolution period. Aurora meets this requirement.

Armed Forces Exercise Aurora 17 is a national exercise aimed at strengthening our national defence capability in light of a deteriorating security situation in our region. The exercise is being carried out at several locations in Sweden and is an important step towards implementing the Defence Resolution's objectives from 2015. It is the first and largest exercise of its kind in more than 20 years. All branches of the Armed Forces and more than 19 000 men and women – one quarter of whom are from the Home Guard – will participate. In addition, a number of government agencies and military units from other countries will participate.

Exercises important to overall capability

The mission of the Swedish Armed Forces is to defend Sweden and Swedish interests. One of the foremost tools for increasing its capabilities, testing the trained units and sending signals to the surrounding world about Sweden's military capabilities is exercises.

"Aurora is the largest exercise in 23 years, in which the army, air force and navy is participating in a joint exercise. The exercise sends an important signal about our security policy. It raises the deterrent threshold against different types of incidents and provides important data for evaluation of our military capabilities," says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Government also wants to increase training activities over the next few years and Sweden to regain the capability to simultaneously be able to mobilise its entire war organisation in the event of a heightened alert. In accordance with the Government's overall focus, a number of measures will be carried out in 2018 that affect refresher training, exercise planning and acquisition of equipment, based on the main missions of the military units in the event of war and the premise that all military units must be battle-ready.

Security together with others

In light of the deterioration of the security situation in Europe, the Swedish defence capability needs to be strengthened and Sweden's defence and security policy cooperation with other countries should be deepened.

Sweden builds security and stability together with other countries and organisations. Since Sweden must be able to provide and receive military support, training in this must also be carried out. The Armed Forces must be able to receive military units from other nations and provide them with necessary support, such as shelter and maintenance. These are the kind of arrangements that will be practised with units from other countries during the Aurora 17.

"We place great value on the international cooperation that builds a security network in our part of Europe. I look forward to personally visiting the exercise on four occasions and at all locations," says Mr Hultqvist.

Increased total defence capabilities

Sweden's total defence capabilities will be practised during Aurora 17.

Representatives from some 40 government agencies will therefore also take part in the exercise.

Aurora 17 will be conducted in the air, on the ground and at sea. Military units throughout Sweden will be affected, but the main exercise areas will be the Mälardalen and Stockholm areas, on and around Gotland and in the Gothenburg area.

Sweden strives to be as open and transparent as possible about the exercise. In line with this, the Swedish Armed Forces is planning a number of international visits, and avoluntarily observation visits in accordance with the Vienna Document chapter 4, which is an international agreement that promotes the exchange of military information among the signatory countries.

Published 13 September 2017



Norwegian Minister of Defence visits Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received on June 22 in Stockholm his Norwegian colleague, Minister of Defence Ine Eriksen Søreide. The visit is a continuation to the strengthened bilateral ties in the light of new security policy challenges both countries are facing.

At the previous meeting in Oslo late November last year the two ministers agreed on a list of measures to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation. Amongst other measures, the two countries are to exchange experiences regarding the development of modern total defence as well as re-institute defence attachés in both capitals in order to strengthen the exchange of information.

During the June 22 meeting the ministers also discussed regional security issues as well as Nordic defence cooperation within the NORDEFECO framework. Norway will hold the chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2018.

- The aim of this meeting is to further develop the defence cooperation between our countries. It creates stability and raises the threshold for conflict in our part of the world, concludes Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.



Government Offices of Sweden

Brazilian Minister of Defence visited Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received on June 13 his Brazilian colleague Raul Jungmann in Stockholm.

Following ceremonial honors at Karlberg Castle, the ministers discussed regional security in Northern Europe and Latin America, as well as international peacekeeping operations and bilateral concerns.

A strategic partnership between Sweden and Brazil was signed in 2009. During the visit, the Brazilian minister also met with representatives from Saab in Linköping.

Published 13 June 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met with U.S. Defense Secretary Mattis

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in Washington D.C. on 18 May. The ministers discussed the deepened defence cooperation between the two countries.

- The meeting clearly indicates that the Swedish-U.S. Statement of Intent (SoI), signed in 2016, holds its ground, Hultqvist said.

The purpose of the SoI is to increase the understanding and cooperation between respective Defence Administrations as well as pave the way for cooperative activities. U.S. participation in the upcoming Aurora 2017 exercise in Sweden is a good example of the close cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting between the Minister for Defence and the Defense Secretary took place at the Pentagon.

Published 19 May 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Johns Hopkins

On May 16 Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist gave a speech at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington D.C. In his speech, the Minister for Defence focused on security policy development in Northern Europe.

A division of The Johns Hopkins University, the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) is a global institution that offers students a perspective on international politics, economy, diplomacy and education.

Published 17 May 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited the UN Headquarters in New York City

On May 15, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited the UN Headquarters in New York City. In addition to visiting the Swedish Permanent Mission, the Minister for Defence also represented Sweden in an open debate on conflict-related sexual violence held at the UN Security Council.

During his visit to the UN, the Minister for Defence met with the Permanent Representative of Sweden Mr. Olof Skoog and his colleagues to discuss Sweden's role in the Security Council.

During the month of May, the presidency of the Security Council is held by Uruguay. The focus of the open debate on conflict-related sexual violence was particularly on sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism. Representing Sweden at the debate, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist expressed the views of the Swedish Government.

Minister for Defence Hultqvist also met with various United Nations Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding actors as well as with representatives of other Permanent Missions to the UN.

In June 2016 Sweden was one of ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.

Published 16 May 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

The Defence Minister of Indonesia visited Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received on May 8 his Indonesian colleague Ryamizard Ryacudu at Karlberg Castle. Following ceremonial honors, the ministers discussed the security policy developments in Northern Europe and Southeast Asia, as well as common defence material related issues.

The Indonesian Defence Ministerial visit is an official response to Peter Hultqvist's visit to Indonesia in December 2016. During the visit, the Indonesian Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu also met the representatives from the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish defence industry.

Published 09 May 2017



Total defence receives SEK 500 million in additional funding

In the spring budget, the Government has proposed extra funding to strengthen total defence this year. The Government is allocating an additional SEK 500 million to the Swedish Armed Forces and Sweden's total defence capability in 2017.

In the spring amending budget, the Government has proposed additional funding of SEK 405 million to the Swedish Armed Forces. This additional funding will be used to:

- increase the preparedness and availability of military units;
- strengthen the Battlegroup of Gotland with anti-aircraft capability;
- carry out exercises and increase the numbers involved in exercises that are already planned;
- improve cyber security; and
- purchase spare parts and vehicles for units.

In addition, the Government has proposed SEK 60 million to strengthen municipalities' and county councils' work in the area of civilian defence, SEK 15 million for the county administrative boards for total defence planning, SEK 10 million for the National Defence Radio Establishment to strengthen society's resilience to cyberattacks against vital public services and SEK 10 million for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency for efforts to counter cyber-attacks.



Sweden adding 500 million SEK to 2017 defence budget

The Swedish government and the parties of the defence agreement have agreed to allocate 500 million SEK extra during 2017, to boost military capability and to enhance the capability of the total defence. The decision to strengthen the defence economy in 2017 is based on information from the Swedish Armed Forces.

The single most important priority in the period 2016-2020 is to increase the operational warfighting capability of the Swedish Armed Forces and to ensure the collective force of the Swedish total defence. Beyond previous investments, the parties of the defence agreement (the Social Democrats, the Green Party, the Moderates, the Center Party and the Christian Democrats) have agreed to strengthen the economy with 500 million SEK during 2017. The decision the foundation for enhanced warfighting capability and enhanced capability in the total defence.

Additional resource strengthening in 2018

The parties behind the defence agreement have agreed to further strengthen the defence economy in 2018. The Armed Forces' budget report will be further analysed and form the basis for discussions in view of the governmental Budget Bill for 2018.

The decision is based on information from the Armed Forces

The decision to strengthen the defence economy in 2017 is based on reports from the Swedish Armed Forces and includes means to strengthen the Battle Group Gotland with air defence from 2018, strengthened resilience for cyber attacks as well as means for total defence planning which will be distributed to municipalities, counties and county administrative boards.



Sweden re-activates conscription

The Swedish government has decided to re-activate conscription from January 1 2018.

The security environment in Europe and in Sweden's vicinity has deteriorated and the all-volunteer recruitment hasn't provided the Armed Forces with enough trained personnel. The re-activating of the conscription is needed for military readiness.

Trained personnel are fundamental for building military capability. In 2016 the Armed Forces lacked 1 000 active squad leaders, soldiers and sailors as well as 7 000 reservists.

Recruitment to the Armed Forces will be partly voluntary and partly conscription based. Individual motivation, interest and will should to be considered as much as possible.

The Armed Forces is planning for 4 000 recruits annually in basic military training in 2018 and 2019.

The modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men.

Published 02 March 2017



Discussion on NATO's future at focus during the Munich Security Conference

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist attended the Munich Security Conference (MSC) from 17 to 19 February. Among the subjects on this year's conference agenda was the future of transatlantic relations and NATO after the election in the United States.

Around 500 leaders debated current international crises and future challenges to international security at the Munich Security Conference 2017. Among the participants were UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, US Vice President Mike Pence, US Defense Secretary James Mattis, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg together with more than 30 heads of state and government, over 80 foreign and defence ministers.

The conference agenda focused on the future of transatlantic relations and NATO, the state of European cooperation in security and defence matters, relations with Russia as well as the war in Syria, the security situation in the Asia-Pacific, and information warfare.

The Minister of Defence spoke at the "Arctic Security Roundtable", where he focused on describing the military build up in the Kola peninsula and its security implications for the Arctic neighbourhood.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke at the roundtable on climate security.



Government Offices of Sweden

Georgian Minister for Defence Levan Izoria visited Sweden

On 24 January, the Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist received Georgia's Minister for Defence Levan Izoria. The Ministers discussed defence cooperation, total defence and the security policy situation.

The Georgian visit in Stockholm also included a meeting with the Swedish Supreme Commander Micael Bydén at the Swedish Military Headquarters. Georgia and Sweden are two of five countries which are part of the enhanced opportunities partnership for dialogue and cooperation (EOP) with NATO.

Published 24 January 2017



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indonesia

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited Indonesia the 20th of December. The purpose of the trip was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of defence.

Peter Hultqvist and his Indonesian counterpart Ryamizard Ryacudu signed the 20th of December a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of defence. The Ministers discussed a deepened cooperation, exchange of information and the security policy situation. Besides signing the Memorandum of Understanding Peter Hultqvist also visited Indonesia National Defence Forces Peacekeeping Centre. The Centre trains Indonesian units which are being used in UN-missions. Sweden and Indonesia participate in the same UN-mission in Mali.

- The journey is about preserving the relationship with Indonesia by deepening defence cooperation in areas such as research and education, said Peter Hultqvist after his meeting with Indonesian Defence Minister in Jakarta.

The strategic position and its regional importance of Indonesia makes it an central partner to Sweden.

Published 22 December 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

The Nordic countries agree on deepened military cooperation

On Wednesday 9 November 2016, the Nordic Ministers of Defence made a Joint Statement, after having signed a Memorandum of Understanding on enhanced and easier access to each others' territories in peacetime. The agreement will improve the operational effect and quality of air, land and maritime operations. Also the Northern Group consisting of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom and Sweden, have met today and came together informally for discussions on defence and security issues.

Published 09 November 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden and the United Kingdom enhances Defence Cooperation

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and UK Defence Secretary Michael Fallon have signed a Programme of Defence Cooperation. The Programme of Defence Cooperation shows political intent, giving support to the bilateral cooperation between Sweden and the United Kingdom, its development and continuation.

The Programme of Defence Cooperation is based on the current cooperation. The aim is to identify and prioritize new initiatives, to work together to develop defence capabilities, to enhance interoperability and ability to deploy alongside operationally and thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the defence forces.

The hope is to enhance the effect and the possibility to deliver more concrete output of the cooperation. The Programme of Defence Cooperation includes more than 50 activities focusing on enhancing interoperability and improving our capability to act together.

Defence cooperation with the UK is a Swedish priority. We have broad cooperation on all levels, including contacts between our governments and agencies. We have positive experiences from previous and ongoing cooperation. The ambition is to continue our cooperation and at the same time ensure its development.

Sweden and the United Kingdom share values and an understanding of developments both in a global context and on matters of direct concern to Europe. Both countries believe that cooperation is crucial for European security. Many regional and global challenges can only be addressed through

acting together.

Published 11 June 2016



Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist signed US-Swedish Statement of Intent

On 8 June, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter signed a bilateral Statement of Intent. The statement sets out a strategic resolve to increase understanding and cooperation between the two countries' defence ministries, armed forces and defence agencies.

"The aim is to build on current cooperative activities and to identify and prioritise new initiatives. We intend to work together to develop our defence capabilities, enhance our interoperability and our ability to deploy alongside each other operationally, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our defence efforts", says Peter Hultqvist.

The efforts to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Sweden and the United States are divided into five key areas:

- Enhancing interoperability
- Strengthening capabilities and posture through training and exercises
- Deepening armament cooperation
- Advancing cooperation in research and development and
- Meeting common challenges in multilateral operations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Fake Twitter account shut down

On 25 April a Twitter account was set up claiming to be the official account of Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. This was a fake account. The violation has been reported and the fake account has been shut down.

The official Twitter account of the Swedish Ministry of Defence is:

[@ForsvarsdepSv](https://twitter.com/ForsvarsdepSv).

Published 26 April 2016



Switzerland's Minister of Defence Guy Parmelin visited Sweden

On April 14th Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist received Mr Guy Parmelin, Swiss Minister of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports during a ceremony at Karlberg Castle.

The reason for the visit was to discuss prospects for joint exercises and training activities and the possibilities for defence cooperation.

It was Swiss Defence Minister Parmelin's first visit to Sweden. A guard of honour welcomed the ministers at Karlberg Palace followed by a bilateral meeting.

At the bilateral meeting the ministers discussed:

- Security policy situation in Europe
- Possibilities for deepened defence cooperation
- The transformation of the Armed Forces in Sweden and in Switzerland
- Swedish and Swiss participation in international operations - with focus on counter-ISIL effort.

Published 14 April 2016



Peter Hultqvist participated in the Munich Security Conference

The Minister of Defence, Peter Hultqvist attended the annual session of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) 12th-14th of February. For the first time by a Swedish minister of Defence, Mr Hultqvist addressed one of the meeting sessions concerning the future of NATO.

Peter Hultqvist spoke about the increased tensions in the Baltic Sea region in the recent years and the need to reinforce Swedish military capabilities and enhanced cooperations with other countries and organizations. In particular, the cooperation between Sweden and Finland builds on the intention that the Armed Forces will have the possibility to act together in case of crisis or war.

Hultqvist lifted the illegal annexation of Crimea and the challenge to the European security order this implies.

- The Russian actions are beyond an aggression on Ukraine. It constitutes a threat to the right to make their own policy choices of all countries' in Russia's neighbourhood, Peter Hultqvist said.

During the session Hultqvist also mentioned the migration challenges for Europe and for Sweden caused by the security situation in Syria and Iraq, and the need to tackle the causes of people fleeing.

- Only a united Europe ready to stand up for its values and principles, will be able to contribute to European peace and stability. The future of regional peace and stability depends on keeping European unity, Peter Hultqvist told the conference.



NORDEFECO Annual Report 2015

2015 was both an eventful as well as productive year for the Nordic Defence Cooperation, NORDEFECO. The Annual Report 2015 highlights the work and achievements made during the Swedish Chairmanship last year.

NORDEFECO as regional defence cooperation is constantly evolving, where we actively seek for possibilities for cooperation based on shared understanding of our mutual potential and challenges for our region. During the Swedish Chairmanship we have tried to strengthen our cooperation further and coordination in capability development and armaments cooperation, continued to coordinate Nordic activities in international operations and capacity building, human resources, education, training and exercises.

To highlight a few focus areas this year we have looked into possibilities of closer cooperation within air surveillance, a work which will proceed during 2016. Significant progress has been made on the topic of secure communication. We have taken a decision to implement secure communication during 2016 between our capitals at military and political level. Within the concept on alternate landing bases, a technical agreement has been drafted that, once signed by all participating nations, will enable our air forces to increase the effect of their exercises. The next step is to examine whether the concept can be extended to also include armed aircraft. The MCC has conducted an initial report on what would be required to establish a high intensity Air Combat Flag Exercise (Northern Flag). This is just a few examples of the work we committed to during 2015.

The Nordic countries meet the challenging security situation in our region through solidarity and enhanced cooperation. With differing organizational affiliations we cooperate closely within the framework of the EU and NATO. In light of the current security situation, close political dialogue between the Nordic countries has become even more important. NORDEFECO provides an important platform for security policy dialogue and seeking military

cooperation for our region.

Denmark will act as Chairman of NORDEFECO during 2016.

Published 26 January 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden and Denmark sign enhanced defence cooperation agreement

On the 14th of January 2016, the Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist and the Danish Minister of Defence Peter Christensen signed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to enhance and deepen bilateral defence cooperation.

The enhanced defence cooperation agreement between Sweden and Denmark includes focus areas such as:

- deepened exchange of information,
- establishment of secure communications,
- increased exchanged of training and exercises
- the ability to access each others' territory in peacetime

With this new framework for expanded defence cooperation, the next step for the Swedish and Danish Armed Forces will be to examine conditions for concrete operational cooperation.

Published 14 January 2016



Focus on peace and development when Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Mali

The peace agreement in Mali, talks with representatives of the Malian Government and a visit to the Swedish detachment in Camp Nobel as part of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA. These were some of the points on the agenda when Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, together with Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Micael Bydén, visited Mali on 5–7 January.

Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist's visit to Mali comes at an important time for the country. A peace agreement was signed last June and is now being implemented with the support of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA.

During their visit, the ministers met Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, Prime Minister Modibo Keïta, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdoulaye Diop and Minister of Defence Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly for talks on peace, security and development in the country. Peace and security and the implementation of the peace agreement were also the focus when Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist visited the Swedish unit in Timbuktu.

"For sustainable peace, it is important that the peace agreement is implemented in an inclusive manner. Women must have a role in the peace process," says Ms Wallström, who with Mr Hultqvist also met local women's organisations in Timbuktu.



The Government presented Sweden's support to France

Sweden attaches great importance to the EU as a community of solidarity. It is in our security policy interest that Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union and the EU's security policy as such are credible. This requires that the bilateral assistance and support requested by France is now credible and fit-for-purpose. Sweden will therefore play its part, as outlined at a press briefing by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist today.

