



# 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.

Published 09 August 2022



# 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.

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# 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.

Published 08 June 2022

# 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.

Published 13 April 2022



# 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



# 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



Government Offices of Sweden

# 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 NORDEFCO 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.

Published 30 June 2021



# 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



# 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.

Published 22 April 2021



# 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



Government Offices of Sweden

# 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](http://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 NORDEFECO, 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



# 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



Government Offices of Sweden

# 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



# 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.

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