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A future Nordic alliance?

– prerequisites and possible operations

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Sammendrag

Rapporten argumenterer mot den rådende oppfatning at nordisk sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitisk samarbeid vil mislykkes. Denne oppfatningen er grunnet i å vite mye om historien til nordisk samarbeid – *innsideperspektivet*. Rapporten viser hvordan nordisk forsvars- og sikkerhetspolitisk samarbeid, herunder nordiske felles militære operasjoner, er både mulig og ønskelig.

Kunnskap om Norden, nordisk forsvarspolitikk og landenes militærvesen hentet fra innsideperspektivet er selvsagt stadig nyttig. Ved å anvende allmenne samfunnsvitenskapelige teorier om de relevante kategoriene, konkluderer imidlertid rapporten med at et utstrakt nordisk samarbeid vil være normen. *Utsideperspektivet* er navnet på dette metodiske grepet. I utsideperspektivet benyttes det til å finne de generelle kategoriene – småstater som enhet og et multipolart regionalt sikkerhetskompleks som omgivelse. Først etablerer analysen en baseline for forventede, generelle utfall. Deretter stiller rapporten spørsmål om det finnes spesielle nordiske særtrekk, historiske eller kulturelle, som modifiserer baseline. Rapporten konkluderer på dette grunnlag at nordisk forsvarssamarbeid, inkludert fremtidige felles militære operasjoner, er mulig og sannsynlig.

Spørsmålet om Nato-medlemskap har historisk sett vært en konkurrerende og alternativ løsning til den nordiske. Denne rapporten viser hvordan formell alliansetilknytning idag betyr mindre, og sammenfallende interesser betyr mer, for grunnlaget for felles militær opptreden. I forlengelsen av dette kan en nordisk allianse inneha forskjellige fremtidige roller. Den kan være et alternativ for trusler som er for små for Nato og for store for Norge. Den kan være kjernen i en allianse av Nato- og ikke Nato-land, som Sverige og Finland. Og den kan utgjøre førstelinjeforsvaret i en artikkel 5 situasjon.

Nordisk forsvarssamarbeid om materiell motivert av økonomi representerer en mulig vei til et politisk samarbeid om militære operasjoner. Denne rapportens analyser benytter igjen en kombinasjon av innside- og utsideperspektiv for å analysere NORDEFCO-samarbeidets mulighet til å fremme forsvarsintegrasjon mellom de nordiske land. Konklusjonen er at materiellsamarbeid ikke er tilstrekkelig for et sikkerhetspolitisk samarbeid. En usikkerhet ved konklusjonen er om den ikke omfatter en situasjon hvor de nordiske land av økonomiske grunner må velge mellom å avvikle hele våpensystem eller å operere dem sammen med andre.

Tre scenarioer har blitt utviklet for å vise bredden i mulige nordiske operasjoner. Det er en situasjon hvor Russland over tid utøver tvangsmakt mot Norge, en situasjon med et begrenset *fait accompli,* og til slutt et storskala russisk angrep mot tre nordiske land, riktignok også det med begrensede mål. Scenarioene var opprinnelig en del av denne rapporten, men det ble besluttet at det var mer hensiktsmessig å utgi dem som en egen rapport.

Summary

This report argues against the conventional wisdom that Nordic security and defense cooperation is destined to fail. That belief comes from deep historical knowledge of the history of Nordic attempts to establish such cooperation – the inside perspective. The report demonstrates, however, that Nordic security and defense cooperation, including joint Nordic military operations, is both feasible and desirable.

The inside perspective, of course, contributes valuable knowledge of the Nordic region, Nordic defense policies and the militaries of the countries. By using social science theories about the relevant general categories, the report, however, concludes that far-reaching Nordic cooperation is the norm rather than the exception. This is the outside perspective – utilizing general categories such as small states as units and a multipolar security complex as context to understand the situation of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The analysis first establishes a baseline for the expected generic outcomes. Then the report moves on to ask whether there are any special Nordic features, historical or cultural, that modify that baseline. Finally, based on all the evidence, the report is able to conclude that future defense cooperation, including future joint military operations, is both possible and indeed likely.

Historically, NATO membership has been a competing alternative to any Nordic solution. The report demonstrates how a formal alliance matters less today and security interests that are in alignment matter more, for joint military action. A corollary is that a future Nordic alliance may take on different roles. Such an alliance may be an alternative to counter threats that are too small for NATO but too large for Norway to handle on its own. It may constitute the core in an alliance of members and non-members such as Sweden and Finland. And it may constitute the first line of defense in an article 5 situation.

Nordic defense cooperation over procurement, motivated by economic concerns, may represent a path towards political cooperation resulting in joint military action. The report again utilizes a combination of inside and outside perspectives to analyze the possibilities of NORDEFCO cooperation to promote defense integration between the Nordic countries. A reservation concerning the conclusion is that it does not yet cover situations in which the Nordic countries are forced by economic restrictions to choose either to abandon weapon systems in their entirety or to operate together with others.