As a follow-up of France's request under Article 42 (7) of the Treaty on European Union and additional support in the fight against ISIL, an inventory of possible Swedish contributions has been made. The starting point for this is that it must be requested, fit-for-purpose, effective and efficient, credible, sustainable over time, in accordance with international law, based on a risk analysis and based on broad consensus and available Swedish resources, in terms of both personnel and funding.

In an initial package, Sweden can offer the following:

- 50–100 SAC hours (strategic airlift capability) will be placed at France's disposal.
- Tactical air transport (1 TP84) for use in MINUSMA within the framework of a Nordic rotation in which Sweden would take over from Norway and Denmark in spring 2017.
- A number of staff officers for MINUSMA or UNTSO.
- A reinforced Swedish contribution to EUTM Mali is being looked into, if possible in cooperation with others.
- A request concerning support in the form of military equipment is being processed under a separate decision procedure.

In addition to this, there is the Swedish military training contribution comprising 35 people who have been on the ground in northern Iraq since August 2015 and will remain there in 2016 if the Riksdag gives its approval. Sweden's contribution also includes personnel stationed at staff headquarters in Baghdad and Erbil. In Mali, Sweden is participating in MINUSMA with a contribution of 250 people. The current mandate extends until 30 June 2016. An extension of Sweden's contribution is expected until the end of June 2017. Sweden currently has 10 people placed with the EUTM in Mali and has decided to continue its contribution of two staff officers with the EUMAM in the Central African Republic.

In spring 2016, the conditions for additional Swedish support will be regularly looked into on the basis of the needs that exist and that emerge in the anti-ISIL coalition, and on the basis of what other countries have contributed, as well as in line with the aforementioned criteria. A review will then take place in autumn 2016.

Moreover, Sweden is providing extensive humanitarian support and development cooperation. Sweden's humanitarian support to Syria since 2011 has amounted to SEK 1.9 billion, and in 2015 support amounted to SEK 577 million. The Government is now raising its level of ambition by drawing up a whole new type of aid strategy for the Syrian crisis, comprising SEK 1.7 billion for the period 2016–2020. SEK 16 million will go to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, which meets the needs of the population in the opposition-controlled areas. In addition, support is being given to Birgitta Holst Alani's facilitator role in the Intra-Syrian Contact Group for the Continuity of Public Services, Reconstruction and Development, and the opposition's efforts to agree and take part in the UN process are being supported by Special Envoy Niklas Kebabian. Moreover, Sweden is working to strengthen women's participation in the UN-led negotiations.

Since 2014, Sweden has given more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, in addition to major Swedish non-earmarked core support to the UN and other international organisations, which in total makes Sweden one of the largest donors to the region. Development cooperation will be expanded by SEK 40 million in 2016 for capacity building of central and local government in Iraq. Sweden is also contributing USD 4 million to the UNDP stabilisation fund (approx. SEK 32 million). In addition to this, possibilities are being looked into for providing support to strengthen the rule of law and the security sector in Iraq, and to contribute to the country's long-term stabilisation. (One possibility could be a civilian ESFP operation targeting capacity building in these areas.)

Published 16 December 2015



Defence minister discussed Sweden's military commitments during visit by Afghan President

On 4 December, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Micael Bydén also took part in the meeting. Discussions focused on the security situation in Afghanistan and Sweden's military commitments.

During his visit, President Ghani has had meetings with representatives of the Government and the Royal Court. A bilateral cooperation agreement was signed during the meeting. The visit is the first by an Afghan head of state since 2002 and is taking place 75 years after Sweden and Afghanistan established diplomatic relations.

Sweden has provided military support to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since 2002. The objective has been to promote peace, security and reconstruction. The Afghan security forces have assumed control of security throughout the country, but there is still a need for international military support.

On 5 November 2015, the Government proposed that the Riksdag allow a continued Swedish military contribution consisting of no more than 50 persons for participation in the NATO-led military training and advisory mission Resolute Support Mission (RSM) on the ground in Afghanistan until the end of December 2016. The Riksdag will take its decision in mid-December.



Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Iraq on 2–3 November

On 3 November, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist concluded a joint visit to Iraq. One key event was a visit to the Swedish contribution to the military multinational operation in northern Iraq. Developments in Iraq are disturbing and in many ways, the country is at a decisive crossroads. The purpose of the visit was to express support for the country's pro-reform forces and to highlight the scope and sustainability of the Swedish commitment to Iraq, both bilaterally and via the international coalition against ISIL.

In addition to visiting the Swedish military personnel on the ground in northern Iraq, the ministers also met representatives of the Iraqi government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil.

The visit began on 2 November in Baghdad, where the two ministers had meetings with President Fuad Masum, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim al-Jabouri, Minister of Defence Khaled al-Obeidi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who hosted the visit.

Meetings in Iraqi Kurdistan

On Monday evening, the visit continued in Erbil, the capital of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in northern Iraq. The ministers attended a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, at which government representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and

the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) parties took part.

On Tuesday, Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist took part in a meeting with Minister for the Interior and acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari and Head of KRG Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir. The ministers also met representatives of civil society and of the Assyrian, Yazidi and Turkmen minorities in Iraq. On Tuesday, the ministers also met KRG President Masoud Barzani for talks on developments in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Visit to Swedish military force

The trip to Iraq concluded with a visit to the regional coalition headquarters and the Swedish military force that, since the summer, has been operating within the framework of the international coalition against ISIL. The Swedish force consists of 35 persons, whose task is to train the Iraqi armed forces in the fight against ISIL.

Sweden has close relations with Iraq. The countries have extensive people-to-people exchanges. Close to two per cent of the Swedish population has Iraqi roots. Since 2014, Sweden has provided Iraq with more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support, thereby making it one of the largest bilateral donors to Iraq. The humanitarian support, which is mainly channelled via the UN on the ground, is crucial to relieving the difficult humanitarian situation, with 8.6 million people in need of humanitarian support. It is also vital in trying to avoid even more Iraqis seeing no other choice than to make their way to Europe. In addition, Sweden has engaged in bilateral development cooperation with Iraq, focusing on democracy and human rights, and support to civil society.

Published 04 November 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

“Intense, fruitful days in Vilnius” – The State Visit to Lithuania 7-9 October

Friday 9 October was the final day of the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania. Since the State Visit began on Wednesday 7 October, the Swedish delegation has had a fruitful and busy visit on the other side of the Baltic Sea.

The theme of the State Visit was ‘The Baltic Sea unites us’. Environment, sustainability, research and innovation have been in focus. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg began his part of the State Visit by discussing the business and investment climate with business sector representatives, Minister of Economy Evaldas Gustas and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

Following a warm welcome by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, the King and Queen, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Mr Damberg visited Antakalnis Cemetery to honour the victims of the struggle for independence and place a wreath there. The King and Queen stressed Sweden’s sympathy and solidarity with the Lithuanian people’s struggle throughout history.

The first evening concluded with a banquet at the Presidential Palace; before it commenced, the King and Queen inaugurated the ‘AccessAbility’ photo exhibition, that highlights openness and inclusion through personal stories by Swedes and Lithuanians who live with impairments.

The second day continued in the same spirit: the King and Queen began their day by meeting the business community and discussing the Lithuanian business climate and the opportunities and challenges Swedish companies who become established there may encounter. Ms Wallström, Mr Damberg, the CEO of Business Sweden Ylva Berg, and a number of other business

representatives were also present.

This was then followed by Swedish Business Forum and Awards, where the King presented awards to business community actors who had distinguished themselves in various sectors. Afterwards, the King and Mr Damberg continued to the company TEO LT AB, which is an industry leader in ICT and wireless connection. Parallel with these visits, Queen Silvia and Ms Wallström took part in a round-table meeting on trafficking with a Lithuanian parliamentary committee.

The conclusion of the second day of the State Visit also marked the end of a successful visit for Mr Damberg and Ms Wallström, who said about the visit:

- We have had two intense and fruitful days in Vilnius. I met my foreign minister colleague, Linas Linkevičius, and we announced that we will visit Ukraine jointly in November. I also visited the parliament, met students and took part in a round-table discussion on trafficking.

The King and Queen and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist began their third and final day on the sand dunes of the Curonian Spit, near the harbour town of Klaipėda, where experts from Region Skåne talked about the cooperation around the Baltic Sea to check negative climate impact along the coast.

In addition to environment discussions, the visit to the Curonian Spit included a stop at the local dolphinarium, which provided information about the dolphin therapy developed to help children with various types of impairments. Later in the afternoon, a visit was paid to the NordBalt project's transformer station ahead of the ground-breaking operational launch in Vilnius on 14 December, which will lead to a change of direction in the energy flow on the Baltic market.

The final State Visit stop was at the Amber Museum in Palanga, where President Grybauskaitė was warmly thanked for an inspiring visit in the spirit of sustainability, research and innovation.

Published 13 October 2015



NATO General visited the Minister of Defence

On the 5th of August, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) of NATO Allied Command Operations Philip M. Breedlove visited the Swedish Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss cooperation within the framework Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP) and issues related to the Host Nation Support agreement between NATO and Sweden.

Since 1994 Sweden has been a part of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO.

- The framework of the EOP is the main vehicle for developing Sweden's partnership with NATO. Also, Host Nation Support provides Sweden with concrete measures to effectively and efficiently work together both in times of peace, with advanced exercises, as well as in time of crisis or war, said Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Sweden's cooperation with NATO allows the Swedish Armed Forces to develop military capabilities and, by contributing to qualified international crisis management operations, Sweden contributes to building security together with partners.

Published 06 August 2015



Indian State Visit concluded

On the evening of 2 June, India's President Shri Pranab Mukherjee left Sweden following a State Visit of three days. The President was in Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. The Government was represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit were innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – was therefore an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

The State Visit began on Sunday with the traditional welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace. The King and the President inspected a guard of honour from the Life Guards and many members of the Government, as well as other Swedish public representatives, were present to welcome the President.

Monday began with a visit to the Riksdag, where the President was received by the Speaker of the Riksdag and met with Members of the Riksdag.

In the morning, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven also received the President for talks at Rosenbad. Mr Mukherjee and Mr Löfven discussed issues such as growing trade between Sweden and India and broad bilateral cooperation covering such areas as the environment, renewable energy and health. Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan also took part in the talks.

In connection with the meeting at Rosenbad, a number of agreements

between India and Sweden were signed, including a memorandum of understanding on sustainable urban development. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to promote cooperation on matters concerning sustainable and integrated urban planning and land use, waste management, sustainable transport systems, water and sanitation.

Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan joined the President and the King later in the afternoon for a boat tour of Hammarby Sjöstad. During the boat tour, a roundtable discussion was held with business representatives on how cities can be built in more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

[Sustainable cities in focus during the Indian State Visit](#)

Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research, was present at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when a number of cooperation agreements were signed between Indian and Swedish higher education institutions.

On Monday evening, the King and Queen hosted a gala dinner for the President.

Visit to Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala University

The theme on Tuesday, the final day of the visit, was mainly research and science. Minister Helene Hellmark Knutsson was in attendance when the President and the King and Queen visited Karolinska Institutet. The focus lay on scientific cooperation, and included visits to Nobel Forum and Aula Medica. The President was also given a presentation of Nya Karolinska Solna (NKS) and Hagastaden.

Before lunch, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg took part in a roundtable discussion between representatives of the Swedish and Indian business sectors. The President and the King were also present.

Mr Damberg gave a speech entitled *India-Sweden Partnership – Co-creating a Brighter Future*.

In connection with the business forum, the President announced that Swedish passport holders will now be granted an 'eTourist visa' when visiting India, leading to more expedient visa handling for Swedish citizens.

In the afternoon, the President visited Uppsala University together with

Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Ms Wallström gave the opening address and the President held a lecture on the theme ‘Tagore and Gandhi: Do they have contemporary relevance for Global Peace?’.

[Speech by Margot Wallström at Uppsala University](#)

On Tuesday evening, Ms Wallström was in attendance when Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel bid farewell to the President at Arlanda airport.

Published 04 June 2015



Budget reinforcement to the Swedish Armed Forces' regimental- and air surveillance capabilities

Sweden's approach to security policy has changed. The Russian annexation of Crimea, the armed conflict in Ukraine, the increased amount of exercises as well as intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region, the intrusive behaviour by Russia, and now the Swedish Armed Forces intelligence operation in the Stockholm archipelago demonstrate the necessity for Sweden to maintain a functional and effective operational defence organisation.

The geopolitical changes demonstrate how important it is to develop the national dimension of Sweden's defence. Safeguarding Swedish sovereignty and territorial integrity is a key task. The Government considers that the military units and equipment acquisition of the Swedish Armed Forces need to gradually be strengthened in accordance with the proposals of the Defence Commission.

In the Budget Bill, the Government proposed measures to strengthen the military activities and presence of the Swedish Armed Forces in our vicinity. As such, the Government underlines the importance of maintaining and strengthening a high standard of air surveillance. There should also be an increased presence on Gotland.

Furthermore, the changes in the autumn budget proposes an additional contribution totalling SEK 210 million, in 2014, in order to strengthen exercise activities and availability of military units. Additional

reinforcements will also occur in 2015 and beyond. The primary purpose of the funding is to strengthen exercise activities. This initiative is in line with the ambitions and directions of the Defence Commission.

In order to ensure the development and acquisition of the new JAS Gripen 39 E, we will take the responsibility for the completion of its upgrade and production. As a consequence of the incomplete JAS-deal with Switzerland, the allocation to defence equipment will be given an additional SEK 2 billion in 2014. This initiative will be funded in part by reducing the appropriation for international operations by SEK 500 million. The allocation for defence equipment will also receive a further SEK 900 million in 2015. The JAS-project will thereby receive a total of SEK 2.9 billion over the next two years. This is crucial in order to ensure that the lost revenues in the JAS-project do not have a negative impact on other planned equipment acquisitions.

By 2024, as in accordance with the Defence Commission's proposals, the military units and allocation of equipment acquisitions will be more than SEK 5.5 billion than previously estimated. In the coming budget year, preparation of the government bill on the direction of the Swedish defence policy, due to be presented to the Riksdag in spring 2015, will be critical in further assessments.

In light of the Defence Commission's analysis, a defence policy resolution that steers the organisation of the Swedish Armed Forces should be adopted. The Government is working to create a broad majority in the Riksdag on this point.

Another priority in this budget will be the deepening of the Finnish-Swedish bilateral cooperation, which falls in line with the Statement of Government Policy. Through deeper cooperation between Sweden and Finland, we will jointly strengthen accountability for security and stability in our part of Europe. Sweden has emphasized that Swedish units should contribute within the UN, EU and NATO international forces registers. This, like other cooperative efforts within the Nordic region, EU, UN and NATO, increases capabilities within the Swedish Armed Forces' and improves interoperability.

Published 27 October 2014



“France and Sweden to further develop defence cooperation”

We live in uncertain times. The geopolitical challenges today are more acute and complex than in recent decades. Russia just concluded the military exercise Zapad, displaying its military capabilities with a substantial volume of forces, while highlighting in its National Security Strategy presented last July that “Russia is preparing for a long-term conflict with the West”.

In the Mediterranean unilateral actions jeopardise regional stability and undermine the unity of the West. China is using its economic might and expanding global military presence to shore up political influence and leverage in many parts of the world. International and domestic politics are marked by polarisation. Growing extremism and terrorism pose threats. International norms and rules are facing increasing pressure. Disinformation and hybrid activities sponsored by state actors such as China and Russia are part of a new normal.

Examples of this can be found in the Arctic, Northern Atlantic, Baltic and Black Sea regions, the South Caucasus, the ongoing war in Ukraine and in the policies of the regime in Belarus. In the Sahel, extremism, terrorism, human trafficking and the drug trade threaten not only the people of the region but also the security of Europe. This is a threat to both our internal and our external security. As global commons, such as space, cyber, sea and air domains, become more and more contested, European countries must jointly defend their interests and values, and international law. This is our duty if we are to maintain security, freedom of access and navigation. We must act together because no one will do so on our behalf.

European countries, together with our transatlantic partners, must meet these challenges together. In the aftermath of the events in Afghanistan we need to

have an open and frank political dialogue on the lessons learned on international engagements and global commitments. Our credibility is linked to a strong political will and military capacity to act, combined with our ability to coordinate with our allies and partners. In this context, we cannot afford to leave the scene to terrorist organisations or to state actors who contest the international rules-based order. The security of Europe is first and foremost the responsibility of Europeans themselves. Europe's security should strengthen European strategic autonomy in a way that directly benefits transatlantic and global security.

France and Sweden are partners with shared interests, values and history. When international institutions and norms are challenged, we emphasise our commitment to democracy, human rights, multilateralism and international law. Today, we will sign an agreement on defence cooperation. Our aim is to work together more efficiently, reinforce our interoperability, foster synergies in capabilities development and develop a common strategic culture in order to be able to deploy alongside each other in military operations when needed. By doing so, we honour our commitment to the European Union and solidarity as manifested in the Article 42(7) of the Treaty, an article that enabled Sweden to support France in 2015 after the terrorist attacks in Paris. We also honour our strong operational cooperation in the fight against terrorism, as demonstrated by the Swedish involvement in the Takuba Task force in the Sahel.

As close partners committed to trust, transparency and cooperation, France and Sweden are coordinating their upcoming presidencies of the Council of the EU in the areas of crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships. We firmly believe that the EU and NATO are complementary partners in a transatlantic security web that includes other forms of bilateral, multilateral, and regional cooperation that vary in purpose and geographic scope. We are prepared to consider how regional groups of Member States could assume regional responsibility and act on behalf of the EU in a more flexible and reactive manner, building on the model of the Takuba Task Force.

It is our firm belief that French-Swedish defence cooperation promotes stability in the Baltic Sea Region, in Europe as a whole and beyond. As part of the NATO enhanced Forward Presence, France has deployed 300 troops in Estonia, contributes regularly to Baltic Air Policing missions and takes part in numerous regional exercises (Arctic Challenge, Aurora, Northern Coasts). Another concrete example is in the Sahel region, where our joint forces are promoting human rights and restoring security. French and

Swedish Special Forces operate side by side in the most demanding environment in direct support of local armed forces fighting against terrorism. This joint effort is critical to maintaining the security and the stability of our neighbourhood, and thus contributes to our own security.

Today, we will meet with Defence Ministers from the European Intervention Initiative, EI2, in Stockholm. We will discuss how like-minded European partners can achieve more together and ways to improve cooperation and common efforts. EI2 is an effective incubator and catalyst for concrete efforts, gathering the political and military communities of our countries. In this regard, France and Sweden are firmly committed to promoting international law and upholding the European security, with Europe assuming its responsibilities as a security provider and through a strong, balanced and mutually beneficial transatlantic relationship.