To illustrate the scope for future Nordic operations, three scenarios have been developed. The first is a situation in which Russia exercises coercive diplomacy towards Norway; the second situation involving a limited *fait accompli*; and, the third and final, a large Russian attack on three Nordic countries, albeit for limited objectives. The scenarios were originally part of this report, but it was decided that it was more user-friendly to publish them as a separate report.

Contents

Preface

This report constitutes one of two parallel publications on future Nordic military operations published by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) in 2019. This report demonstrates that Nordic security and defense cooperation, including joint Nordic military operations, is both feasible and desirable. It does in two steps. First, by using social science theories about the relevant general categories, the report concludes that far-reaching Nordic cooperation is the norm rather than the exception. This is the outside perspective. Second, the report moves on to ask whether there are any special Nordic features, historical or cultural, that modify that baseline. Based on all the evidence, the report is able to conclude that future defense cooperation, including future joint military operations, is both possible and indeed likely.

The other report describes the scope for future Nordic operations by presenting three scenarios: a situation in which Russia exercises coercive diplomacy towards Norway; a situation involving a limited *fait accompli*; and, finally, a large Russian attack on three Nordic countries, albeit for limited objectives. The scenarios show ways in which Nordic operations may be useful, in situations involving varying degrees of force and of cooperation with countries outside the Nordic region. The report demonstrates how Nordic operations are particularly relevant for the present politico-military challenges, where a short response time, the political effects of military support and possessing military instruments tailored to the situation become ever more important.

Both reports are part of the project on Global Trends and Military Operations II (2016–2019) at FFI, the Norwegian Research Establishment. The project is a continuation of Global Trends and Military operations I (2013–2016) and studies how global trends might affect the Norwegian Armed Forces within the next 15–25 years. It identified a number of different classes of operations that the armed forces might have to undertake (see Sverre Diesen (2016), *The Future Operations of the Armed Forces* [Forsvarets fremtidige operasjoner – en morfologisk analyse av operasjonsspekteret], *FFI-rapport 16/02096*, Kjeller: Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt). Classes 5 and 6 were Nordic Operations, in Norway and elsewhere respectively. This report attempts to study these two classes of operations in more detail.

This report is aimed at political and military decision-makers in the Defense Ministries, Joint Staffs and Joint Operational Headquarters in all Nordic countries, and, it is hoped, may also find some readers among political scientists and the general public. To reach all potential readers in the Nordic countries, it has been written in English.

Alexander W. Beadle and Sverre Diesen have read the manuscript in full, several times, and have provided many suggestions to improve the report. Thanks also to Robert Dalsjö, Magnus Petersson and Håkon Lunde Saxi for their valuable comments on parts of it. Thank you all for removing many errors and sharpening the arguments. Any remaining errors are my responsibility.

Kjeller, 4 March 2019

Tore Nyhamar

1 Introduction: What are Nordic High-Intensity Operations and How Can They Be Studied?

Today, the institutional security arrangements of the Nordic countries are once again up for debate.[1] Are the fundamental assumptions and institutions that have served the Nordic states well for the last 70 years still valid? This report examines this question with a 15–25 year future perspective, as part of FFI's long-term military foresight activities.[2] In such a long-term perspective, there is a need to examine the fundamental prerequisites underpinning Nordic security, rather than simply analyzing incremental changes in existing arrangements. What might be the future alternatives if the existing order is no longer sufficient for Nordic security?

The report argues that current fundamental changes will make closer Nordic security and defense cooperation a more plausible alternative in the future. The report challenges the idea that the study of *past* attempts at Nordic cooperation is a reliable guide for understanding whether *future* cooperation is possible. Instead, it argues that identifying the general factors driving and influencing the policies of the Nordic states is a better way to understand what might be possible in the future. In order to do so, the Nordic states are analyzed as small states in a multipolar subsystem.

This report discusses the potential for Nordic defense and security cooperation – an alliance – that may enable the Nordic countries to conduct military operations together in Norway or elsewhere in Scandinavia. The discussion of alliances is not an end in itself, but necessary for the discussion the research question: *What is the future potential for joint Nordic military operations?* Such military cooperation requires interoperability – being able to operate effectively together to carry out a mission and tasks. Strategically, interoperability is operating forces together in order to achieve political objectives. Tactically, interoperability is operating together to achieve military objectives. The trend is for both strategic and tactical interoperability to be necessary in modern operations, as military units become smaller. This is because, as military units become smaller, the demand to coordinate tactics and procedures (tactical interoperability) increases because the units become more functionally dependent. In turn, functional dependencies and the need for tactical interoperability challenge national control of forces, creating new demands for more comprehensive political cooperation.[3]

The report begins with an explanation of why effective Nordic security cooperation has been considered impossible in the past. The purpose of this discussion is threefold. The first is to map today's ideas and their premises. The second is to use the identified premises to understand what