Florence Parly
Minister for Defence, France

Peter Hultqvist
Minister for Defence, Sweden

Published 24 September 2021



Finland, Norway and Sweden enhance their trilateral military operations cooperation

We are living in unpredictable times with new challenges and threats contributing to a sense of uncertainty in our societies. We are witnessing an increasingly challenging security situation both globally and in our neighborhood. In addition to the current Covid-19 pandemic and hybrid influencing, we should remember that other security threats persist. Together, we have a responsibility to maintain peace and stability in our region. In order to meet our common responsibility for the security in our region, we must continue to strengthen our capabilities to act together.

In 2018, a new vision for the Nordic defence cooperation (NORDEFECO) was signed. The guiding aim of the vision is that the Nordic countries will improve their defence capability and cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict. We, the defence ministers of Finland, Norway and Sweden, on the 23 September signed a trilateral Statement of Intent which aims to enhance our operational cooperation. This will also support the aim of the NORDEFECO vision.

The new Statement of Intent outlines our common ambition to be able and ready to conduct coordinated operations in crisis and conflict. In order to fulfil this ambition, we will have discussions based on common security concerns in the region. The aim is to be able to coordinate present and future national operations plans. To realize this aim we will establish a strategic planning group among the countries. Exercises and table top exercises will support this work. We will also explore possibilities for common operations planning in certain areas.

One 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. In the spirit of Nordic cooperation, Denmark and Iceland will be informed on a regular basis as the cooperation proceeds.

We are also developing solutions for efficient security of supply in times of peace, crisis or war. Finland, Sweden and Norway have concluded an annex concerning security of supply to the Nordic Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Defence Materiel Area. The annex is a legally binding treaty and entered into force on 11 June.

In light of the security situation, cooperation and unity among likeminded nations is paramount. The Nordic region is one of the world's most integrated. The Nordic countries share a long history, similar economic and social models. We have well-functioning military cooperation among the Nordic countries. The geographic and military-strategic realities underscore the need for this cooperation to continue. Ultimately, the purpose of this cooperation is to jointly be able to meet security challenges also beyond peace-time. We have shared interests to defend.

We have over the years always found pragmatic and flexible ways to cooperate, allowing our defence cooperation to emerge and evolve despite our different security affiliations. We have cooperated successfully in exercises such as Arctic Challenge Exercise, Cold Response, Cross Border Training, Northern Wind and Trident Juncture. We will now build upon experiences gained from these exercises when enhancing our operational cooperation.

We believe in the strength of the Nordic defence cooperation. We must continue to stand together, confront the challenges and unite by the responsibility of maintaining peace and stability in our region. Our trilateral enhanced operational cooperation will be yet another important tool in fulfilling our common ambitions.

Antti Kaikkonen, Minister of Defence in Finland

Frank Bakke-Jensen, Minister of Defence in Norway

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence in Sweden

Published 23 September 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

The need to up security cooperation in the EU

Opinion piece, published in Defense News, 11 December 2017, by Peter Hultqvist, Sweden's Minister of Defence.

Over the past few years, the security situation in Europe has deteriorated. Russian actions constitute a serious challenge to the European security order. Russia's conflict in Georgia in 2008 and the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, with the illegal annexation of Crimea, show that Russia is prepared to use military means to achieve political goals. Russian disinformation campaigns are a reality and something we take seriously.

We also see more Russian activity in the Arctic. We have seen an increase of military activity in the Murmansk region, near the Finnish border and about 300 kilometers from Sweden. Russia has demonstrated both the ability and willingness to act offensively, for example, by temporarily deploying Iskander systems to the Kaliningrad area, as well as conducting offensive exercises with strategic bombing over the Baltic Sea.

Unity in the European Union with the upholding of sanctions connected to international law against Russia is essential. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to raise these concerns through diplomatic dialogue. Furthermore, the trans-Atlantic link is necessary for the stability in our part of Europe, and it must remain strong.

Sweden has reviewed and weighed these facts carefully. On the military side, the Swedish government has increased national defense spending, activated conscription, and refocused efforts on national and civilian defense. Sweden has stationed permanent troops on the strategic island of Gotland located in the Baltic Sea, implemented NATO's Host Nation Support agreement, agreed to develop active cyber capabilities, intensified cooperation with our Baltic Sea partners, and is acquiring next-generation submarines and fighter aircraft.

To exercise and improve defense readiness, the Swedish Armed Forces recently completed the largest military exercise in 26 years, Aurora 17. It had over 22,000 participants including units from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Norway and the United States. Their contributions were of great value. The exercise in itself, which included receiving and hosting friendly troops on Swedish territory, is a security signal.

At the same time Sweden continues to take responsibility for global security concerns through our substantive contributions to international peacekeeping efforts, including Afghanistan, in the coalition against Daesh and in Mali.

Several bilateral and multilateral efforts further demonstrate Sweden's role as a security provider to the region and the overall stability in Europe. The cooperation with Finland is a fundamental platform in our defense strategy. We have taken necessary steps, as two militarily nonaligned countries, to give our Armed Forces the tools to cooperate in case of crisis or war. The bilateral statement of intent with the United States is an important expression of common interest and mutual commitment. We have joined the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force and will continue to work closely with the U.K. NATO has recently renewed our partnership within the Enhanced Opportunities Program. NATO cooperation is a priority, especially on information sharing and military exercises.

Sweden's current surface-to-air Hawk missile (Robot system 97) is a system that will be replaced. The Swedish Defence Materiel Administration will now begin the analysis and process with regard to acquiring the Patriot air and missile defense system. Acquiring such a system with active defense measures and with the flexibility to meet today's wide range of challenges in the air-defense domain is in line with the Swedish defense bill and current needs.

We will continue to upgrade our military capabilities and tie close cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally with the United Nations, NATO, Nordic Defence Cooperation and the EU.

Intensified defense and security cooperation in the European Union remains critical, and we welcome the Permanent Structured Cooperation. The European Union must work more closely on issues such as cyberthreats, hybrid warfare and international crisis management. Intergovernmental cooperation is vital to improve our mutual interests while respecting national sovereignty of all. Capability building must also continue through the

European Defence Industrial Development Programme aimed at fostering innovation and competitiveness for our defense industries.

Cooperation must, however, take into consideration the specific character of the security and defense policy of all member states. To ensure maximum competition and quality, it is important that such programs are open to third parties, including all European-based companies and even those that are not European-owned. The lack of such an arrangement would put member states like Sweden at an unfair disadvantage, in turn risking the trans-Atlantic link and regional cohesion.

As a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Sweden has broad engagement in the U.N. Safeguarding respect for international law and national sovereignty is an integral part of Swedish defense and security policy. Sweden's national defense strategy is strictly in line with international law, by means of the United Nations Charter, with a defensive character and with the right to self-protection.

These are times of uncertainty. The security challenges are more complex than ever, and our response must therefore be multifaceted.

Peter Hultqvist,
Minister of Defence

Published 11 December 2017



“Aurora has had a clear impact on our military capability”

Article in Svenska Dagbladet, 8 October 2017

The first exercise by the Swedish Armed Forces and the largest national exercise in more than 20 years – Aurora – is now over. Unlike other defence-related exercises, the collective capability of the Swedish Armed Forces was now put to the test by participation from all sections of the Armed Forces. Already now, we are able to state that Aurora has been seen as a distinct Swedish security policy signal indicating that Sweden contributes to the stability in our part of Europe, that the exercise has had a clear impact on Swedish military capability and that Sweden is serious in its preparation to provide assistance to and receive assistance from other countries in a crisis situation.

Aurora also signified a very distinct indication that Sweden is now focusing on increasing the capability of its national defence. This move in defence policy position has now been displayed with desired clarity. In practice, the Aurora exercise signified that the new focus of the Swedish defence policy decided upon by a Riksdag majority is now a reality. The exercise was based on the two strategic prerequisites resolved by the Riksdag, namely increased military capability combined with stronger cooperation with other countries. The Swedish unit I met on Gotland viewed itself as part of a larger entirety whereby the challenge was in the cooperation between the air force, the navy and the army. The meeting between the Swedish units and units from other countries provided the opportunity to train against other weapon systems and military tactics than the normal. This has had a direct positive impact on our own military capability.

The visit to Berga and Trosa with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven highlighted the security policy dimension. The exercise was part of a strategy to tackle the new security policy situation. The scenario is the defence of Sweden and our own sovereignty. The development of events over time in our surroundings, with the illegal annexation of the Crimea, the Russian

aggression against Ukraine, the pressure experienced by the Baltic States and the increase in military activities in the Baltic Sea area makes the upgrade of the national defence necessary. As Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven has paid several visits and had the opportunity to speak with personnel in conjunction with the Armed Forces exercises. This emphasises the fact that this government views the defence as a national interest – not a special interest. The cooperation with the Baltic and Nordic countries, France and the US that was manifested during the exercise is clearly significant to the security policy. Cooperation is what generates stability and provides desired clarity in the security policy landscape. The exercise collaboration creates interoperability, meaning the ability to act together, which will prevent crisis situations and generate the necessary thresholds. Combined with diplomacy, transparency and confidence-building measures, exercises such as Aurora act as a preventive measure against crises in our surroundings. Accordingly, the Aurora exercise involving 19,000 participants was also relevant to the situation in other surrounding countries. Following contact with minister colleagues in several countries, particularly Europe, I know that our exercise has strengthened the image that Sweden seriously wants to assume its share of the responsibility for security in our part of Europe.

Consequently, there is high intelligence value and reports have been received about activities in close proximity to the exercise indicating interest in our soldiers, equipment and exercise operations from 'interested parties' that wanted to remain anonymous. With respect to Sweden, we acted openly and invited other countries to the inspection pursuant to the Vienna Document. During the same period, the Zapad exercise was conducted in Russia and Belarus. Sweden was invited to participate with observers in Belarus but Russia did not invite any observers to the exercise. Sweden has represented openness and transparency and Russia should also have done so.

During the exercise, we were also able to note that a message had spread that this was a "war manoeuvre," had "escalating impact" and was organised by NATO. This is disinformation about the exercise. The exercise scenario, which was about the defence of Sweden's sovereignty, is in line with the right of self-defence as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. This can hardly be considered as "escalating." The invitations to the exercise were from Sweden and NATO did not even participate in the exercise. However, we cooperated with countries with whom we usually train and with whom we are partners. Unfortunately, this rhetoric has also been used by the media, which is regrettable.

The evaluation of Aurora will now be extremely important. It will provide an

excellent basis for assessing the strengths and weaknesses in the Swedish Armed Forces. This applies, for example, to the planning for this type of large-scale exercises, the capability of joint operations of the armed forces, the role of the total defence and its capacity in crisis situations, logistics, command control, the capability for brigade combat, host nation support and mandatory refresher training for total defence personnel. This type of experience will be significant for future prioritisation and decisions about the future focus of the defence.

Between 2014 and 2020, defence expenditure will increase by 24.7 per cent, which is a major break in trend and a departure from previous prevailing conditions. This is based on three broad political agreements. The Armed Forces has one requirement to deliver against the background of the approximately SEK 26.5 billion that will be added to the defence finances up to 2020. It primarily involves increased exercise operations, investments in basic equipment needs for the defence and new weapon systems.

I regard the current cooperation between the Armed Forces and the government as good and this is important in order to achieve results. Building military capability takes time. The process is gradual and it is crucial that decisions and prioritisation are well thought out. For the government, content and results are more important than public bidding about who can invest the most money. Our line is to gradually strengthen the national defence through broad agreements. Aurora will be an important basis in this long-term work, as will the major total defence exercise planned for 2020.

Since Aurora 17 was conducted at several locations in the country and many people came in contact with the exercise, I would like to thank the general public for their positive and understanding approach.

Finally, I would like to thank all personnel, both military and civilian, who participated in the preparation and implementation of Aurora. Your efforts are important for Sweden!

Peter Hultqvist,
Minister of Defence

Published 11 October 2017



The EU and NATO: Divided they fall

This article was published in the Summer 2016 issue of Europe's World.

More than two years have passed since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and the peninsula has still not been returned to the sovereign state of Ukraine. 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 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. 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 illegal annexation of Crimea cannot become the status quo. It cannot be written into our history books as something that just happened. The annexation and the Russian involvement in eastern Ukraine is the greatest challenge to the European security order. 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.

It is unacceptable that military force, deception and disinformation are being used to change borders in Europe in the 21st Century. Such behaviour is in direct contravention of the fundamental principles of the European security order laid down in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Helsinki Final Act. Ukraine, as any other sovereign nation, has the right to make its own foreign and security policy, and to retain the integrity of its territory. We cannot accept that another country interferes with that right. Our European and transatlantic response should be united, firm and leave no doubt of our resolve to defend the European security order.

Tensions in the Baltic region have also increased in recent 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 produce statements regarding nuclear capability. The question is why they continue to bring this up? It is a very real concern for us. We are in response reinforcing our military capability and 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.

Russia, in all this, is testing the unity and resolve of the EU and NATO. What must absolutely be avoided is to give in to these attempts to sow division. Sweden, as a NATO partner, welcomes the increased defence measures taken by NATO in the Baltic, where the alliance has a key role to play ensuring stability and deterring threats. The US role in the Baltic is of equal importance in its own right, and has a clear threshold effect. We in Sweden welcome the US ambition to increase its presence in Europe.

We must avoid a situation in which existing international norms and principles are allowed to be watered down. We should also withstand any attempts at new grand deals on European security. This is not the time to rebalance the concept of comprehensive security. Respect for the UN Charter, the Statute of the Council of Europe and the OSCE principles, norms and commitments, including democracy, human rights and the rule of law are at the core of a predictable, rules-based European security order. We cannot give up on these basic principles.

On Europe's southern flank, five years after our hopes that the Arab Spring would bring about a better future, conflicts and crises are tormenting the region and forcing thousands of people to flee their homes. Sweden has been hugely 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, but the many challenges we face in the southern neighbourhood point towards long-term destabilisation. The most urgent threat is Daesh and likeminded terror groups. Their unparalleled brutality in Syria, as well as the atrocities committed in Europe most recently in Paris and Brussels, is against everything the transatlantic security community stands for.

From Sweden's perspective, the future of regional peace and stability depends on the EU, NATO and the US together defending our basic values. Only as a united transatlantic community, ready to stand up for our values and principles, will we be able to contribute to global peace and stability.

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

Published 08 July 2016



Taking steps towards enhancing the cooperation on defence

Dagens Nyheter 10 april 2015 The Russian aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea are violations of international law and other international agreements. These actions represent the greatest challenge to the European security architecture. These developments have led to deterioration in the security situation in Northern Europe over the past year. The region is still considered to be stable, however, we must be prepared for the likelihood of crises and incidents. In the current security situation in Europe, our assessment is that there can be no 'business as usual' and that we are faced with a new normal.

We have to take account of the actions taken by Russia and not Kremlin's rhetoric. Russia is making substantial investments in her Armed forces, with the aim of enhancing its military capabilities, and has demonstrated a will to apply military means to achieve political goals, even when it violates principles of international law. Russia has increased her military exercises and intelligence operations in the Baltic Sea region and the High North. Russian military activities are occurring close to our national borders (and several violations of the territorial integrity of states around the Baltic Sea have taken place). Of particular concern are those activities, by Russian military aircraft, reducing the safety of civilian air traffic.

Russian military exercises and intelligence operations in our region have increased, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. The Russian propaganda and political manoeuvring is aiming to create a rift between states and within organisations such as EU and NATO. A great responsibility lies on Russia to reverse this negative development.

The Nordic countries meet the present situation through solidarity and enhanced cooperation. Our cooperation is built on shared values and a determination to address our challenges together. With differing organizational affiliations we cooperate closely within the framework of the EU and NATO. Our approach is defensive. We want to strengthen the stability in Northern Europe and distance ourselves from threats and the use of military force. Closer cooperation among the Nordic countries and our solidarity with the Baltic States contribute to enhanced security in our region, as well as raising the threshold for military incidents to take place. By acting together in a predictable and consistent way, we contribute to peace and security in our part of the world. At the same time we strengthen cohesion within the EU and NATO while also maintaining the transatlantic link.

The security situation in the Nordic region is also affected by several other issues, including our dependence on international trade, the threat of cyber-attacks and terrorism, as well as the effects of climate change. In Europe's southern and southeastern neighborhood states and institutions are pulled into a spiral of violence marked by civil war, which risks leading to interstate confrontations. Non-state actors, such as ISIL, challenge established states, borders and institutions and continue also to attract citizens from the Nordic countries.

At the Nordic Defence Ministerial meeting in Arvidsjaur on March 10th, we decided to enhance the possibilities to monitor the development in our region. This includes both air- and sea- surveillance. The aim is to share information on activities in our air space, improve pre-warning communication and reduce the risk of unexpected events and possible misunderstandings. Moreover, we decided to continue exchanging information and experiences on how to counter cyber-attacks.

In order to effectively act together in a possible future crisis, it is essential to be prepared through training, education and exercises. We have great opportunities utilizing a unique exercise and training environment in order to strengthen our military capabilities on land, in the air and at sea. Within the field of air training the already established Cross Border Training is a model to build on. The possibilities to organize a more complex air exercise, a Northern Flag, will also be explored. We are taking steps towards establishing possible alternative landing bases in case of difficult weather conditions.

Qualified exercises will ensure that other countries and organisations are offered opportunities to become familiar with our region and its specific conditions. In particular, this will be demonstrated through the NATO High Visibility Exercise in Norway 2018.

Through international operations, in Afghanistan, Mali and Iraq, we continue to develop our collaboration, ensuring cohesion and coordination, in an effort to improve the coordination of our civilian and military contributions. Nordic countries are actively involved in the discussions on how to further improve UN peacekeeping operations.

We have established a programme for defence capacity building, where we, together with the Baltic States, can offer contributions to the reform of the defence sector in participating countries.

The Nordic Defence Industry Agreement has undergone a process of revision and modernisation. The Agreement has now been signed, which constitutes an important milestone. It provides the framework for provisions on Security of Supply and specific measures that are important in case of a crisis or conflict, for provisions on certain simplifications concerning the application of defence industrial cooperation, and provisions aiming on facilitate trade in defence equipment between the Nordic countries.

In addition to Nordic defence cooperation, respective national defence capabilities are strengthened through bilateral cooperation, which enhances the overall capacity to handle incidents and threats. Bilateral cooperation complements and strengthens Nordic cooperation as a whole, as well as security in our part of the world.

We assume our part of the responsibility for our region during unpredictable times. The Nordic cooperation complements already existing cooperation within the EU and NATO aimed at increased security in our region. Our shared ambition is to increase predictability, contribute to a peaceful development and avoid military incidents and conflicts.

Nicolai Wammen, Denmark's Minister of Defence

Carl Haglund, Finland's Minister of Defence

Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, Iceland's Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ine Eriksen Søreide, Norway's Minister of Defence

Peter Hultqvist, Sweden's Minister for Defence

Published 10 April 2015



Government proposes Swedish armed force in military training operation against ISIL

DN Debatt 9 april 2015

The terrorist organisation ISIL, also known as IS, has spread death, destruction and fear. We have all witnessed the way in which people have been murdered or forced to flee, and communities have been wiped out, as a result of its ravages in Syria and Iraq. We have seen out-and-out atrocities towards people with differing beliefs and large-scale abuses. And we are forced to note that ISIL is also attempting to extend its terrorism to other parts of the world, including Europe.

Sweden, along with all other EU Member States, is therefore among the countries participating in the international coalition of some 60 countries that has been formed to fight ISIL in various ways, stabilise Iraq and manage the consequences of this terrorist organisation's ravages.

So far, Sweden has chosen to focus its support on a two-pronged approach: dealing with the urgent crisis, which is a matter not least of humanitarian assistance, and seeking political means to achieve a long-term solution to the underlying political problems in the region that have allowed ISIL to gain a foothold.

We have provided extensive humanitarian assistance to those who have been forced to flee from their homes in Syria and Iraq and we also support the stabilisation measures planned in areas secured from ISIL. Like others, we are also taking steps to prevent possible sympathisers from travelling to the region to take part in terrorist actions or terrorist training.

In parallel with this, we are supporting political processes aimed in the long run at eliminating the breeding grounds of terrorist organisations such as ISIL. This support takes the form of backing UN efforts to find a solution to the violence and civil war in Syria, and promoting an inclusive and cohesive

Iraq, in which strengthened democratic institutions will enable the country's many different religious and ethnic groups to influence developments. The emergence of a society under the rule of law is necessary to fight terrorism in the long term.

Iraq is in a position where military support is also needed to stop ISIL. At the request of the Iraqi Government, the international coalition is therefore providing the Iraqi defence forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga units, with aerial support and training.

Thanks to this cooperation, it has been possible to check ISIL's offensive and areas that were formerly held by ISIL have been secured. One example is Tikrit, which was liberated from ISIL's violence last week. This proved once again that ISIL can be defeated. But that this requires joint efforts.

Since the winter, the Government has been investigating the possibility of Sweden participating in these joint military operations. Today, the Government is presenting a proposal for Sweden to participate in the military training operation in northern Iraq.

The Government proposes that the Riksdag allow a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons to be made available in 2015 to participate in the military training operation being carried out by the international coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq. The Swedish Armed Forces will put together an all-round, fit-for-purpose force to manage the tasks included in the operation. Should the security situation deteriorate, the Swedish Armed Forces will be able to make temporary reinforcements to a level of 120 persons for evacuation and reinforcement operations. The Government's decision is based on Iraq's request for assistance to stop ISIL, which also provides the basis for the operation in international law.

The main tasks of the planned Swedish contribution will be training and advice to the Iraqi security forces in northern parts of Iraq.

The Swedish force will be under Swedish national command and control during the operation. Necessary coordination will take place within the international coalition against ISIL, primarily with other actors in the area of operations, including the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

The Swedish operation in northern Iraq is part of a larger picture. The international coalition is actively working against ISIL in several parts of

Iraq, and the operation in northern Iraq is one part of this. Moreover, Sweden has long had a broad, long-term commitment to and involvement with Iraq. Our relations are very good and encompass cooperation in a range of areas based on large-scale international exchanges, mainly thanks to the substantial proportion of the Swedish population – close to two per cent – with roots in Iraq and the region. In addition, Sweden has engaged in close development cooperation with Iraq since 2004, focusing on democratic development, human rights, the situation of women and gender equality, anti-corruption and support to civil society.

ISIL's ravages are terrible. The violence and hatred appear limitless. Their objective is to inspire fear so that resistance gives way and violence can triumph. This must not be allowed to happen. That is why the efforts of the international coalition against ISIL are crucial. Cooperation against terrorism is the key to success. We, on Sweden's part, will continue to contribute to these common efforts.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

Published 09 April 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

Seventh support package for Ukraine

The Government will donate artillery ammunition worth approximately SEK 500 million to help defend Ukraine.

Since February this year, Sweden has donated defence equipment to Ukraine through five different support packages. The sixth support package took the form of a training initiative. Swedish instructors are currently providing basic training for Ukrainian soldiers in the United Kingdom.

The seventh Swedish support package consists of artillery ammunition worth approximately SEK 500 million. The ammunition is compatible with the artillery systems currently in use, can be used immediately upon delivery and will contribute substantially to Ukraine's military capability.

Published 01 September 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Press conference with Nordic and Baltic defence ministers on Gotland, Friday 2 September 2022

On Friday 2 September, defence ministers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden will meet at the Gotland Regiment (P 18) to discuss defence cooperation.

The Gotland Regiment (P 18), Västerhejde skjutfältet 821

The ministers will address the media in a press conference held in connection with the meeting. Individual interviews are also available.

Time

Friday 2 September, 12.30–13.30.

Place

The Gotland Regiment (P 18), Västerhejde skjutfältet 821.

Swedish media

Swedish media must register by Thursday 1 September at 9.00 via email to Maj-Britt L Persson, see press contact below.

Please give your name, personal identity number, telephone number, the name of your editorial office and the capacity in which you wish to attend (reporter or photographer). Please submit your press credentials as well.

International media

International media must submit the form 'Request for visit'. Submit a complete form by Wednesday 31 August at 11.00 to Maj-Britt L Persson, see press contact below.

The form is available under the heading ‘Read more’.

Since the press conference will take place in a protected area, it is not possible to register after the deadline has passed.

Assembly by the gate to the Gotland Regiment (P 18),
Västerhejde skjutfältet 821, by Friday 2 September at 12.00.

Participation is subject to available space.

Published 30 August 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to attend defence ministers meeting in Prague

On 30 August, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will meet his EU colleagues in Prague, Czechia. The main focus of the meeting will be on support for Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, will also attend parts of the meeting.

The Czech Republic currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, so the informal meeting of EU defence ministers will be held in Prague.

The agenda includes discussions on the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continued support from EU countries to Ukraine. Oleksii Reznikov, Ukraine's defence minister, is expected to join via videoconference to talk about the country's needs. The EU defence ministers will also discuss defence industrial issues at the meeting.

The meeting will be preceded by a joint dinner on the evening of 29 August.

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will be available for interviews in connection with the meeting. Please contact Press Secretary Ulrika Langels.

Published 29 August 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to meet defence ministers from Finland and Norway

On 25 August, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will travel to Finland to meet Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen and Norway's Minister of Defence Bjørn Arild Gram.

Mr Hultqvist and Mr Kaikkonen will discuss bilateral Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation and the ongoing NATO accession process.

In conjunction with the bilateral meeting with Mr Kaikkonen, a meeting will be held between Mr Hultqvist, Mr Kaikkonen and Mr Arild Gram concerning the trilateral defence cooperation between Sweden, Finland and Norway. During their meeting, the ministers will discuss the security situation in the neighbourhood and strengthening the defence of their shared regions such as the Cap of the North.

There will be time for interviews; please contact Press Secretary Ulrika Langels.

Published 24 August 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to take part in international conference on support for Ukraine

On Thursday 11 August, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will travel to Copenhagen to take part in an international donor conference in support of Ukraine. Defence ministers from 17 countries will take part in the conference to discuss financial support for Ukraine as well as defence equipment and military training support.

Denmark, Ukraine and the United Kingdom will host the Copenhagen Conference for Northern European Defence Allies in the Danish capital.

Defence ministers from Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States will discuss continued support for Ukraine at the conference. One key question is how support for Ukraine can be developed and become more long-term.

“As long as Russia’s brutal and unlawful war continues, the rest of the world needs to continue supporting Ukraine. It is about Ukraine’s security, but also all of Europe’s security. At the conference, I expect that we will make further progress in concretising our support for Ukraine,” says Mr Hultqvist.

During the conference, Mr Hultqvist will take part in a press conference and will be available for interviews. See press contact below.

Published 10 August 2022



Sweden to train Ukrainian soldiers in UK

The Government has decided that the Swedish Armed Forces will send instructors to the UK to give Ukrainian citizens basic military training to enable them to serve in Ukraine's armed forces. The aim is to make it possible for Ukraine to maintain and strengthen its defence capabilities.

The initiative to offer basic military training to Ukrainian citizens comes from the UK – the country has invited other partner nations in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and Canada to contribute.

The Government has now decided that Sweden will contribute by training Ukrainian soldiers.

Between 12 August and 31 December 2022, the Swedish Armed Forces will send up to 120 instructors to the UK to conduct basic military training for Ukrainian citizens, divided into several training courses.

“Russia’s war against Ukraine has been going on for over five months, and it’s immensely important that the rest of the world continues to support Ukraine in its fight for sovereignty and self-determination. It’s important that Sweden is part of these efforts, and the Swedish instructors will contribute to strengthening Ukraine’s defence capabilities,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

In total, approximately 10 000 Ukrainian citizens are expected take part in the training programme in the UK. A maximum of 60 Swedish instructors will be in the UK simultaneously – this is not expected to have any significant impact on the Swedish Armed Forces’ other activities.

The Swedish part of the training programme will begin as soon as it is practically possible. For further information, please contact the Swedish

Armed Forces, +46 8-788 75 00.

Published 07 August 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence to visit international air exercise in Såtenäs

On 4–6 July, the Swedish and British Air Forces conduct a joint exercise at Skaraborg Air Force Wing (F 7) in Såtenäs. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will visit the exercise on 5 July.

The exercise includes planes such as the JAS 39 Gripen and the Eurofighter Typhoon, and takes place within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

The JEF is led by the UK, and partner nations include both Sweden and Finland. In light of their applications for NATO membership, a series of JEF exercises will be held in Sweden and Finland in the second half of the year.

“When the defence ministers from the JEF partner nations met in Oslo in June, they all expressed strong support for Sweden’s and Finland’s applications to join NATO. Other partner nations also promised to increase their presence in the Baltic Sea region while Sweden and Finland wait to become NATO members. This exercise is an important part of that presence,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Mr Hultqvist will attend a press conference at F 7 on 5 July. Participants will assemble in the reception area at 10.45.

Journalists can register with their name and personal identity number by 4 July at 17.00 via email to f7-info@mil.se.

After the press conference, Mr Hultqvist will be available for individual interviews. Please see contact details of his press secretary below.

Published 04 July 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to attend defence ministers meeting in Oslo

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will travel to Oslo to attend a meeting on 14–15 June with his colleagues from the countries participating in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

When the defence ministers of the ten countries participating in the JEF meet in Norway, Russia's war against Ukraine will be on the agenda.

The ministers will discuss, among other things, the impact of the war on the security situation in northern Europe, support for Ukraine and increased training activities in response to Sweden's and Finland's applications for NATO membership.

They will also discuss their cooperation over the previous year and future activities within the JEF.

“The JEF is a partnership between ten like-minded countries in northern Europe. It is an important partnership for Sweden, and we welcome plans for more JEF activities in our neighbourhood. It is positive that the JEF, through various exercises, for example, now has an increased presence in the Baltic Sea region while Sweden and Finland await a decision on NATO membership,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Published 13 June 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Regional security on the agenda at defence ministers meeting in Iceland

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will be in Reykjavik, Iceland on 7–8 June to take part in a ministerial meeting of the Northern Group defence policy forum.

The meeting in Reykjavik will bring together defence ministers from the countries that make up the Northern Group – the Nordic and Baltic countries, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom – to discuss current issues.

The meeting will mainly focus on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its impact on the security situation in northern Europe. The ministers will also discuss China's role in the region.

Published 07 June 2022



Additional amending budget with further support to Ukraine

The Government today adopted an additional amending budget with proposals for Sweden to provide Ukraine with financial support and equipment in response to Russia's invasion. The Government's proposals include Sweden donating defence materiel in the form of the RBS 17 anti-ship missile system, AG 90 anti-materiel sniper rifles and ammunition, and an additional 5 000 Swedish AT-4 recoilless anti-tank weapons.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is unprovoked, illegal and unjustifiable. It threatens international peace and security and is a violation of international law. As a sign of solidarity with Ukraine, and as part of the international response to Russia's actions, the Government considers it important to continue to support Ukraine.

As a result of Russia's invasion, Ukraine has requested support that includes additional defence materiel. The Swedish Armed Forces are able to manage without certain defence materiel for a limited period of time. The Government proposes that Sweden donate additional defence materiel to Ukraine in the form of the RBS 17 anti-ship missile system, AG 90 anti-materiel sniper rifles and ammunition, and an additional 5 000 Swedish AT-4 recoilless anti-tank weapons. Sweden also intends to contribute SEK 60 million to the fund set up by NATO intended to support the Ukrainian armed forces.

Earlier this spring, Sweden donated SEK 500 million to the National Bank of Ukraine's special fundraising account to support the country's armed forces. The Government now proposes that Sweden make an additional financial contribution of SEK 578 million to the fund. This support will help strengthen Ukraine's ability to fight Russia's aggression at a critical time.

Sweden has provided support to Ukrainian civil society through action via the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency within the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the UN. The Government also proposes including an additional SEK 100 million to this support.

The proposals presented mean that allocated funds to the government budget will increase by SEK 1 billion in 2022.

For further information about the weapon systems now being donated to Ukraine, please contact the Swedish Armed Forces.

Published 02 June 2022



Government approves additional military support to Ukraine

In March and April, the Government approved additional military support to Ukraine besides the support previously approved by the Riksdag and the Government.

The Government was able to approve the support independently as it consists of surplus materiel. The exact nature of the support is classified, and no further comment will be made at present. Secrecy is necessary to ensure that the support arrives and can be used by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, among other reasons.

The Government's focus is to continue to support Ukraine, including through military support. The question of additional possibilities for support is currently being prepared in the Government Offices.

Previous decisions

On two occasions since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, the Riksdag and the Government have approved support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine totalling 10 000 anti-tank weapons, 5 000 helmets, 5 000 body shields, field rations, mine clearance equipment and SEK 500 million.

On 13 April, the Government also decided to give EUR 5 million (around SEK 50 million) to Ukraine via a NATO fund. That support is primarily for use in projects to manage chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats.

Under the Budget Act, the Government can approve the transfer of equipment that is no longer needed for central government activities (surplus materiel). For equipment that is not surplus materiel, the Riksdag can permit the Government to transfer some materiel, for example if it is found that it can be spared for a limited period of time.

Published 25 May 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to meet US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin in Washington

On Monday 16 May, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will travel to Washington DC to meet US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, at the invitation of the Pentagon. The meeting will focus on Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Sweden's forthcoming application for NATO membership.

Mr Hultqvist and Mr Austin will meet on 18 May and are also set to discuss bilateral Swedish-American defence cooperation, the security situation in Europe, China's defence policy and its consequences for Sweden and the US.

Mr Hultqvist will also meet with various members of the US Congress during his visit to Washington DC.

Published 16 May 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Media invitation: Result of security policy discussions to be presented

On 16 March this year, the Government initiated discussion with the parties of the Riksdag concerning the changed security situation following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The result of these discussions will be presented at a press briefing on Friday 13 May.

The press briefing will be attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Kenneth G. Forslund (Social Democratic Party), Hans Wallmark (Moderate Party), Pål Jonsson (Moderate Party), Aron Emilsson (Sweden Democrats), Kerstin Lundgren (Centre Party), Håkan Svenneling (Left Party), Mikael Oscarsson (Christian Democrat Party), Allan Widman (Liberal Party) and Maria Ferm (Green Party). The press conference will be held in Swedish.

Published 12 May 2022



Nordic defence ministers to meet in Kirkenes

On 11–12 May, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will travel to Kirkenes in Norway for a meeting on the regional security situation, held within the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO).

The meeting between the Nordic defence ministers is held against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“In light of today’s very serious security situation, cooperation between the Nordic countries is essential. NORDEFECO is fundamental for security in our neighbourhood,” says Mr Hultqvist.

NORDEFECO ministerial meetings are held twice a year and focus on further enhanced cooperation and the latest security policy developments.

The NORDEFECO chairmanship rotates between member states. Norway holds the chairmanship in 2022 and is therefore hosting the ministerial meeting in Kirkenes on 11–12 May. Sweden is set to hold the chairmanship in 2023.

Published 10 May 2022



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist observes Cold Response 2022 exercise

On 25 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and the other Nordic defence ministers observed the Cold Response 2022 exercise in Norway. Conducted primarily in northern Norway, the exercise involves approximately 30 000 participants from 27 countries, including approximately 1 500 Swedish enlisted personnel and officers.

Sweden takes part with a number of ground units that, together with Finnish units, make up a reduced brigade combat group. Units from Norrbotten Air Force F 21 Wing also take part with JAS 39 Gripen planes. In total, approximately 150 enlisted personnel and officers from F 21 take part in the exercise.

“The aim of Sweden’s participation is to strengthen our national defence capability and increase the collective capability of the Swedish Armed Forces to respond to an attack against Sweden and against our neighbourhood. Participating in the exercise is an important part of the evolving cooperation with our close partners, the other Nordic countries and NATO. Through exercises like this, we demonstrate which resources we are able to mobilise if necessary,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Swedish contribution to Cold Response 2022

The participating Swedish ground units consist of approximately 1 500 enlisted personnel and officers from Norrbotten Regiment, Norrland Dragoon Regiment, Boden Artillery Regiment, Göta Logistic Regiment, the Armed Forces Technical School, the Armed Forces Centre for Defence Medicine, the Army Staff and the Land Warfare Centre.

The exercise is held in ground exercise areas in multiple regions of Norway. The ground exercise area in northern Norway extends from Narvik in the south to Finnmark in the north. The Swedish-Finnish brigade combat group operates predominantly in Troms county.

Part of these manoeuvres take place in Swedish territory, involving the transport of foreign units to and from the exercise and some smaller phases of the exercise in northern Sweden.

Organised every second year

Cold Response is organised in the month of March every second year. Norway and Sweden are joined in the exercise by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and Turkey.

Published 25 March 2022



Defence ministers from Sweden and Estonia visit Gotland for talks on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited the Gotland Regiment (P 18) on 23 March, together with Estonia's Minister of Defence Kalle Laanet. They held bilateral talks about the security situation in the Baltic Sea region and regional defence cooperation.

“Russian aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the security situation in Europe. The Swedish Armed Forces continuously adapt their activities with regard to the situation. They have raised their readiness, with increased military presence on the island of Gotland among other things,” says Mr Hultqvist.