[1] The Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. This is term used in the region and these countries have developed a web of mutual cooperation. In this report, Iceland is omitted as it has no military forces and are situated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.
[2] Alexander William Beadle and Sverre Diesen (2015), *Globale trender mot 2040 – implikasjoner for Forsvarets rolle og relevans. FFI-rapport 2015/01452* http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/15-01452.pdf
http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/15-01452.pdf
[3] Ola Aabakken (2002), *Interoperabilitet:Kostnadsdriver og styrkemultiplikator FFI/Rapport –2002/02320*: FFI, p. 8–9, 17–18

needs to change to enable future Nordic operations. The third is to understand the conditions that might shape the planning and implementation of future Nordic operations.[4]

1.1 What are Nordic operations and how do we study them?

The starting point for this investigation is that the Nordic countries' military operations will be subject to the same general trends as operations elsewhere. These include increased use of unmanned platforms, network-organization and long-range weapons. The report focus on operations because they influence long-term defense planning in ways that alliances do not. How may these general trends play out in a Nordic context? Before addressing that question, however, the political assumptions of a future Nordic alliance need to be examined, because a Nordic operation needs to be politically feasible to occur at all. What are the key questions?

The first prerequisite for a future Nordic military operation is that the Nordic states have sufficient common interests to become a security actor together. Such common interests may be found in at least two areas. First, do the Nordic states have mutual *security* interests that are not reflected in the formal security architecture of NATO and the EU? Second, do they have *economic* incentives for defense cooperation that may lead to security political integration and actorness?[5] Chapters 3 and 4 of this report provide the answer to these questions.

The second prerequisite for any Nordic operation is that the future will be different from the past, as previous attempts at closer Nordic defense and security cooperation have often failed. Extrapolating trends for Nordic military operations is not really feasible, as there is no real past track record to study or to provide comparisons. The report will discuss how the interests and freedom of maneuver of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have changed in ways that make Nordic operations more feasible. This will lead to an analysis of the forces that will shape future operations.

1.2 Studying from the inside and the outside

When the idea of increased Nordic security and defense cooperation is floated from time to time, it garners widespread approval in itself. However, because it has repeatedly failed to produce much substance, Magnus Petersson succinctly notes that "everyone initially wants it but few actually want to realize it, as demonstrated when competing objectives arise." Toumas Forsberg concludes that "The historical wisdom in all the Nordic countries is that their existential security depend more on wider global and European trends than on their mutual relations."[6] On the most recent attempt – NORDEFCO – Håkon Lunde Saxi concludes that "it

[4] Sverre Diesen (2016), *Forsvarets fremtidige operasjoner. En morfologisk analyse av operasjonsspekteret FFI-rapport 16/02096*: FFI, p. 17, 38 https://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/16-02096.pdf https://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/16-02096.pdf

[5] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 115. Diesen 2016, p. 17.

[6] Magnus Petersson (2010), 'Komplement eller konkurrent? Några reflexioner kring det nordiska militärpolitiska samarbetet'. *Internasjonal Politikk* 68: 2, p. 241Clive Archer (2010), 'The Stoltenberg Report and Nordic security: big idea, small steps'. *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook*Tuomas Forsberg (2013), 'The rise of Nordic defence cooperation: a return to regionalism?'. *International Affairs* 89: 5, p. 1165.

has proved impossible to realize the vision of functional military cooperation about force generation. This ambition has in reality been abandoned."[7] Arguably, one likely explanation is that Nordic security cooperation in the past was usually advocated by *Nordists* who viewed it as a good in itself, without linking it to current security policy or strategic challenges. Instead, the *Nordists* often resorted to "lofty expression such as shared destinies or ideas about the unique mission or role of the Nordic countries."[8]

Methodologically, future events may be studied from the inside or the outside. When we ask ourselves whether a Nordic military operation is possible (and what it might look like), we might start by amassing as much information about the Nordic countries as we can. That is the *inside view*. This is the approach taken in the analyses mentioned in the paragraph above. Alternatively, we can ask about the category to which an event belongs more generally, e.g. investigating what small states in a multipolar system do when they are threatened by the same state. That is the *outside view*.[9] The advantage of the outside view is that it avoids the *anchoring* bias, where we rely too heavily on an initial piece of information offered (known as the "anchor"), e.g. the initial price estimate of a house on sale. Once an anchor has been given, it frames our thinking around the number or piece of information given, even though the anchor may be entirely incorrect. In the same way, our knowledge of the present and recent past will loom large in predictions of the future of Nordic security policy.

As noted by Daniel Kahneman, "the basic principle of framing is the passive acceptance of the formulation given."[10] In the case of Nordic military operations, therefore, it is not a question of choosing either the inside or the outside view but of alternating between them. To go directly to the outside view is to prejudge matters, as it may not be obvious what the category is. In this report, the inside view provides the knowledge needed to find the premises leading to the questions that enable us to identify the relevant categories to study the possibility of future Nordic military operations. Finally, returning to the inside view, the report will challenge the baseline prediction for the category by asking in what ways the Nordic countries may differ. Specifically, which pitfalls may be avoided by adding the outside view?