As the Minister for Defence visited the P 18 regiment together with his Estonian counterpart, they discussed both Sweden's and Estonia's bilateral defence cooperation and forums for multilateral defence cooperation that include both countries, such as the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) and the EU.

“In this very severe situation it is important to maintain close contacts with other countries. Sweden's cooperation with other states in the Baltic Sea region, among them Estonia, is crucial for building security in our neighbourhood.”

During the meeting, Mr Hultqvist also highlighted the Swedish Government's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which follows a three-track approach: sanctions against the Russian regime, support to Ukraine and measures to strengthen Sweden.

Published 23 March 2022



Ukraine in focus as Peter Hultqvist took part in extraordinary meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence

The war in Ukraine prompted the NATO defence ministers to gather in Brussels on 16 March for an extraordinary meeting. A representative for the European External Action Service and the defence ministers from NATO partner countries Ukraine, Georgia, Finland and Sweden also took part in the meeting.

The main focus of the meeting was how EU, NATO and NATO partner countries can cooperate further to manage the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Europe.

While addressing the meeting, Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist highlighted the Swedish Government's three-track approach in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine: sanctions against the Russian regime, support to Ukraine and measures to strengthen Sweden.

“Sweden condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms,” said Mr Hultqvist.

Mr Hultqvist also mentioned that, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, Sweden's cooperation with NATO has deepened, with improved exchange of information and coordination of activities and strategic communication.

“Cooperation between countries is crucial for security and stability in our neighbourhood. Sweden's strengthened partnership with NATO is incredibly important given the worsening security situation.”

In conjunction with the NATO ministerial meeting, Mr Hultqvist had separate meetings with General Tod D. Wolters, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and British Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace, as well as a meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg together with Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen.

Published 16 March 2022



Sweden takes part in Joint Expeditionary Force exercise

Sweden is taking part in a joint exercise within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force defence cooperation, that started on Friday. Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist was present in Denmark for the start of the exercise, which is taking place against the backdrop of the rapidly worsening security situation in Europe.

“Russia’s armed attack on Ukraine is an attack on every country’s right to decide its own future. It is a threat to international peace and security. The Swedish Government’s response is focused on three areas: sanctions against Russia, support to Ukraine and strengthening Sweden,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Participation in joint military exercises with other countries is an important part of the efforts to strengthen Sweden and Swedish defence capabilities, with the current Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) exercise being one example.

“When I last met with the defence ministers from the other JEF countries, we stated that the threats to the European security order that we are seeing are unacceptable. We decided to implement several joint JEF exercises over the coming months, against the backdrop of the development of the security situation,” says Mr Hultqvist.

During his visit to Denmark for the start of the JEF exercise, Mr Hultqvist participated in a working lunch with his counterparts from the nine other JEF countries.



Minister for Defence visited joint Swedish-Finnish preparedness exercise in the Baltic Sea

Against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the rapidly worsening security situation in the neighbourhood, Sweden and Finland are ramping up their joint military activities. On 2 March, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited a joint preparedness exercise in the Baltic Sea.

Swedish Gripen and Finnish F 18 fighter aircrafts took part in the exercise, as well as naval ships from both countries.

“The Swedish Government's response to this crisis covers three areas: sanctions against Russia, support to Ukraine and strengthening Sweden. Joint exercises with Finland are an important part of strengthening Swedish defence. Those exercises increase our capability to take action together as neighbours if needed”, says Mr Hultqvist.

Sweden and Finland have far-reaching bilateral defence cooperation. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February underlines the importance of this cooperation, according to the Swedish Minister for Defence:

“Russia and the Russian regime are a threat to the European security order and every country's right to decide its own future.”

At the same time as the Baltic Sea exercise is taking place, Sweden and Finland are both providing defence materiel to Ukraine.

“We are taking this step together with many other countries. We are doing so because the war in Ukraine is a threat to Europe and European values as a whole. It is an exceptional situation”, says Mr Hultqvist.

Published 02 March 2022



Peter Hultqvist attends Joint Expeditionary Force ministerial meeting

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist took part in a defence ministers meeting on 22 February within the framework of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). At the annual ministerial meeting, which was held in the United Kingdom, the attendees discussed the development of the security situation in Europe and upcoming JEF exercises, among other things.

The annual JEF ministerial meeting gathered defence ministers from the ten participating states for discussions that initially concerned the development of the security situation in Europe.

“Over time, we have seen a deterioration of the security situation in our neighbourhood. We stated that threats to the European security order are unacceptable,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Also discussed at the meeting were cooperation between the JEF and NATO and planning for the JEF’s operations over the next two years, including scenario-based discussions in which representatives of the JEF member states discussed how to handle various courses of events. The defence ministers also decided to implement joint JEF exercises over the coming months, against the backdrop of the development of the security situation.

“The JEF is a priority for Sweden. Like the other forms of international defence cooperation we participate in, it contributes to increasing Sweden’s national defence capabilities and its capability to take joint action in the event of a crisis,” says Mr Hultqvist.

The JEF is a framework for a rapid reaction force and is led by the UK. The

JEF can act independently or within the framework of a UN, NATO or EU operation in the event of a crisis, and focuses on northern Europe. In addition to the UK and Sweden, the members of the JEF are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway.

Published 22 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Press briefing with Swedish Minister for Defence and Minister of Defence of Ukraine on Tuesday 14 December

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister of Defence of Ukraine Oleksii Reznikov will hold a joint press briefing in connection with Minister Reznikov's visit to Sweden.

Online via Zoom or Bella, (entrance via security at Rödbodgatan 6, Stockholm)

Time: Tuesday 14 December 2021 13.30-14.00 Central European Time (CET)

Venue: Online via Zoom or Bella, (entrance via security at Rödbodgatan 6, Stockholm)

Language: English

The press briefing will be held in a hybrid format, online via Zoom and at Bella. Instructions on how to join the press briefing digitally will be sent separately. Admission from 13.00 for members of media participating at Bella. Press credentials and registration required.

Registration: The registration deadline has passed.

Published 13 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Comment from Minister for Defence on Finland's decision regarding acquisition of fighter aircraft

We regret that Finland did not choose Gripen and GlobalEye.

We are convinced that Gripen and GlobalEye would have been very good choices also for Finland, combining highly capable aircraft systems with low costs and high availability. The systems are tailor-made for our common security challenges as well as the harsh Nordic environmental conditions.

Having said that, we fully respect the Finnish decision. Our excellent defence cooperation will of course continue. Finland will continue to be our closest security and defence policy partner. Over a long period of time the relationship has been based on common geostrategic interests and common views on security challenges.

The geographic and military-strategic realities underscore the need for continued and deepened defence cooperation and we will continue the work on creating prerequisites for combined joint military operations in peace, crisis and war.

Published 10 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Press briefing with Swedish Minister for Defence and UK Secretary for Defence on Thursday 9 December at 17.00

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom Ben Wallace will hold a joint press briefing in connection with Secretary Wallace's visit to Sweden on 9-10 December, which includes a visit to Norrland Dragoon Regiment in Arvidsjaur (K4) and bilateral meetings in Stockholm.

Online via Zoom or Bella, (entrance via security at Rödbodgatan 6, Stockholm)

At the press briefing Minister Hultqvist and Secretary Wallace will make short introductory remarks on the bilateral military cooperation between Sweden and the UK, on the development of the regional security situation in Northern Europe and in the Arctic Region. Following the introductory remarks, Minister Hultqvist and Secretary Wallace will take questions.

Time: Thursday 9 December 2021 17.00–17.30 Central European Time (CET)

Venue: Online via Zoom or Bella, (entrance via security at Rödbodgatan 6, Stockholm)

Language: English

The press briefing will be held in a hybrid format, online via Zoom and at Bella. Instructions on how to join the press briefing digitally will be sent separately. Admission from 16.15 to 16.30 for members of media participating at Bella. Press credentials and registration required.

Registration: The registration deadline has passed.

Published 07 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Change of government, 30 November 2021

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government takes place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty the King. The Council of State begins at 13.00.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 22 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

Ministry of Employment

Eva Nordmark, Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

Johan Danielsson, Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment

Ministry of Finance

Mikael Damberg, Minister for Finance

Max Elger, Minister for Financial Markets

Ida Karkiainen, Minister for Public Administration

Ministry of Defence

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

Ministry of Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth, Minister for Infrastructure

Khashayar Farmanbar, Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Ministry of Justice

Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Integration and Migration

Ministry of Culture

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Minister for Culture

Ministry of the Environment

Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Anna-Caren Säterberg, Minister for Rural Affairs

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Social Security

Ministry of Education and Research

Anna Ekström, Minister for Education

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom, Minister for Schools

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation

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Published 30 November 2021



NATO Secretary General to visit Sweden and Finland

On 25–27 October, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the NAC – NATO’s principal political decision-making body – will visit Sweden and Finland which are partners to NATO.

The North Atlantic Council (NAC), the principal political decision-making body within NATO, where every member country is represented by an ambassador, conducts a number of international visits every year. The NAC is chaired by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. NAC visits are made to member countries of the Alliance and to partner countries. A NAC visit to Sweden and Finland will take place on 25–27 October. The visit will begin in Finland on 25 October and continue in Sweden on 26–27 October.

The programme includes discussions on security developments in Finland’s and Sweden’s neighbourhood and on the countries’ close partnership with NATO. The visit will also highlight the close security cooperation between Finland and Sweden, not least in the defence area. It will also offer an insight into Sweden’s efforts to enhance its military and civil defence within the total defence framework.

“I am delighted that I will have the opportunity next week to welcome NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the NATO countries’ ambassadors to Sweden. Our partnership is an important part of Sweden’s security and defence policy, and the visit is a natural part of this partnership. The visit gives Sweden and Finland an opportunity to share our views on the situation in our neighbourhood, our close bilateral cooperation and security developments more broadly,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, who will host the visit to Sweden.

“The security situation in our part of Europe has deteriorated over time. This is why we have shifted from international operations to national defence. Sweden’s defence policy rests on two pillars: increased national military

capabilities and deepened military cooperation with other countries and organisations. Our cooperation with Finland and Sweden's and Finland's partnership with NATO contribute to stability, predictability and increased security," says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The programme also includes meetings with HM The King, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Home Affairs. The Delegation will also visit SWENEX – the Swedish naval exercise, which Finland is participating in and is an example of the enhanced cooperation between Sweden and Finland. Finnish Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen will take part in this segment of the programme.

A number of media activities will take place in connection with the visit. A press invitation to these activities will be issued on Monday 25 October.

Published 20 October 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

The defence ministers of Denmark, Norway and Sweden sign a trilateral Statement of Intent on enhanced operational cooperation

A serious security crisis in the Nordic region would affect us all, and we need to be prepared and equipped to act together in peace, crisis and conflict. Coordination of national operational planning will improve our ability to act together if so decided.

All Nordic countries and surrounding areas are strategically connected and of considerable importance to transatlantic security.

These geostrategic realities result in the need for enhanced Nordic defence cooperation. The trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI) that we sign today focuses on geographical areas of common concern, such as southern parts of Scandinavia, including Kattegat, Skagerrak and the North Sea.

The SOI will help improve interoperability among our armed forces and enable common military action if decided. This may include protection of sea lines of communication and air and sea surveillance, which are important for security of supply in our region.

The SOI is also in line with the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF) vision for 2025. The guiding aim of the vision is to improve the Nordic countries' defence capability and cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict.

We believe in the strength of Nordic defence cooperation. We must continue to stand together and build peace and stability in our region. This trilateral statement of intent will be an important tool in fulfilling our ambitions of

strengthening our common security.

Trine Bramsen
Minister of Defence, Denmark

Frank Bakke-Jensen
Minister of Defence, Norway

Peter Hultqvist
Minister for Defence, Sweden

Published 24 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Press briefing at EI2 ministerial meeting on Friday 24 September at 15.00 at Karlberg Castle, Stockholm

Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and French Minister of Defence Florence Parly and ministers or delegations leaders from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy will hold a press briefing at Karlberg Castle, Stockholm, on Friday 24 September at 15.00.

Karlbergs Castle, Stockholm

The press briefing will take place at the margins of the Annual Minister's Meeting of European Intervention Initiative (EI2), a multilateral defence cooperation body with thirteen member countries.

Ministers Parly and Hultqvist will make short introductory remarks on the EI2 meeting and the issues discussed and will then take a few questions. Ministers of delegation leaders from the EI2-member countries will also participate in the press briefing and are available for one-on-ones.

Time: Friday 24 September 2021 15.00 – 15.30 Central European Summer Time (CEST).

Venue: Outside in the courtyard, Karlberg Castle, Stockholm. Entrance for members of the media via the gate on the back side of the castle. Closest address: Karlbergs slottsväg.

Weather forecast: 8 degrees, cloudy. (The press conference will take place outside.)

Language: English

Registration: The registration deadline has passed.

Published 21 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden's new Government

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government will take place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty The King. The Council of State will begin at 14.15.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 21 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

Ministry of Employment

Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination

Märta Stenevi

Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson

Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg

Published 09 July 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Acting Secretary of the U.S. Air Force and The Nordic Ministers of Defence sign Letter of Intent on Nordic-US joint exercise 'Arctic Challenge' (ACE)

The Acting Secretary of the U.S. Air Force and the Ministers of Defence of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden signed a Letter of Intent on 17th February, 2021, stating political support to the continued Nordic-US engagement in the Nordic-led flag-level air exercise, Arctic Challenge Exercise (ACE).

U.S. valuable contributions are key to uphold the high-level quality of the exercise. Together with the engagement of the Nordic countries and important European contributions, the aim is to maintain ACE as one of Europe's largest air exercises.

The signing of the Letter of Intent is a significant signal of the strong Nordic-Transatlantic cooperation and highlights the continued political and military importance of US presence in Northern Europe.

Published 18 February 2021



Substantial investment in total defence

In the government bill ‘Totalförsvaret 2021–2025’ (Total Defence 2021–2025), the Government is proposing a substantial increase of capabilities in both military and civilian defence. The bill includes proposals on a new and expanded war organisation with reinforcements in all branches and functions of defence, as well as the re-establishment of five regiments and one air wing. The bill also includes substantial investment in military equipment, reinforcements of cyber defence, ammunition and foreign intelligence capabilities, and a doubling of basic-training volumes. Within the civilian defence, resilience is strengthened in several important societal functions.

The Government’s proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

“This represents the largest increase in the level of ambition in defence capabilities in 70 years. The bill is based on the defence commissions proposal for both the civilian and military defence. It is a signal to the Swedish people and our neighbourhood that we are taking the security situation extremely seriously,” says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

During the period 2021–2025, the level of funding to the Armed Forces will have increased by SEK 27.5 billion, compared with 2020. In total, SEK 79 billion will be allocated to military defence during the period., The decisions that have been made and proposed by the Government during the period 2014–2020, will mean that the military defence will have increased its funding by 85 per cent in fixed prices between 2014 and 2025. In 2023, the

Government will implement a control station to evaluate the implementation of the Defence Bill to ensure that the reinforcement and cost development is in phase according to the Riksdag's decision on direction and financial framework.

The investments mean that total defence capabilities continue to be strengthened and that total defence is being shaped and dimensioned to address an armed attack against Sweden, including acts of war in Swedish territory.

“The proposals in the bill should be seen against the background of the deteriorating security situation in Sweden’s neighbourhood and in Europe over time. Sweden will be affected if crisis or an armed conflict arises in our neighbourhood. An armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out,” says Mr Hultqvist.

Strengthening of the war organisation and expansion of the peacetime organisation

Within military defence, the endurance of the war organisation is strengthened and better balance is created between the active service and its’ support units. The government also proposes that a new and expanded war organisation should be established from 2021, and successively filled with personnel throughout the 2020s.

Reinforcements are to take place within all branches and functions of defence. In addition, cyber defence and foreign intelligence capabilities are also being strengthened. Substantial investments in military equipment are also being carried out.

For geographical, emergency preparedness and training reasons, the Government is proposing, as previously announced, that the Swedish Armed Forces’ organisation should be expanded with the re-establishment with a number of regiments and an air wing.

The organisational units to be re-established are: the Norrland Dragoon Regiment (K 4) in Arvidsjaur; the Älvsborg Amphibious Regiment (Amf 4) in Gothenburg; Uppland Wing (F 16) in Uppsala; the Bergslagen Artillery Regiment (A 9) in Kristinehamn; the Dalarna Regiment (I 13) in Falun; and the Västernorrland Regiment (I 21) in Sollefteå, with a training detachment in Östersund

More recruits for national military service

The total number of positions in the war organisation is expected to increase to approximately 90 000, which can be compared with 60 000 positions in 2020. This means that the number of people undergoing national total defence service basic training will be gradually increased to 8 000 per year until 2025.

Strengthened civilian defence

Civil and military defence reinforce each other. Alongside the increased funding to military defence, a gradual strengthening of civilian defence is also taking place, which will see total funds for civilian defence increasing to SEK 4.2 billion in 2025. Sweden's capabilities to handle a state of heightened alert and, ultimately, war need to be strengthened on a broad front. The resilience of the most important societal functions must be strengthened, particularly the health and medical care system, the supply of food and drinking water, transportation, public order and safety, financial preparedness, energy supply and electronic communications and the postal service. In order to maintain the balance in the total defense, it is important to prioritize civil defence and that civil defence continues to develop.

“The proposals in the bill are key to being able to implement the increase of capabilities in military and civilian defence that the Government considers to be necessary. It is a matter of continuing to be able to assert our sovereignty in an increasingly complex security reality,” says Minister for Defence Hultqvist.

Published 16 October 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint Press Release: European Intervention Initiative Annual Ministerial Meeting 25 September 2020

On September 25, 2020, the Ministers of Defence of Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom met via videoconference, in the third annual European Intervention Initiative (EI2) meeting.

At the meeting, hosted by Portugal, the Ministers of Defence assessed the work done during 2020 by the Working Groups, the Military European Strategic Talks (MEST) and the Strategic Dialogue, as well as the results of the Seminar on Resilience and Strategic Anticipation post-COVID, which have given the chance to reflect on how to reinforce resilience in a pandemic context and get ahead of future crisis. The issue of future enlargements of the European Intervention Initiative was also discussed.

Participants shared their views on some of the emerging defence and security challenges, including the situation in the Sahel, Belarus, Arctic/High North, the Mediterranean Sea, the growing threat of disinformation and cyber-attacks, maritime security as well as post-COVID defence spending and how to reduce dependency in the logistics supply chains.

In 2021, the EI2 Ministers annual meeting as well as the Strategic Dialogue's meeting will be hosted by Sweden.

EI2 is an independent and flexible forum, aimed at bringing European countries together to prepare themselves better for future crisis by creating a

shared strategic culture. EI2 will not duplicate activities within the EU, NATO, UN, the OSCE or ad hoc coalitions, but will be complementary to them.