Extrapolating past experiences will result in a pessimistic view of the potential for Nordic defense cooperation, since the Nordic countries have had different security and defense orientations for at least 200 years. Their respective experiences during World War II and the Cold War figure prominently. Denmark's security problem, at least since the Congress of Vienna in 1814, was at the Southern border. Since 1864, it was Germany. The remedy to the German threat was hard to find, but it was clear that Denmark was looking westwards and not to

[7] Håkon Lunde Saxi (2016), 'Hvordan revitalisere NORDEFCO? En statusrapport og noen konkrete tiltak for å styrke samarbeidet i hverdagen'. In *Nordisk forsvarsamarbejde*, ed. Jensen. København: Forsvarsakademiet (2016), p. 62. My translation.
[8] Sven G Holtsmark and Tom Kristiansen (1991), 'En nordisk illusjon? Norge og militært samarbeid i Nord, 1918-1940'. p. 90.
[9] Alexander William Beadle (2016), *Å forske på Forsvaret i fremtiden – muligheter, begrensninger og kognitive fallgruver FFI-rapport 2016/01810* FFI, p. 39ff http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/16-01810.pdf http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/16-01810.pdf
[10] Daniel Kahneman (2003), 'A perspective on judgment and choice: mapping bounded rationality'. *American psychologist* 58: 9, p. 703.

the other Nordic countries for solutions even before 1940. Eventually the solution arrived in the shape of American hegemony. Denmark joined NATO and the American security guarantee. Norway tried to stay out of great power politics from independence in 1905 onwards, assuming that its territory was not vital to Germany or the United Kingdom, but clearly preferring the latter if forced to choose. As the German attack in 1940 and subsequent occupation proved staying out to be unworkable, the Norwegian solution was to abandon non-alignment in favor of NATO in 1949, protecting against the new Soviet threat. Sweden also tried to steer clear of great power politics before World War II, but with more success than Norway. Hence, Sweden concluded that non-alignment could work during the Cold War also, albeit with stronger ties to the Western alliances than acknowledged at the time.[11] Finland, like Denmark, shared a great power neighbor, but has had more success in fending it off militarily than the Danes. The outcome of WW II was that Finnish alignment with the West was not possible.

The common belief that Nordic defense cooperation tends to fail to deliver is based on the *inside view*. Since Nordic security cooperation by and large is a history of unfulfilled promise, the more you know about it, the more likely you are to conclude that it will continue to fail in the future also. Nevertheless, the inside view is not necessarily flawed and useless. In the case of the new Nordic security initiative, NORDEFCO, the time perspective was short and the predictions on its fate were arguably reasonably on target. In addition, the use of history was *not* merely an extrapolation of trends, saying that, since Nordic defense and security cooperation had failed in the past, it would do so in the future.[12] The argument of the inside view or use of historical experience was that threats had varied over time, and strategies available to deal with threats had varied, leading to different historical experiences and traditions. This is a contribution to understanding today's ideas and premises.

Nevertheless, the *inside view* is an *interpretation of current events within an existing framework.* [13] That Nordic security cooperation was not possible in the past bipolar Cold War system is an *anchor* leading to the conclusion that it will not be possible in the future. This is particularly troubling, as it is multipolar systems that are the historical norm and bipolar systems that are rare.[14] The inside view offers a readily *available heuristic* for interpretation of the future outcome: Nordic security cooperation will fail because that it is what Nordic security cooperation does. It is arguably an *underreaction to changes in the strategic environment*.

Let us turn to each individual Nordic country. The following analysis is not a complete review of their defense and security policies, but instead focuses on factors relevant to the possibilities of a Nordic alliance capable of carrying out joint high-intensity operations in the future. First, we consider what factors shaped the alliance pattern that divided the Nordic area during the Cold War. Denmark and Norway became NATO members, whereas Finland and Sweden were

[11] Robert Dalsjö (2006), *Life-line lost: the rise and fall of" neutral" Sweden's secret reserve option of wartime help from the west.* Santérus Academic Press Sweden. Magnus Petersson (2000), 'Vapenbröder: Svensk-norska säkerhetspolitiska relationer under kalla kriget'.
[12] Jacob Westberg (2015), 'Det nordiska försvarssamarbetets drivkrafter och utvecklingsmöjligheter'. In *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen*, eds. Engelbrekt, et al. Stockholm: Nordsteds juridik (2015), p. 98–99.
[13] Beadle 2016, throughout, a summary on p.90–91.
[14] Barry Buzan (1991), *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era.* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf p.161.

non-aligned. All four states currently remain within their Cold War political alignments, although to focus solely on formal alignments is too narrow and can be misleading. Second, we consider their present room for maneuver. The third factor is their state of readiness for the interoperability needed to carry out Nordic high-intensity operations, for different levels of ambitions of integration of forces. The fourth factor is the current threat assessments of their security environment, to explore the forces shaping future shared interests.

2 Nordic Security Thinking – Looking Backwards

Figure 2.1 The Nordic Countries and Region.

This chapter examines: (1) the forces that shaped the Nordic alliance pattern; (2) their present room for maneuver; (3) readiness for the interoperability of their forces; (4) the current threat assessment.

2.1 Norway from the Cold War to the present

Norway's security guarantee during the Cold War was NATO and it remains so at present. As part of NATO membership, there was talk of an "alliance within the alliance" between Norway and the US. Originally, the Norwegian efforts to cultivate the US were born out of weakness and a perception of vulnerability. Only the US had the capabilities to defend the High North and a direct national interest in doing so. This was based on the strategic importance of the High North for the global balance of power at the time. It was the shortest distance from the USSR to the US, making it a staging area for strategic bombers and submarines, and home to early warning systems. It also became vital to holding Atlantic sea lanes open, making it a strategic priority for defending Western Europe.[15] Today, petroleum resources and the opening of shipping lanes from Asia are new features in the area, while the strategic importance is a factor once again, as a consequence of Russia's resurgence as a military power.[16] The High North has again become important for the American and Russian nuclear forces. Its importance for the Atlantic sea-lanes has, on the other hand, diminished as Russia lacks the Soviet capability to threaten all of Europe, rendering large American troop transfers across the Atlantic less necessary. However, for military assistance to Northern Norway and Sweden, sea control of the North Atlantic remains necessary.

During the Cold War, for all members, shared threat perceptions of one clear enemy and pre-planned actions determined the military response. Today, the shared existential Soviet threat has largely been replaced by some of the individual member states' fear of isolated Russian use of force in bilateral, regional disputes.[17] Not all member states fear Russia, and those who do, do so for different reasons. NATO's Article 5 actually does not automatically trigger military assistance, but only demands consultations about the situation. Today, the member states have more diverse interests, creating political ambiguity about military assistance. Whether and how much military assistance Norway may receive has become a political decision, taken by the state leaders in the member countries meeting in NATO's institutions, increasingly functioning as an arena to build coalitions of the willing to act in NATO's name.[18] Norway's Core Area

[15] Rolf Tamnes and Sven G Holtsmark (2014), 'The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective'. In *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamics in a Global World*, eds. Tamnes and Offerdal. London: Routledge (2014), p. 31.
[16] Paal Sigurd Hilde ibid.'Armed forces and security challenges in the Arctic'. p. 154–155. Ministry of Defence (2016), *Capable and Sustainable. Long Term Defence Plan 17 June 2016*. . https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/fd/dokumenter/rapporter-og-regelverk/capable-and-sustainable-ltp-english-brochure.pdf
[17] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 77–78.
[18] Bruno Tertrais (2004), 'The Changing Nature of Military Alliances'. *Washington Quarterly* 27: 2. Øyvind Østerud and Asle Toje (2013), 'Strategy, Risk and Threat Perception in NATO'. In *NATO's European Allies. Military Capability and Political Will*, eds. Matlary and Petersson. London: Palgrave Macmillan (2013), p. 89–91.

Initiative in NATO from 2008 is trying to do just that. It aimed at a visible and credible NATO commitment in the High North, in support of a future Article 5 operation.[19]

As in all political decisions, leaders will be influenced by public political opinion. It is food for thought that in some cases the majority of the population does not support Article 5. Polls in 2015 said that, by margins of 53 to 47% in France, 51 to 40% in Italy and 58 to 38% in Germany, people believed that their country should *not* use military force to defend a NATO ally in a military conflict with Russia.[20] Such decisions are not of course taken by public opinion, and respondents were asked a general question without any context. At a minimal level, however, it suggests that NATO member states need to have a strategy to ensure that they receive allied assistance when needed. Member states thus need to reconsider the kind of crisis they need to plan for and their own security. Indeed, the strategy of small member states may be to make Russian encroachment into a problem that other members cannot ignore.

During the Cold War, the main goal of the Norwegian Armed Forces was to contribute to NATO's deterrence by denial. The alliance sought to muster sufficient military power to repel a major or indeed all-out attack, thereby avoiding it. Norway's focus was to ensure that its military would be able to delay an aggressor sufficiently to allow allied help to arrive. Today, believing that threats are political pressure by military means or limited military objectives, the objective is still to deny an attack, but a much smaller one. Not only does Russia have significantly less military capability than the Soviet Union, but its limited objectives lead to political constraints on its military. Therefore, the boundary county of Finnmark has gone from being a strategic to main operational area.[21] Today, the Norwegian Armed Forces must be able to raise the costs of military incursion sufficiently to thwart any perceived political gain by military aggression against Norway in Finnmark, and the readiness of the armed forces therefore figures more prominently than it used to do. Sufficient and timely military action can be carried out by Norway alone or together with NATO allies. This innocent-looking sentence has a number of implications. At present, Norwegian defense and security policy aims to preserve NATO by giving it a new role as an instrument out of area, and to bolster alliance solidarity. Norwegian operational concepts aim to prevent infringement that would create a *fait accompli*, to have the tools to seek engagement that would trigger an Article 5 operation if deemed necessary, and to secure areas for allied military forces to disembark. The last obviously has a practical side, but it also has a political rationale in lowering the risk of troops sent into harm's way and increasing the chances of a successful outcome.