Published 28 September 2020



Government decision to increase defence spending

The Swedish government has proposed to parliament that the defence sector should be allocated an additional SEK 5 billion in 2021.

The decision also concludes that the previous decisions of additional SEK 5 billion annually towards defence over the next five years (until 2025) remains in place.

By the end of 2020, the Government will present a defence bill to the parliament. In the upcoming defence bill, the Government intends to propose objectives for the total defence, and revised objectives the military and civilian defence, as well as the development of the Swedish Armed Forces war fighting organisation up to 2030.

Furthermore, it will outline a broad range of issues such as security policy, defence acquisition, research and development, skills supply, military security services, cyber defence and international defence cooperation.

Published 21 September 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Peter Hultqvist keynote speaker at Chatham House Security and Defence conference in London and meets British Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist meets with Britain's Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin in London on 11 March. The agenda includes discussing regional security in Northern Europe, the joint Future Combat Air Systems Cooperation (FCASC), the defence cooperation Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the upcoming Swedish defence exercise Aurora 20. Peter Hultqvist will also be the keynote speaker at the conference "A New Era of Strategic Competition" at the think tank Chatham House.

Sweden and the UK have a defence policy cooperation in several areas. Common interests include, for example, security in the Baltic Sea region and cooperation in peacekeeping operations. Sweden and the UK also have significant defence material cooperation and signed an agreement in July 2019 on Future Combat Air Systems Cooperation.

During the bilateral meeting in London on March 11, the ministers will discuss several ongoing projects between the countries, including the development of the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), which in addition to Sweden also includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway. JEF is an important element of the

security network in Northern Europe. JEF strengthens the national military capabilities as well as the interoperability between involved nations.

The ministers will also discuss work following the agreement on joint development on the Future Combat Air Systems Cooperation project FCASC signed in July 2019, as well as international operations.

Chatham House

During his visit to London, Peter Hultqvist will also attend a conference at the Chatham House, under the theme "A New Era of Strategic Competition", where the Swedish Minister for Defence will give the opening speech and will participate in a discussion on the European security architecture.

Journalists are welcome to contact press secretary Natalie Sial for enquiries.

Published 10 March 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to receive Hungary's Minister of Defence Tibor Benkő on 19 February

On Wednesday 19 February, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist will receive Hungary's Minister of Defence Tibor Benkő at Karlberg Palace for a bilateral meeting.

During the meeting, the ministers will discuss regional security, current European defence issues and bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Hungary.

Time for the media

In connection with the meeting, there will be an opportunity for the media to put questions to the defence ministers.

Time: 12.00–12.30

Venue: Fortifikationssalen, Karlberg Palace, Stockholm

Please register at the security desk of Karlberg Palace by 11.30. Valid ID is required.

Please send the mandatory notification of attendance to Press Information Officer Josefin Freij.

Published 12 February 2020



Referral to the Council on Legislation on operational military support between Sweden and Finland

The Government decided on 6 February to refer a proposal to the Council on Legislation on operational military support between Sweden and Finland. The legislative proposal aims, among other things, to enable faster decisions on providing and receiving operational military support within the framework of Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation.

This enhanced defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland is intended to strengthen Sweden's and Finland's national defence and the countries' capacity for joint military action. This cooperation covers the planning of joint operations and preparations for the use of civilian and military resources operationally in various scenarios, for example in the event of one of our country's territories being violated or subjected to an armed attack.

The Government's proposed legislation would enable faster decisions on providing and receiving operational military support within the framework of Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation by giving the Government the legal right to make more decisions in this regard than is possible today. It is also proposed that a number of legislative amendments be made to create better conditions for the Finnish military to provide support in Sweden. The proposals referred to the Council on Legislation build on the proposals presented in the report *An act on operational support between Sweden and Finland* (SOU 2018:31).

The date of the proposed legislation's entry into force is 1 August 2020.

Published 07 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Press invitation to Nordic defence ministerial meeting on 19–20 November in Stockholm

The Nordic defence ministers will meet on 19–20 November in Stockholm within the framework of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). The issues the ministers will discuss include a common platform for dialogue on security and defence policy for more efficient practical defence cooperation.

Karlberg Palace, Stockholm

In connection with the meeting, there will also be a meeting held together with the Baltic defence ministers and a meeting within the defence policy forum Northern Group.

Press conference

The Nordic defence ministers will hold a joint press conference in connection with the meeting.

Separate interviews

There will also be opportunities for separate interviews during the conference. Suggested times are after 17.30 on 19 November and after 13.00 on 20 November.

Requests for separate interviews can be sent to Josefin Freij, who will forward them to the appropriate delegation/press contact.

Published 13 November 2019



Long-term financing of military defence

In the Budget Bill for 2020 the Government proposes that military defence will be allocated an additional five billion SEK for the year 2022. This investment is fully funded through a bank tax. The Budget Bill is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The Government has reached an agreement with the Centre Party and the Liberal Party to increase defence spending by 5 billion kronor in 2022 and that an additional 5 billion kronor will be added to the budget annually up until 2025, in accordance with the Defence Commission's proposals. This funding will have a reasonable distribution profile. The Government intends to propose a Defence Bill to Parliament during autumn 2020.

During the period 2015–2020 additional around SEK 33 billion has been allocated to military defence

Within the limits of the agreement on the defence budget, it is now the aim of the Government to implement the Defence Commission's proposals in the upcoming Defence Bill, which will be presented to Parliament during autumn 2020. While defence spending needs to increase, it is important that the affected agencies continue to take the necessary measures to ensure that resources are used in an effective and rational manner.

There is a broad political consensus regarding the Defence Commission's analysis of the deteriorating security situation as well as the Commission's main proposals regarding the future development of the military defence and the need to strengthen military capabilities.

The Government intends to propose a Defence Bill to Parliament during autumn 2020, which will be based on the Defence Commission's report. The aim is a Defence Bill that can attain the broadest political support possible. A

broad unity behind Sweden's security and defence policy is a strength as it sends both an important security policy signal and gives an important indication of stable development to the people of Sweden.

Published 18 September 2019



Sweden and United Kingdom sign agreement on development of future combat aircraft capabilities

On 18 July, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Defence Penny Mordaunt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in London agreeing to examine the possibilities for joint development of future combat aircraft capabilities and combat aircraft systems.

The MoU is the starting point for the countries to analyse the conditions for deeper cooperation on the development of future combat aircraft capabilities, including future development of the JAS 39 Gripen.

The MoU does not entail long-term commitments between the countries, but is intended to enable future positions. Nor does it prevent the countries from engaging in similar studies and analyses with other partners.

The agreement will be effective for ten years, which is deemed sufficient to carry out the above activities. If and when Sweden decides to fully initiate a bilateral development and procurement project, additional, more detailed agreements will need to be signed. Sweden's current combat aircraft system, the JAS 39 Gripen, will be the backbone of Swedish combat aircraft capabilities for the foreseeable future. This collaboration offers the opportunity to further insert advanced technologies into JAS 39 Gripen.



Peter Hultqvist received Defence Commission's final report

On 14 May, the chair of the Defence Commission, Björn von Sydow, submitted his final report to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

“The Defence Commission has undertaken a thorough analysis of huge importance for Sweden’s defence and security policy. The Commission has completed its task well and managed to incorporate the supplementary instructions on greater order in defence finances into the final report.”

“The Commission’s work and conclusions will now be the starting point for the Government’s future work. The next step for the Government is to task the Swedish Armed Forces and the Defence Materiel Administration with analysing the economic implications and feasibility of the Defence Commission’s proposals. The Government plans to present a defence policy bill for the period 2021–2025 to the Riksdag in 2020,” said Mr Hultqvist at the presentation of the report.

The cross-party Commission has been working since January 2017 to analyse international developments and the associated implications for Sweden’s defence and security policy.

Published 14 May 2019



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist to host Nordic defence ministerial meeting on Gotland

The Nordic defence ministers will gather on Gotland on 9–10 April in the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). The agenda for the meeting includes total defence issues, regional security and the follow-up of the vision for Nordic defence cooperation amongst other. In conjunction to the meeting Finland, Norway and Sweden will sign an annex concerning security of supply, which constitutes a part of a wider Nordic defence materiel cooperation agreement. At the same time, Denmark will declare its intent to sign the annex.

Sweden holds the Chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2019 and will host two defence ministerial meetings during the year. Denmark's Minister of Defence Claus Hjort Frederiksen, Norway's Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen, Permanent Secretary at Finland's Ministry of Defence Jukka Juusti and Director General of the Defence Directorate at Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs Arnór Sigurjónsson will attend the meeting on Gotland.

During the meeting, the representatives of the Nordic countries will discuss issues partly highlighted in the Swedish chairmanship priorities for the year, including:

- experiences and opportunities concerning cooperation in the total defence area;
- the development of NORDEFECO as a platform for crisis consultations between the countries;
- cooperation in the defence materiel area;

- military exercises; and
- deepened Nordic-transatlantic cooperation.
- the development of Arctic Challenge Exercise into a European high-quality flag level exercise

The Nordic countries are facing similar security policy challenges and strive for close, effective and cost-efficient defence cooperation. The objective is to strengthen each country's national defence and their capability to act together. The vision for Nordic defence cooperation, adopted in November 2018, states that Nordic defence cooperation should cover activities in peacetime, as well as cooperation in potential crisis and conflict situations. A step is the development of a mechanism and guidelines for consultations between the Nordic countries in the event of a potential crisis or conflict. One ambition in this regard is that Nordic defence cooperation through NORDEFECO should be a platform to strengthen the security in the Nordic region.

As part of the meeting, the Nordic defence ministers will visit the Gotland Regiment (P 18), where total defence issues will be the focus of the discussions. The Gotland County Administrative Board and the Swedish Armed Forces will update the ministers on the ongoing work with developing the total defence system on Gotland.

Questions from the media

At 11.30–12.00 on 10 April, there will be an opportunity for journalists to ask the ministers questions about Nordic defence cooperation.

Please register via email to Press Officer Josefin Freij.

Published 05 April 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and India's Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman to sign security protection agreement

During a ceremony in Stockholm, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and India's Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman will sign a security protection agreement between Sweden and India.

Bella, entrance via security at Rödbogatan 6

A short press briefing will be held in connection with the ceremony. The signing will take place at 16.15 and there will be a photo opportunity. The press briefing will begin at 16.30.

If you have any questions, please contact Press Secretary Toni Eriksson. To register for the press briefing, please contact Press Officer Josefin Freij.

Published 11 February 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

The ministers' press contacts

Here are the contact details for the ministers' press secretaries.

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Press secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

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Martin Kling

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Press Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde

Joanna Abrahamsson

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Published 22 January 2019



New state secretaries at the Government Offices

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

Prime Minister's Office

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

Ministry of Employment

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen.

Ministry of Finance

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries

to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi.

Ministry of Defence

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Ministry of Infrastructure

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

Ministry of Justice

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

Ministry of Culture

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

Ministry of the Environment

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister

for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

Ministry of Education and Research

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.

Published 22 January 2019



Sweden and Finland signed a memorandum of understanding

During a ceremony in Turku, on 9 July, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Finnish Minister of Defence Jussi Niinistö signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the Swedish-Finnish Defence Cooperation. The agreement provides common political guidance for the defence cooperation.

The Memorandum of Understanding sets out a number of areas of cooperation, for example defence and security policy dialogue; training, exercises and education in addition to territorial surveillance and protection of territorial integrity. Further mentioned is access to each other's territory for military forces of the participants, host nation support as well as prerequisites for combined joint military action and operations, including operational and tactical planning and interoperability.

– The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to create continuity, predictability and a long-term perspective for the defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland. This clarifies a common political guidance for the defence cooperation, said Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Published 09 July 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden joins the German-led Framework Nations Concept (FNC)

On June 28, the Swedish government tasked the Swedish Armed Forces to take part in the German-led Framework Nations Concept.

The German-led Framework Nations Concept consists of around 20 partner nations and covers a wide area of defence cooperation in different areas such as medical, CBRN, CIMIC, logistics etc.

The goal of the Framework Nation Concept is to develop European capabilities. Participation in the FNC provides good opportunities to cooperate in a wide range of capability areas.

- The bilateral defence cooperation between Sweden and Germany has deepened over the last three years. Our participation in the FNC provides additional opportunities to further complement our bilateral as well as multilateral defence cooperation, says the Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Published 28 June 2018



Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist signs JEF agreement in London

Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist visited London on 27-28 June. Together with his colleagues within the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Minister Hultqvist signed a memorandum of understanding through which JEF reaches full operational capability.

JEF comprises Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Minister Hultqvist participated in a meeting with all JEF defence ministers. At the meeting, the defence ministers discussed the future vision of JEF, with the agreed view that JEF is an important building block of the security policy cooperation in northern Europe.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding means that JEF reaches full operative capability. JEF can be used for missions led by the UN, the EU and NATO, among others. Participating nations decide independently, in each particular case, and in accordance with national procedures, whether to participate in exercises or operations.

During the visit in London Minister Hultqvist held bilateral talks with his UK colleague Gavin Williamson, at which the ministers discussed the development of the bilateral programme of activities. In addition, Peter Hultqvist met minister for defence procurement and innovation Guto Bebb and a number of think tanks.

- This signing is another step forward in the development of JEF. The UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force is an important contribution to the security network in our part of Europe, says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist signs trilateral Statement of Intent

Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist met on May 8th 2018 with United States Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Finland's Minister for Defence Jussi Niinistö in Washington to sign a trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI).

Sweden, Finland and the United States of America intend to complement and reinforce the defense relationships by formalizing and enhancing the defense relationship concerning issues such as exercise activities and increased interoperability.

Published 08 May 2018



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist to visit Washington

Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist will make a working visit to Washington on 7 to 10 May 2018. He will meet the United States Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Finland's Minister for Defence Jussi Niinistö.

The ministers will sign a trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI). In 2016 Sweden and Finland signed bilateral SOIs with the United States to improve defence relations.

Based on the bilateral Statements of Intent, the USA, Finland and Sweden intend to complement and reinforce the defense relationships by formalizing and enhancing the defense relationship concerning issues such as exercise activities and increased interoperability.

Published 07 May 2018



The Government of Sweden tasks the Armed Forces to support the United Nations with gender competence

On 25 January the Swedish government decided to task the Armed Forces to support the United Nations with gender competence. Sweden is responding to a sought after need within the UN and will thereby continue to be an active partner for gender equality and its development within the UN system.

Sweden will support the UN with gender competence by offering training opportunities at the centre for implementation of gender perspectives in military operations - the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, NCGM. Since 22 February 2013, this centre of Nordic defence cooperation has been tasked with leading the gender area within NATO.

NCGM was established five years ago in part responding to Security Council resolution 1325. Adopted 17 years ago, the resolution aims at including women to a much greater extent in the work for peace and security and to take into consideration the perspectives of both men and women in this work.

Sweden is a strong advocate and has been working hard for increased implementation, understanding, education and competence in the gender field. This is in line with the government's feminist foreign policy and Sweden's work on the already existing Security Council agenda for women, peace and security.

- Gender in military operations is a priority for Sweden. We have unique skills in which NCGM has developed the only certified Gender Advisor

course that exists for military personnel. Increased skills in and understanding of gender issues also increases the operational effects of a military operation, says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

- Sweden is actively working on the issue of women, peace and security in the EU, the UN and in our cooperation with other countries and organisations, such as NATO. Knowledge and education are important and we contribute to this through the NCGM, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Published 25 January 2018



EU's ministers for defence and foreign affairs discussed permanent structured cooperation

On 13 November, EU's ministers for foreign affairs and defence met at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels. At the meeting, Sweden was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, and the Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist.

In conjunction with the meeting, Sweden and the other EU countries that intend to participate in EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (Pesco) signed a joint declaration of intent to the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The government will soon submit a proposition to gain Riksdag's approval for Sweden to join the cooperation.

The cooperation is to develop the EU's operational capacity for military crisis management tasks, which can also be at the disposal of UN missions, for example. Pesco offers a framework for cooperation on the development of military capabilities but also the potential for tangible security and defence policy projects.

The Permanent Structured Cooperation is a phase in the implementation of EU's global strategy, for which Sweden has been a driving force and places major emphasis. The Union's collective capability to prevent conflicts and manage external crises with various instruments is to increase within the framework of the follow-up.

The government believes that Pesco will fulfil two strategic objectives: to strengthen the joint security and defence policy and to contribute to strengthening European solidarity. The Swedish participation will enable Sweden to better influence EU's joint foreign, security and defence policy. The cooperation is inter-governmental and fully in line with Sweden's

military policy of non-alignment.

At the Council meeting, the ministers of foreign affairs held a separate discussion on the relationship between the EU and Africa, and how the Union's strategic communication is to be strengthened.

In a separate session, EU's ministers for defence also discussed the cooperation that exists between the EU and Nato in order to strengthen European security and international crisis management capability. In conjunction with the meeting, the European Defence Agency (EDA) held a board meeting in a Defence Ministers format.

Published 14 November 2017



Budget 2018: Increased military capabilities and enhanced total defence

In its Budget Bill for 2018, the Government proposes allocating an additional SEK 2.7 billion to Sweden's total defence, of which SEK 2.3 billion for military defence and SEK 0.4 billion for civil defence.

On 16 August, the Government reached an agreement with the Moderate Party and the Centre Party on additional measures to increase the operational capabilities of military units and ensure overall total defence capability. In addition to the investments of SEK 500 million announced in the 2017 Spring Amending Budget, military capabilities and total defence capability will be enhanced with an additional SEK 2.7 billion per year from 2018.

Top priority will be given to measures to ensure implementation of the 2015 Defence Resolution during the period until the end of 2020. Priority will also be given to measures aimed at further enhancing capabilities during the current period and also ensuring that military capabilities and total defence capability can increase after 2020.

In accordance with the defence agreement, the Government proposes allocating an additional SEK 80 million in 2018 to the National Defence Radio Establishment (FRA) and the Military Intelligence and Security Service (MUST) for efforts targeting counter-terrorism, information and cyber security, and security services.

The additional funds will make it possible to:

- increase unit activities and preparedness;
- give priority to measures aimed at ensuring military units with lowest battle readiness in order to increase their capabilities;

- enable army combat forces to take action simultaneously involving two brigades with acceptable capability;
- increase training activities; and
- enhance the capability to simultaneously mobilise the entire war organisation in the event of a heightened alert.

In light of the changing security situation in our region, the Government considers it necessary to have a coordinated military command on Gotland. The Government therefore proposes that a Gotland Regiment, stationed in Visby, be established as of 2018.

Published 20 September 2017



Agreement strengthens the defence by 2.7 billion per year

The government has agreed with the Moderates and the Center Party to further strengthening the Swedish Armed Forces and to ensure the overall capability of the Swedish Total Defence. In addition to previous agreements, the budget of the Swedish Armed Forces and other parts of the Swedish Total Defence will be strengthened by an additional 2.7 billion kronor annually for the years 2018-2020.

The priority is to ensure the implementation of the 2015 Defence Bill for the years 2016 to 2020. In addition, actions to further strengthen the Swedish Defence are prioritized including laying the foundation for further increases of Swedish defence capabilities after 2020.

Compared to previous decisions this agreement will increase the defence economy by a total of SEK 8.1 billion over the next three years. Of these, approximately SEK 1.3 billion is allocated to civilian defence and about 6.8 billion to the military defence.

Published 16 August 2017



Sweden and Finland join UK-led response force

At a signing ceremony held at Karlberg Castle June 30, Swedish Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist together with UK Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Minister of Defence of Finland Jussi Niinistö joined the United Kingdom-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

JEF is a UK framework for a rapidly deployable force capable of conducting the full spectrum of UN, EU and NATO operations. Participants, besides the UK, are Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway. Participation in missions is decided on a case by case basis, after decision by the appropriate competent national authorities.

– The JEF will complement our bilateral and multilateral cooperation focusing both on our close vicinity and a broader global agenda, said Minister for Defence of Sweden Peter Hultqvist.

– In an uncertain world, the UK is spearheading this high-readiness joint force, which will help us tackle growing threats. Together, we pack a more powerful punch. This is a Force of Friends, and alongside Sweden, Finland, and our other partners in this force, we remain committed to security, in Europe and around the world. We are stronger together, and, this joint force clearly shows Britain is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our international allies.

– Both Sweden and the UK are major partners for Finland and joining JEF gives our cooperation yet another dimension. We believe that the cooperation will enhance our national defence capability and deepen cooperation with our partners, said Minister of Defence of Finland Jussi Niinistö.

Representatives from other participating countries were also present at Karlberg Castle. After the ceremony Peter Hultqvist, Michael Fallon and

Jussi Niinistö will attend the seminar – The Security Situation in Northern Europe, arranged by Folk och Försvar and Finlandsinstitutet.

Published 30 June 2017



Sweden and Germany sign Letter of Intent in area of defence

In conjunction to the Nato-meeting June 29, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and his German counterpart Minister of Defence Dr. Ursula von der Leyen signed a Letter of Intent (LoI), deepening the co-operation between the Swedish and German Armed Forces and other Defence Agencies.

The aim of the LoI is to deepen and increase co-operation between the Swedish and German Armed Forces and other Defence Agencies by building on current co-operative activities, and implementing new initiatives to work together effectively and efficiently.

- Germany is an important actor in the Baltic Sea Region and a partner that we share values and many central interests with. Consequently, German-Swedish defence co-operation promotes stability in the Baltic Sea region and in Europe as a whole, said Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Letter of Intent comprises for example exercises, armament and multinational operations, and include land, sea and 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.



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden joins United Kingdom-led expeditionary force

The Swedish government decided on June 22 to join the United Kingdom-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Present participants are Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway.

JEF is a UK framework for a rapidly deployable force capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations. Participants, besides the United Kingdom, are Estonia, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway. The United Kingdom has invited Sweden to join. The decision has been coordinated with Finland.

Published 22 June 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Prime Minister to receive Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka – press conference and photo opportunity

On 3–4 November, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Bohuslav Sobotka will visit Sweden at the invitation of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Issues including jobs and growth, the internal market, decent working conditions and migration will be the focus of the talks at Rosenbad. Developing and deepening cooperation between the Czech Republic and Sweden in the EU context, not least in light of Brexit, will also be discussed.

Bella Venezia in Rosenbad, Stockholm

Media programme

11.45 Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka in the entrance to Rosenbad.

11.50 Talks begin in the Rosenbad Guest Dining Rooms.

Photo opportunities at the entrance and in the Guest Dining Rooms.

Enter via Kopparporten, Rosenbad, from 11.00. Photographers must be in place by 11.30.

13.00 Press conference in Bella Venezia, Rosenbad.

Enter via Kopparporten, Rosenbad, from 12.15.

The press conference will be held in English and Czech and webcast live on www.regeringen.se.

Please bring your press credentials.

Registration required via email to Nina Kefi, Prime Minister's Office.

Published 28 October 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Press invitation: French Minister of Defence Jean-Yves Le Drian to visit Sweden on 17 May

In connection with the visit, a press conference will be held the 17t May at 15.00 at Berga Naval Base.

Assembly at the security desk at Berga Naval Base at 14.50.

Published 13 May 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Nordic ministers of defence discussing regional security challenges on 30–31 of March in Denmark

As chairman of Nordic Defence Cooperation NORDEFCO the Danish Minister of Defence Peter Christensen will meet with his Nordic colleagues from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland on 30-31 of March 2016 at Frederiksberg Palace in Denmark.

This year Denmark holds the chairmanship of NORDEFCO, and therefore the Nordic ministers of defence will all meet to discuss the joint defence cooperation between the countries.

At the ministerial meeting the ministers of defence will discuss:

- The common security challenges in the Baltic Sea Region
- Enhanced military access to each other's territories (air, maritime and land) in peacetime
- Nordic transport capacity contribution to the UN mission in Mali through a Nordic rotation of transport aircraft (C-130)
- Support for Eastern Africa Standby Force in Eastern Africa

The media is hereby invited to cover the ministerial meeting on 31 march 11.00–11.30 – both with time for pictures and interviews with the different ministers.

For further questions and participation please contact press secretary Andreas Reckeweg Godfrey on arg@fmn.dk or +45 6187 1934.

Published 29 March 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan in Stockholm

On Friday 4 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, in Stockholm. They met to discuss topics including developments in Afghanistan, Swedish support and the international refugee crisis. A cooperation agreement between the two countries was also signed.

Invitation to press conference

Mr Löfven will receive President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad.
Photo opportunity.

Discussions.
Photo pool.

Signing of cooperation agreement.
Photo pool.

Joint press conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President Ashraf Ghani in Bella Venezia Language: English.

The press conference will be webcast live on www.regeringen.se

To editorial offices

Special media accreditation obtained via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is required to follow the programme. Please apply to the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 18.00 on 2 December.

[Apply for accreditation](#)

The assembly place and time for each programme point will be announced to the media representatives concerned.

Programme points, 4 December

During his visit to Sweden, President Ghani will also hold bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, and meet Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. He will also meet Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin, and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria at the Royal Palace. He will also undertake a visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Morning

Visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

Late morning

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Photo pool.

Afternoon

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Photo pool.

Crown Princess Victoria receives President Ghani at the Royal Palace.

Photo pool.

Mr Löfven receives President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad as above.

Published 30 November 2015



Sweden's contribution to the military training mission in northern Iraq

The Government will present a bill to the Riksdag today on continued Swedish participation in the military training mission in northern Iraq. In the bill, the Government proposes that the Riksdag approve the participation of a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons in a military training mission within the framework of the coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq in 2016. The Swedish force is to help train the Iraqi armed forces so as to strengthen their capability to withstand ISIL's advances.

The planned Swedish military contribution should be seen as part of Sweden's broad support to Iraq, which also includes development cooperation and extensive humanitarian support to those affected by ISIL. The contribution is an expression of Sweden's intention to step up and take responsibility to meet the serious threat that ISIL represents today. Sweden also supports the coalition's civilian stabilisation efforts in areas liberated from ISIL.

The basis in international law is comprised of Iraq's request to the international community to provide assistance in fighting ISIL and the bilateral agreements that Iraq enters into with the states that contribute to the mission.

The decision also specifies that the Swedish force can, if necessary, be reinforced by up to 85 persons (for evacuation and reinforcement operations).

Published 05 November 2015



Continued Swedish presence in Afghanistan

The Government will present a bill to the Riksdag today on continued Swedish participation in NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RSM), which provides training, advice and assistance in Afghanistan. Together with the 40 or so other troop-contributing countries, Sweden is taking part in the NATO-led mission at the request of the Afghan government. At present, the Resolute Support mission consists of just over 13 000 personnel.

The Government expects that the Swedish military contribution of no more than 50 persons on the ground in Afghanistan will continue until the end of December 2016, with focus remaining on northern Afghanistan. The Afghan security forces have been responsible for maintaining security in the country since summer 2014. The Resolute Support mission is a step in the gradual phasing out of an international military presence in the country. However, the last year has seen an increased level of violence, with the Taliban expanding their attacks against the Afghan government. Consequently, the Afghan government has requested continued support at current levels, which NATO is expected to offer in 2016. The mission is a non-combat mission aimed at providing continued training and advice to the Afghan security forces and relevant institutions in Afghanistan to help continue to build and develop society.

The bill also describes the extensive civilian involvement that Sweden has with Afghanistan, particularly in the area of development cooperation. Sweden has announced long-term support with a total indicative volume range of SEK 8–8.5 billion for the period 2015–2024 within the framework of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) of July 2012. The TMAF affirms the mutual commitments of the international community and the Afghan government regarding development cooperation in Afghanistan.

Published 05 November 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

Press invitation: Nordic Defence Ministers' meeting in Stockholm November 10-11

Sweden holds the presidency of the Nordic defence cooperation Nordefco. Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist is the hosts when the Nordic defence ministers meet on the 10th of November in Stockholm. The meeting will also be attended by Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Tuesday the 10th of November starts with a Nordic defence minister meeting. Participating at the meeting are Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Finnish Minister for Defence Jussi Niinistö and the Norwegian Minister for Defence Ine Eriksen Søreide. There will also be representatives from Iceland and Denmark attending the meeting.

Date and time for the press brief: Tuesday the 10th of November at 14.00

Place: Hotel J, Nacka Strand, Augustendalsvägen 36, Stockholm

Time for media: Gathering with security control from 13.30

Registration: Dennis Abrahamsson, tel +46 8-405 25 30, +46 70-548 51 74. E-mail: dennis.abrahamsson@regeringskansliet.se. Send your registration before the 6th of November. **Please bring a valid press id.**

The Nordefco meeting will after the press brief continue with a Nordic-Baltic Defence Ministers' meeting. The Lithuanian Defence Minister Juozas OLEKAS, Estonia's Defence Minister Hannes Hanso, and Parliamentary Secretary Andrejs Pantelejevs from Latvia will join the meeting.

Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is invited to participate in the Nordic and the Nordic-Baltic Defence Minister meetings. The Secretary

General will also have a bilateral meeting with Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist.

The meeting will continue on the 11th of November with a meeting with the Northern Group. The Nordic and Baltic representatives are then joined by Britain's Secretary of State for Defence Michael Fallon, Director International Affairs and Operations David Van Weel from the Netherlands and Ministries of Defence representatives from Germany and Poland.

Published 04 November 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to attend Nordic Council in Reykjavik on 27–28 October

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will be in Reykjavik on 27–28 October for the annual session of the Nordic Council. His schedule includes meetings with the Nordic prime ministers, the Nordic Council Presidium and the three self-governing territories of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. Subjects including migration, climate, the environment and Syria will be on the agenda.

On Tuesday 27 October, the Prime Minister will take part in the award ceremony for the Nordic Council prizes.

While in Reykjavik, Mr Löfven will also attend a meeting of the Nordic and Baltic prime ministers, focusing on security policy cooperation in our neighbourhood.

In connection to the Nordic Council session, the Nordic–Baltic heads of government will also meet the Prime Minister of the UK within the Northern Future Forum.

Attending alongside Mr Löfven will be Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation Kristina Persson, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. For details of the respective programmes, please contact the relevant press secretaries.

Press briefings

Wednesday 28 October

11.15–11.45 Press conference with the Nordic prime ministers.

Venue: Harpa – Kaldalón

14.00–14.30 Press conference with the Nordic and Baltic prime ministers.

Venue: Harpa – Kaldalón

Published 27 October 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

Government appointed new Supreme Commander

The Swedish Government has appointed Major General Micael Bydén to the rank of General and to the Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces. Supreme Commander Sverker Göranson will relinquish his command to Micael Bydén on October 1st, 2015.

Micael Bydén, born in 1964, has a fighter pilot background with an extensive background within the Swedish Armed Forces. He has served in Afghanistan and as the Swedish Air Attaché in Washington D.C. Since 2012, Micael Bydén has served as the Air Force Chief of Staff.

Published 11 September 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden to Join NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence

Sweden is set to join the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence as a Contributing Participant. This cooperation format at the knowledge hub is open for non-NATO nations.

- Sweden joining the Centre as a Contributing Participant will enhance cyber security cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Swedish technical experts have already contributed remarkably to the world's largest live-fire international cyber defence exercise Locked Shields that the Centre organizes, noted Colonel Artur Suzik, Director of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. He highlighted the importance of such cooperation as cyber security is a global issue that does not stop at NATO borders.

- We recognise the successful work of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, particularly its role as a training facility as well as its important contributions to the ongoing discussion on international and legal issues, said State Secretary Jan Salestrand of Swedish Ministry of Defence. Through closer cooperation with the Centre, Sweden wishes to contribute to the regional development of cyber defence and international cyber security. Salestrand emphasised that the recently adopted Swedish Defence Bill states that Sweden should strengthen its cyber defence capabilities and that international cooperation is vital to this end.

It is essential to involve as many nations with advanced cyber defence expertise as possible in the work of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, noted Mikk Marran, the Permanent Secretary of the Estonian Ministry of Defence.

- Coping with the cyber world that is not hindered by physical borders requires international cooperation and the Centre embodies that. It already

is one of the largest NATO Centres of Excellence in terms of number of nations involved, Marran said. He added that Sweden adds value to the Centre's synthesis of cyber security knowledge.

The Tallinn-based NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence is a NATO-accredited knowledge hub focused on interdisciplinary applied research and development as well as consultations, trainings and exercises in the field of cyber security. The Centre's mission is to enhance capability, cooperation and information-sharing between NATO, Allies and Partners in cyber defence. The Centre is staffed and financed by sponsoring nations and contributing participants. Membership of the Centre is open to all Allies. Currently, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States have signed on as Sponsoring Nations. Austria has joined the Centre as a Contributing Participant, the status for non-NATO members of the NATO CCDCOE.

Published 02 July 2015



Enhanced military cooperation between Denmark and Sweden – 27 May 2015

Enhanced military cooperation

At today's meeting in Copenhagen the Swedish and Danish ministers of defence, Peter Hultqvist and Nicolai Wammen, welcomed a report on enhanced possibilities for Danish-Swedish military cooperation.

The report has been prepared by the Danish Armed Forces and Swedish Armed Forces and identifies possible areas of enhanced military cooperation. The goal is to increase operational effect from peacetime maritime and air operations.

The report presents recommendations covering enhanced information sharing in regard to air and maritime surveillance; on secure communications; and on enhanced possibilities for accessing each others countries in peacetime.

The ministers stated:

“We have a long tradition of military cooperation between Denmark and Sweden. The report and its recommendations will undergo further study in the coming period. A pragmatic and determined effort will be made to enhance Danish-Swedish military cooperation in order to achieve increased operational effect and added value to mutual benefit for both countries. We underline the political will and intent to move forward.”

The ministers look forward to meeting again in order to finalise the process. Increased Danish-Swedish military cooperation will supplement already existing Nordic defence cooperation (NORDEF) and sea surveillance cooperation in the Baltic Sea (SUCBAS).

Published 27 May 2015



Nordic defence ministers have signed an updated agreement concerning Cooperation in the Defence Materiel Area

The Nordic ministers have signed an updated agreement between the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden concerning Cooperation in the Defence Materiel Area.

The agreement has been updated with an adaptation to the defence directives of the EU (Defence and Security Procurement Directive and the Transfer Directive).

It has also been enhanced in order to make it possible to cooperate in additional areas. The agreement is now more flexible so the various parties can enter into agreements that support cooperation in various configurations.

- It is satisfying that we now have updated the agreement, which is an important milestone. The next step will be to develop an appendix, which includes more detailed contractual regulations, such as procurement, security of supply and export control, says Minister for Defence, and Chairman of Nordefco, Peter Hultqvist.

- [Twitter](#)
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Published 10 March 2015



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

Check against delivery

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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!

* * *

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!

Published 19 November 2020



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.

Published 16 June 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at video conference of foreign affairs ministers (defence)

6 April 2020 Check against delivery.

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!

Published 08 April 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

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.

* * *

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.

* * *

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.

Published 12 March 2020



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.

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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.

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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



Government Offices of Sweden

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

* * *

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



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.

Published 14 February 2016



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
23 September 2015 Check against delivery

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 chocked 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.

Published 25 September 2015



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 effects 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.

Published 03 June 2015



Government Offices of Sweden

JEF Defence Ministers Statement

3 October 2022

The defence ministers from the countries within the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) defence cooperation met virtually on 3 October 2022, and gave the following statement.

Following the deliberate damage caused to the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea, today Defence Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) met virtually to share assessments of the blatant and irresponsible attacks against critical civilian infrastructure.

The JEF condemns in the strongest terms the reckless sabotage in the Baltic Sea. It is discussing security responses, including increased maritime presence and intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance activities.

It will seek to deter further such acts, reassure allies and demonstrate collective commitment to the security and stability of the region. Ministers discussed increasing shared intelligence assessments to ensure common situational awareness, as well as cooperation to secure critical infrastructure. The JEF will ensure complementarity, alignment and transparency with NATO as well as the investigation led by Danish, Swedish and German authorities.

The JEF is a group of like-minded nations – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom. The nations share the same purpose, values and a common focus on security and stability in the JEF core regions of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The JEF provides a responsive, capable, and ready military force that undertakes integrated activities at sea, on land and in the air, across northern Europe. These activities are preventative and proportionate and demonstrate solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability

in the JEF core regions.

Published 03 October 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint statement by the Nordic Ministers of Defence 30 September 2022

The Nordic defence ministers convened for a virtual consultation on 30 September 2022 and gave the following statement.

We, the Nordic Ministers of Defence, are deeply concerned about the damage to the Nord Stream pipelines in international waters in the Baltic Sea. All information currently available points to a deliberate act of sabotage close to the national borders of Denmark and Sweden. It cannot be ruled out that this is a reckless attack on Europe's energy infrastructure and an attempt to destabilise the already tense security situation. The leaks from the pipelines are causing risks to civilian sea-traffic and substantial environmental damage.

Finland, Iceland and Norway stand ready to support Denmark and Sweden by any means possible in the investigation of the incident. We are in close contact with each other regarding the incident and the overall security situation in the Baltic Sea region and beyond.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries are determined in our support to Ukraine. We will not recognise the results of the illegal referenda or annexations.