Norwegian security policy informally recognizes that, in the absence of a clearly defined threat, NATO has not dissolved as alliance theory would have predicted, but is moving towards

[19] Kristine Offerdal (2014), 'Interstate relations: the complexities of Arctic politics'. In *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamics in a Global World*, eds. Tamnes and Offerdal. London: Routledge (2014), p. 83.
[20] Eliot Cohen (2017), *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force.* Basic Booksp. 155.
[21] Iver Johansen and Henrik Gråtrud (2018), *Fra taktisk elite til strategisk tilrettelegger–hvordan Forsvarets spesialstyrker kan møte fremtidens utfordringer-FFI-rapport 18/01435*: FFI, p. 43-44 https://publications.ffi.no/handle/20.500.12242/2165

becoming an arena in which to build alliances for the most likely scenarios. Planning aims to limit the number of security challenges that are too small automatically to trigger NATO's security guarantee. Even examples of coercive diplomacy – operating military forces close to NATO territory with an implicit threat of escalation – may no longer automatically be seen as NATO's responsibility.

Therefore, Norway emphasizes investment in defense capabilities that can contribute to the alliance while being relevant to its own defense. A strategic priority is the strengthening of Norway's ground-based air defenses. The current medium-range Norwegian Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile II system (NASAMS) will be upgraded and enhanced through the addition of extended range missiles. Additionally, new air defense systems with long-range missiles and sensors will be introduced. Air defense is obviously a national capability for national needs, but the priority given to the alliance is shown in how the deployment of the systems is planned. Both NASAMS II and the new long-range systems will be concentrated around the two air bases at Ørland and Evenes, areas that are critical for Norway's own forces, but which will also serve as potential staging areas for allied reinforcements. The acquisition of the F-35 Lightning and the planned acquisition of new submarines are other examples of capabilities that enable Norway to maintain a presence and, if necessary, to act on its own behalf as well as for the alliance.

Norway is the only NATO country to share a land and sea boundary with Russia in the High North, rendering Norway's territory vital for surveillance, intelligence and a defense presence in the Arctic. Norway's acquisition of new maritime patrol aircraft – five P-8 Poseidon aircraft to replace the aging P-3 Orion – is a prime example of a capability that serves the needs of the alliance. The prioritizing of all these capabilities is an example of the effort made to create a credible Norwegian defense posture by contributing situational awareness and intelligence to both Norway and the alliance.[22] It should be noted that all capabilities serve both national and alliance purposes. They could also be used in a Nordic operation.

2.2 Sweden from the Cold War to the present

During the Cold War, Swedish official policy was that the country was non-aligned in peace time, aiming to remain neutral in the event of war. In shorthand, this is often referred to as a policy of neutrality. Recent scholarship has revealed stronger informal Swedish ties with NATO countries than was officially recognized at the time. Most recent analysis agrees on three fundamental points. The first is that Sweden cooperated with NATO countries, rather than with NATO as an organization. The second is that the most extensive and intense cooperation was with Denmark, Norway, the UK and the US. These countries were situated around two of the hotspots during the Cold War – the Baltic Straits and the High North – and they were seen from both sides as strategically intertwined with Sweden. The third is that the nature of the

[22] Ministry of Defence (2016), p.4. lists all these capabilities (F-35, NASAMS II, long-distance air defense, submarines and Maritime Patrol Aircraft) as strategic and describes their utility for the alliances. They all serve both national and alliance needs, but only the number of Maritime Patrol Aircraft is motivated by alliance needs beyond what is demanded for national purposes.

cooperation changed over time from formal arrangements in the 1950s and 1960s to become more informal and secretive during the 1970s and 1980s.[23]

After the Cold War, Sweden arguably abandoned its policy of non-alignment for one of solidarity. In 1992, the government led by Carl Bildt made neutrality policy an option rather than a goal in itself; instead of "non-alignment *aiming* at neutrality in war" the new doctrine was "to *enable* us [Sweden] to remain neutral in the event of war in our immediate vicinity."[24] Two milestones in Swedish security policy followed: NATO partnership (1994) and EU membership (1995). The Swedish government took the view that cooperation with NATO was desirable. Like EU membership, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program combined traditional non-alignment with the new formal, more open cooperation with NATO. In the 1990s, the Baltic States were also NATO partners rather than members, the PfP providing an instrument for active Swedish and Finnish support.

Sweden's cooperation with NATO has been open, to such an extent that it is informally called NATO's "allied partner" or "partner number one" in NATO Headquarters in Brussels. During the 2014 NATO summit in Wales, Sweden signed an agreement on host nation support and received special partner ("gold card") status within NATO, together with Australia, Finland, Georgia and Jordan. Sweden has contributed greatly to all the major NATO operations (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and even Libya). Sweden is also part of the NATO-managed Strategic Airlift Capability, which involves pooling resources in order to acquire maximum airlift capability.[25]

In 2009 the Swedish government formally declared, later confirmed by the parliament, that:

> "It is impossible to imagine military conflicts in our region that would affect only one country. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to take similar action if Sweden is affected. Sweden should therefore be in position to both give and receive military support." (Försvarsdepartementet, 2009, p. 29).