Published 30 September 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint Statement from the ministers of defence from Sweden, Finland and Norway 25 August 2022

Joint Statement from Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen and Norway's Minister of Defence Bjørn Arild Gram after a meeting 25 August 2022 in Finland.

The security situation has deteriorated following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia has proved that it does not respect international law and has upended the European security order.

The security in northern Europe has been adversely impacted by this development. A crisis in our region affects us all. Therefore, we must be ready and able to act together in peace, crisis and conflict.

The increased military presence and activity in northern Europe underlines the importance of avoiding incidents. At several occasions, we have seen irresponsible and unprofessional Russian behaviour.

The North Calotte and adjacent areas are of strategic importance to the defence of our countries in the event of a crisis or war. Enhanced cooperation between our countries is therefore of utmost importance. Through increased cooperation we can achieve a more efficient defence of our countries. One of our major objectives is to coordinate and develop military operations planning between Finland, Sweden and Norway.

Our trilateral initiative facilitates such an enhanced cooperation. We can engage in preparing and conducting operations in the event of a crisis or conflict. We can take common responsibility and create prerequisites for, e.g., the protection of lines of communication as well as security of supply.

All together, this cooperation provides an opportunity to reduce

vulnerabilities and increase the common security in the northern parts of our countries. This is a vital interest for Finland, Norway and Sweden and contributes to increased security in the entire region.

Published 25 August 2022



JEF defence ministers' statement: Finland and Sweden's application for NATO membership

The ministers of defence of the countries participating in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) met in Oslo, Norway on 15 June 2022, and gave the following statement.

Today, the Defence Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) – comprising Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK – met in Oslo.

JEF Defence Ministers discussed current security challenges, including the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and considered the future development of the JEF to ensure it continues to make an effective contribution to security and stability in its core region of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea.

JEF Defence Ministers also took part in a table-top exercise to practise the JEF's role in responding to an escalating crisis, including the relationship between the JEF and NATO in such a scenario.

All JEF Defence Ministers strongly welcome Finland's and Sweden's applications for NATO membership. Each country has made its sovereign decision to join NATO after a clear, open and democratic process; they share the Alliance's values and are modern, highly capable defence and security partners with whom together we will enhance our collective, transatlantic security.

The allied JEF Partners will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Finland and Sweden in a spirit of solidarity through their accession to NATO membership. We shall work closely with our NATO Allies to integrate both Finland and Sweden into the Alliance as soon as possible.

The JEF shall engage in multi-domain activity across our core regions to provide enhanced levels of assurance to our Finnish and Swedish friends as they complete the process of joining NATO. This is in addition to the series of integrated activities and exercises in northern Europe that JEF Defence Ministers agreed at their meeting at Belvoir Castle on 21–22 February 2022.

We reaffirm the shared purpose and common resolve of the JEF to work together to enhance security and stability in northern Europe and be ready to respond to a wide range of contingencies, both in peacetime and at times of crisis and conflict; all in a way which is coherent with, and complementary to, the role of NATO.

Published 15 June 2022



Joint statement by the ministers of defence of the Northern Group, 8 June 2022

The ministers of defence of the Northern Group met in Reykjavík, Iceland, on 8 June, and gave the following statement.

Today we, the Ministers, discussed the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms. Russia's invasion has inflicted immeasurable destruction and suffering on the Ukrainian people, and is a threat to the security of Europe and the North Atlantic area. We stand with Ukraine and will continue to support Ukraine both militarily and politically against Russia's brutal and illegal aggression.

Today we also discussed the implications of global challenges to security in the northern regions, including the High North. We underline our strong political unity and cohesion in the face of threats to the security of our region. We will continue to strive to protect our common values of democracy, rule of law, freedom and human rights. We underline that the sanctity of internationally recognised borders is a bedrock principle of international relations. Any erosion of this principle represents a grave danger to a system that is based on international law and rules-based order.

The Ministers of Defence of the Northern Group warmly welcome the sovereign decisions by Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership. This will improve our collective defence and enhance security and stability in Northern Europe. Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom welcome Finland and Sweden's applications and will work for fast national ratification processes



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement by Nordic Ministers of Defence on Nordic Defence Cooperation 24 May 2022

The Nordic defence ministers or their representatives met on 24 May 2022 on the island of Bornholm, Denmark, and gave the following statement. At the meeting, Sweden was represented by Jan-Olof Lind, State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Nordic Ministers of Defence warmly welcome the sovereign decisions by Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership. Denmark, Iceland and Norway welcome Finland and Sweden into the Alliance and will work for fast national ratification processes.

As we enter a new era of deeper defence relations, we, the Nordic Defence Ministers, remain committed to the Nordic defence cooperation (NORDEFECO). We share common interests concerning the complex and demanding security challenges in our region, including the Baltic Sea and the High North. These regions constitute a single area of operations and coordinated or joint operational planning among the Nordic countries is therefore key.

Finland and Sweden's decision will improve our collective defence, enhance security and stability, and strengthen the alliance in Northern Europe. We will continue the political and military dialogue that is already well underway.

Today the Nordic Ministers and representatives met on Bornholm to discuss the security situation in our region. During the coming months we will strengthen our Nordic defence cooperation. As the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Iceland and Norway already have stated, Denmark, Iceland and Norway stand ready to assist Finland and Sweden by all means necessary, should they be the victim of aggression on their territory before obtaining

NATO membership. Nordic military presence in our region will be enhanced through joint exercises, training and visits. These assurance activities underline our well-founded ability to operate together.

We have tasked our ministries to adapt NORDEF CO in light of the developments in Finland and Sweden.

Published 24 May 2022



Nordic defence ministers joint statement on strengthening Nordic defence cooperation

The Nordic defence ministers met on 11 May 2022 in Kirkenes, Norway and gave the following statement.

The war in Ukraine has fundamentally changed European defence and security policy. In light of the ongoing crisis, Nordic solidarity and defence cooperation is more important than ever.

The Nordic countries share fundamental values and security interests. We share a strategically important location. Closer defence cooperation between the Nordic countries strengthens our military capabilities and promotes regional security and stability. Combined, our armed forces represent a considerable defensive force.

Our ability to cooperate during peacetime is a foundation for our ability to act during crisis and conflict. Hence, our armed forces train and exercise together regularly, including exercise Cold Response, the biennial Nordic air defence exercise Arctic Challenge Exercise, as well as regular Cross Border Training conducted between our Air Forces. In addition, we are in the process of deepening our operational cooperation, enabling us to improve our interoperability, deterrence and territorial defence.

As we face increasingly complex security challenges in our region and beyond, we must cooperate through a whole-of-society approach. Recent experiences from the Covid-19 pandemic have demonstrated the necessity of international cooperation and resilient societies. We have a strong tradition for total defence within the Nordic countries, and we aim to strengthen civil-military cooperation across our borders.

We, the Defence Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and Foreign Affairs Minister of Iceland, remain committed to further deepening our defence cooperation with regards to operational cooperation and total

defence.

Published 11 May 2022



Defence Ministers of Finland and Sweden took part in a scenario-based exercise

Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen and Sweden's Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist met today 14 March 2022 in Helsinki and took part in a scenario-based exercise. The Ministers made the following joint statement:

Sweden and Finland give high priority to the continued development of our bilateral defence cooperation. We are prepared to act together in peacetime and beyond it. We have bilateral operation plans and contingency measures, enabling us to coordinate our actions in times of crisis and war.

During our meeting today we discussed the international security situation and deepening our bilateral defence cooperation.

One element of our bilateral defence cooperation is table top exercises. The Swedish and Finnish Defence Ministers had such an exercise on 14 March. Chiefs of Defence from Sweden and Finland, too, took part in the exercise. The exercise was based on a fictitious scenario of a conflict in the Baltic Sea Region. Its objective was to practice political decision-making and procedures for joint action.

Table top exercises and other similar exercises reinforce the defence capability of our countries and increase our understanding of the possibilities and potential challenges of joint military operations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement by the Nordic Ministers of Defence regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine

The Nordic Ministers of Defence today discussed Russia's actions in Ukraine and gave the following statement.

The Nordic countries strongly condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Nordic ministers of Defence call on Russia to immediately cease its military action and withdraw its military forces from in and around Ukraine. Russia's attack on Ukraine is a serious violation of international law.

The Nordic Ministers of Defence stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. The ministers reaffirm their support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia's military attack on Ukraine is a threat to the security of all of Europe. The Nordic Ministers of Defence remain in close contact regarding the situation and continue to consult with NATO and EU allies and partners.

Published 24 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint statement by Defence Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force

Meeting in the UK, Defence Ministers from the ten Joint Expeditionary Force nations have issued a joint statement on the situation in Ukraine.

Today the ten Defence Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) met at Belvoir Castle in England: the UK, together with Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

We reaffirm the importance of the JEF as a group of like-minded and proactive nations, with shared purpose and values, and a common focus on security and stability in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region. Ten nations that are stronger when working together, the JEF gives us the ability to act collectively in an agile and responsive way to meet the variety of security challenges we face, however they arise, in that part of Europe we call home. The JEF is designed from first principles to be complementary to NATO's Deterrence and Defence posture.

Never has the JEF been more important and relevant than it is today. During the course of our meeting the Russian Federation has recognised Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions as independent states, breaching Minsk agreements and international law. All ten Defence Ministers are united in our condemnation of that unjustified act, the build-up of Russian forces on the border with Ukraine, and further incursion in the Donbas region.

We strongly support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and reiterate the right of all sovereign nations to choose their own path, their own security arrangements and their own alliances, free from external aggression and coercion, as a fundamental principle of the European security order. We call on Russia to de-escalate and encourage them to engage in transparent dialogue, including through the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council, in

order to reduce tensions. We also condemn the instrumentalization of migration flows and other hybrid activity towards Latvia, Lithuania and Poland by the Belarussian regime.

We have reviewed the progress we have made in the development of the JEF as an agile, capable, and ready force, and today agreed to undertake a series of integrated military activities across our part of northern Europe – at sea, on land and in the air. For example, we will shortly conduct an exercise demonstrating JEF nations' freedom of movement in the Baltic Sea. These and subsequent activities will remain preventative and proportionate. In acting together, we shall demonstrate the JEF's solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in our region.

Published 22 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement by the Nordic Ministers of Defence regarding the situation in and near Ukraine

The Nordic Ministers of Defence met virtually on 21 January to discuss the deteriorating situation in and around Ukraine. The ministers monitor the security situation in Ukraine closely, and continue to consult with each other through the NORDEFSCO Crisis Consultation Mechanism.

The ministers agree on the gravity of the situation, and the need to seek a diplomatic solution to the current situation. The ministers call on Russia to de-escalate through halting and reversing their ongoing military build-up in the region and engage in dialogue.

The ministers reaffirm their support to Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and its right to decide its own foreign and security policy, free from outside interference. The fundamental principles underpinning the European security order remain non-negotiable.

The Nordic countries welcome dialogue on European security issues in relevant fora, including the EU, NATO, OSCE and the UN. The Nordic countries welcome the United States' efforts in engaging Russia in resolving the current crisis.

Published 21 January 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint statement by the Nordic Ministers of Defence on Ukraine

We, the Nordic Ministers of Defence, follow the recent developments in and around Ukraine with great concern. Recent Russian military activity, especially the exceptional military build-up along Ukraine's borders, is a worrying development, which may have a destabilising effect on our shared security environment.

Transparency, refraining from the use of military force, and adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the OSCE commitments and principles and the Vienna Document 2011 is paramount.

We continue to follow the situation in and around Ukraine closely. In 2019 the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) established a Crisis Consultation Mechanism, facilitating rapid consultations on any urgent matter of common concern. We recently had a Ministerial consultation to discuss the current situation close to Ukraine's border, and we will continue to keep close contact.

The Nordic countries continue their firm support to Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and right to decide its own foreign and security policy course free from outside interference. We reject the notion of spheres of influence in Europe.

The Minsk agreements and political dialogue remain the basis for solving the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Published 21 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Comment from Minister for Defence on Finland's decision regarding acquisition of fighter aircraft

We regret that Finland did not choose Gripen and GlobalEye.

We are convinced that Gripen and GlobalEye would have been very good choices also for Finland, combining highly capable aircraft systems with low costs and high availability. The systems are tailor-made for our common security challenges as well as the harsh Nordic environmental conditions.

Having said that, we fully respect the Finnish decision. Our excellent defence cooperation will of course continue. Finland will continue to be our closest security and defence policy partner. Over a long period of time the relationship has been based on common geostrategic interests and common views on security challenges.

The geographic and military-strategic realities underscore the need for continued and deepened defence cooperation and we will continue the work on creating prerequisites for combined joint military operations in peace, crisis and war.

Published 10 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint Statement European Intervention Initiative Meeting of the Ministers of Defence

24 September 2021, Stockholm, Sweden

Since the launch of the European Intervention Initiative in 2018, it has grown to include thirteen European states who share the aim to develop a common strategic culture to meet the challenges facing Europe. These challenges are becoming more severe and urgent than in decades.

Today, Ministers of Defence, or their representatives, of Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom met in Stockholm, Sweden, to exchange views on current security and defence challenges.

The Ministers or their representatives shared important lessons so far identified after the withdrawal from Afghanistan, including views on the implications for European coordination and capability requirements, and for transatlantic cooperation.

The Ministers or their representatives were briefed by France on the security situation in Mali. They underlined the importance of the political transition in Mali and that elections are held within the agreed time frame. They also expressed serious concern over possible cooperation between Malian authorities and foreign mercenaries. Furthermore, they discussed their continued commitment to the fight against global and regional terrorism and the contribution EI2 can make through exchange of information and analysis.

The Ministers or their representatives received a timely update by Portugal on the situation in Cabo Delgado, and the process of launching the European Union training mission in Mozambique and took note of the initial positive results.

The Ministers or their representatives were briefed by Sweden on the Russian-Belarusian military exercise Zapad-21, and by Finland on the first results of the Working Group on Disinformation.

Lastly, the Ministers or their representatives discussed the future of EI2 cooperation, and how to strengthen its capacity to tackle current and future security challenges and deliver concrete outputs by streamlining the flow of information between its various components.

Published 24 September 2021



Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist

A treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons was adopted at the UN General Assembly in July this year. Sweden has long been active on the issue of nuclear disarmament. This is why it is important for the Government to support the UN's work on a treaty of this kind. We will soon appoint an inquiry to look into all of the consequences of the treaty, including for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Sweden's defence policy cooperation. The forms for this inquiry will be presented shortly.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well. National defence capability will be strengthened while our defence and security policy cooperation continues to be developed. Our foreign and security policy works through diplomacy, mediation, conflict prevention and trust-building measures. This increases Sweden's ability to promote détente and stability both in our neighbourhood and globally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint Statement on Regional security challenges discussed by the Nordic defence ministers meeting in Copenhagen 30-31 March

The Nordic ministers of defence met at Frederiksberg Palace and had a good and open dialogue on Nordic defence and security matters. Furthermore, the ministers strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March.

In relation to the terrorist attacks last week the ministers stated:

Last week Brussels – the heart of Europe – was hit by callous terrorist attacks. Attacks not only on Belgium, but on all the values we share and promote. We strongly condemn the attacks and stand in solidarity with the Belgian people against the violent, cynical and fanatic terrorists behind these attacks. We are resolute in our determination to prevent and defeat terrorism and to fight ISIL, and we discussed this during the meeting. We will do this by standing even closer together – as the free democracies we are.

The ministers also stated:

Nordic defence cooperation is progressing well. In recent years we have seen an increased cooperation taking place and priorities to find effective solutions to our security and defence needs. Implementation of secure communication between the Nordic ministries of defence and military headquarters will be operational this year. Furthermore, we decided that the Nordic countries will provide air transport to the UN operation in Mali. This will create much needed sustainability and predictability for the UN, and will provide a useful model for enhanced Nordic cooperation in future UN

operations.

We also discussed current security challenges in our region. Closer cooperation among the Nordic countries and the Baltic States contributes to enhanced security in our region. We remain concerned with the military activities in the Baltic Sea Region and follow these activities closely. Therefore, we urge Russia to be transparent and predictable when conducting military activities. Furthermore, we reiterate our position that the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea are violations of international law and other international agreements.

Within the framework of NORDEFECO, the ministers meet twice every year to discuss areas of ongoing and potential cooperation. The following ministers participated in the meeting:

Danish Minister of Defence Peter Christensen, Swedish Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist, Norwegian Minister of Defence Ine Eriksen Søreide, the Finnish Minister of Defence Jussi Niinistö and Director of Department for Security and Defence for Iceland Arnor Sigurjónsson.

Published 31 March 2016



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint statement on the Situation in Ukraine by the Swedish and Lithuanian Ministers of Defence

Statement by the Swedish Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist and the Lithuanian Minister of Defence Juozas Olekaz. We have had a constructive meeting with defence minister Poltorak discussing the military situation in Eastern Ukraine, the ongoing Russian aggression and the relations between our countries. For us as defence ministers of Lithuania and Sweden this visit is an important way of showing our solidarity with Ukraine and our resolute support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a few weeks' time, two years will have passed since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. Today the world's eyes are turning to the crisis in Syria and other parts of the world. But no matter how grave other crises are, they must not serve as an excuse for forgetting about Crimea. It is unacceptable that a powerful neighbour uses military force, deception and disinformation to change borders in Europe in the 21st century.

We stand firmly by the side of Ukraine in that respect.

The fighting in eastern Ukraine continues. Despite persistent Russian denials we know that regular Russian troops are present in Donbass. It continues to support the separatists with equipment, training and advice and to control them for its purposes. Numerous ceasefires have been negotiated and agreed. None has been fully respected. (Over the last 24 hours there have been 47 shootings.) The ceasefire must be respected, Russian troops and weaponry must leave Ukrainian territory and Ukrainian control of its state border must be restored.

The Minsk agreement remains the key to reach a solution to the conflict. We do understand, however, that the absence of Russian delivery on its Minsk commitments presents Ukraine with a domestic challenge to implement its own Minsk obligations.

In general, we commend Ukraine for its progress of democratic and economic reforms achieved so far. At the same time we recognise the extent of the work that remains to be done. Considering the challenges ahead, no time must be lost and it is important that the Ukrainian leadership remains united and focused on the reform process. Successful reforms are indeed the best response to the Russian aggression.

In the sphere of foreign policy, Ukraine, as any sovereign country, has the right to make her own choices on security policy and make other fundamental choices about its own future. We cannot accept that another country interferes with that right. We will not accept any attempts to undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine.

Our presence here today is a sign of our determination to support Ukraine and stand by her side.

18 February 2016, Kyiv

Published 18 February 2016