The wisdom of issuing a unilateral security guarantee without demanding reciprocity has been questioned,[26] but for our purposes it is sufficient that Sweden sees its security interests as sufficiently intertwined to merit entering into alliances, formal or informal. The security situation in the Baltic areas has worsened since 2009, leading to calls for a new Swedish security policy.[27] That would involve revoking the security guarantee above, increasing defense spending and seeking to deepen existing cooperation or even joining NATO.

[23] Magnus Petersson (2018), 'The Allied Partner' Sweden and NATO through the realist–idealist lens'. In *The European Neutrals and NATO Non-alignment, Partnership, Membership?*, ed. Cottey. Berlin: Springer (2018).
[24] Ibid.
[25] Petersson (2018), 'The Allied Partner' Sweden and NATO through the realist–idealist lens'Ann-Sofie Dahl (2017), 'Sweden and Finland: to be or not to be NATO members'. In *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*, ed. Friis. London: Routledge (2017).
[26] Petersson (2018), 'The Allied Partner' Sweden and NATO through the realist–idealist lens'.
[27] Anders Björnsson and Kent Zetterberg (2016), *Öka försvarets resurser kraftigt*. Svenska Dagbladet

In conclusion, Sweden has never had any institutional barriers against new security arrangements, and the special partner status within NATO ensures that the practical challenges of a Nordic alliance have been minimized, without Sweden actually being a member of NATO.

2.3 Finland from the Cold War to the present

Finland was neutral during the Cold War, not only refraining from membership of international organizations and alliances, but also trying to follow an even-handed middle course politically between East and West. The pejorative term *Finlandization* was used to characterize this as a policy of submissiveness, but it was a policy not of choice but of necessity after the defeat in World War II and the ceded territory that was finally codified in the peace treaty of Paris in 1947.[28] In 1948, Finland and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (FCMA Treaty), the other treaty that governed the relationship with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The treaty included Finland's aspiration to remain neutral but also a clause on joint military consultation if a threat were jointly identified. There was no automaticity of military assistance in the treaty; what would be done in the event of a military threat would be subject to negotiations. The relationship with the Soviet Union was less harmonious than on the surface, subject to constant political tug-of-war about the boundaries of Finnish freedom of action.[29] Finland was a small state, balancing behavior with limited resources in a difficult geopolitical situation.

After the Cold War ended, Finland unilaterally reinterpreted the peace treaty in September 1990, so that there were no restrictions on Finland's Armed Forces. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was renegotiated in 1991 and replaced with a treaty of friendship with Russia in 1992 with no military clauses.[30] During the Cold War, the Soviet interpretation of neutrality had hindered Finnish attempts to join institutions that were too Western. But after 1991, Finland officially replaced neutrality with non-alignment, enabling among other things EU membership in 1994.

The question of NATO membership has been the largest remaining unresolved question in Finnish security policy in the post-Cold War period. Technically, the Finnish Armed Forces have aimed at interoperability with NATO. This has a crisis management aspect, but also simply recognizes that NATO's standards had become the overall international standard for military operations. Countries such as Australia also strive towards NATO's standard, with no prospect or desire to join the organization. For Finland, the decision to purchase 64 F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets in 1992 led in turn to intensive bottom-up cooperation between the air forces, strengthening overall political and military relations, particularly with the United States. Interoperability with NATO and its members may also be put to practical usage in international operations. Finland has contributed to NATO operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and

[28] Tuomas Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. In *The European Neutrals and NATO Non-alignment, Partnership, Membership?*, ed. Cottey. Berlin: Springer (2018), p. 2.
[29] Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. p. 3–4.
[30] Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. p. 5.

Afghanistan but not in Libya.[31] In short, Finland accepted that it would contribute to NATO operations with a UN mandate for crisis management and peacekeeping.

Institutionally, practical cooperation with NATO led to new ties. Finland joined the Partnership for Peace in 1994 and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997, and it took part in the PfP Planning and Review Process, which was aimed at developing the armed forces on the basis of interoperability. Since 2014, Finland has participated in the Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP) with NATO. The EOP was presented to NATO as a joint proposal, together with Sweden. Finland has also signed a Host Nation Support agreement with NATO, enabling them to give and receive military support in crisis and to host NATO exercises in peacetime. Finally, unlike Sweden, Finland has a NATO option as part of its security doctrine, but has nevertheless not moved towards membership. [32]

NATO membership has not happened, for a number of reasons: Uncertainty about Russian reactions, concern over Finnish freedom of action, Finnish identity as a neutral, sometimes in a positive in-group with Sweden.[33] The question reasserted itself after 2014, and not only due to the general worsening of relations between Russia and the West that Finland sees itself as a part of. Finland has seen its airspace violated by Russia. It has watched as Russia carried out a military exercise aiming to conquer its territory. It has experienced cyber-attacks against its infrastructure and has been targeted in a propaganda and disinformation campaign.

2.4 Denmark from the Cold War to the present

Like Norway, Denmark was a founding member of NATO. Like Norway, after 1990, Denmark shifted attention from territorial defense to participation in US-led expeditionary operations. For Denmark, the end of the Cold War was a strategic shock that seemingly removed threats to its own territory and allowed Denmark to participate and gain influence with the US, whereas Norway tried to reinforce the American security guarantee. The then Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's speech in 2003 gave the signal to transform the Danish armed forces to deploy to these missions.[34] Practically, transformation from a force tailored to fight a war out of necessity at home to a force that fights wars of choice was accomplished by participation in out-of-area operations, chiefly in Helmand, Afghanistan from 2006 onwards.[35] Transforming its armed forces to deploy out of area permitted Denmark to deploy larger number of troops relative to the size and cost of its armed forces than other countries could. The increased importance of how and where the troops deployed also allowed Denmark to contribute significantly, in spite of limited defense spending.[36] Weapons systems that could not be

[31] Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. 8-9.
[32] Dahl (2017), p. 81–83.
[33] Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. p. 10ff.
[34] Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2013), 'Punching above Its Weight: Denmark's Legitimate Peripheral Participation in NATO's Wars'. In *NATO's European Allies. Military Capability and Political Will*, eds. Matlary and Petersson. London: Palgrave Macmillan (2013), p.265.
[35] Rasmussen (2013), p. 268.
[36] Jens Ringsmose (2010), 'NATO burden-sharing redux: continuity and change after the Cold War'. *Contemporary Security Policy* 31: 2, p. 328.

deployed and were too expensive to replace, notably submarines, artillery and ground based air defense, were simply abandoned.[37]

NATO's Baltic Air Defense Policing was an exception to Danish deployment out of area. Since 2004, Denmark has participated five times. Denmark's support of the Baltic States is, however, a continuation of Danish political support from the early 1990s. During those years, Denmark was the first, and for a long time only, NATO member in favor of Baltic NATO membership.

Since 2014, renewed Russian assertiveness has made Denmark look to its own region again. NATO remains Denmark's preferred framework. Denmark is, together with Poland and Germany, framework nation for the multinational HQ in Stettin and has doubled its deployment there, making it the HQ with the most Danes deployed. In 2017, Denmark contributed 200 troops to a battalion in NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States. In 2015, Denmark joined the Joint Expeditionary Force that was to be fully developed in 2018. There is, however, a growing concern that a Denmark willing to deploy to risky areas with few caveats can no longer compensate for the modest Danish defense spending at 1.2% of GDP. [38] The latest defense and security strategy promises to "substantially" increase defense spending. It also underlines the importance of the Baltic Sea for Danish security and advocates strengthening Nordic cooperation in the area, in a NATO frame. The strategy has led to a political compromise, increasing defense spending and reintroducing capabilities such as ground based air.[39]

2.5 Implications for future Nordic operations

The first important historical take-away is that the alliance pattern in the Nordic region has been determined by great power politics. Thus, to reveal the future possibilities for a Nordic alliance, it is necessary that future patterns of enmity and amity favor Nordic cooperation to meet a shared threat. The second observation is that today the Nordic states have not only the necessary freedom of action to cooperate with each other about security and defense matters, but also a shared interest in withstanding Russian politico-military pressure. The final conclusion is that currently the Nordic states increasingly cooperate, by using NATO's framework to strengthen interoperability, and by increased direct bilateral and inter-Nordic defense cooperation in planning, training, exercises and to some extent procurement.

[37] Saxi (2016), p. 68.
[38] Ann-Sofie Dahl (2016), 'Ett nytt normalläge: rysk aggression och nordisk respons i Östersjön'. In *Nordisk forsvarssamarbejde - vilkår og muligheder*, ed. Jensen. København: Forsvarsakademiet (2016), p. 46.
[39] Udenrigsministeriet (2017), *Udenrigs- og Sikkerhedspolitisk Strategi 2017-2018* Copenhagen: Udenrigsministeriet *The So-Called Defense Compromise 2018-23* (forsvarsforliget) Forsvarsdepartementet http://www.fmn.dk/temaer/forsvarsforlig/documents/forsvarsforlig-2018-2023.pdf.

3 The Future of Nordic Operations

This chapter pursues further the impact of alliance politics on the *future* development of Nordic high-intensity conflict cooperation. It will build both on the past and on how the political, social, technological, economic and environmental dimensions may affect such operations. The chapter first discusses premises. The premises are not binary, in the sense of being necessary or sufficient. Rather, they should be viewed as gradualist factors that increase the likelihood of a Nordic operation if they are present. If the premises are fulfilled to a high degree, the prospects of a Nordic operation increase accordingly.

The chapter will proceed as follows. First, the future role of NATO, the most important security institution in the Nordic area, is discussed. Will it prevent, promote or be irrelevant to Nordic cooperation? Second, the argument that, in the future, a multipolar subsystem will become an important part of the security environment of the Nordic states is made. Third, the logic of that multipolar subsystem is outlined.

3.1 Institutional preconditions for Nordic operations: The role of NATO

As late as 2009, Norwegian (and Danish) concern for the impact on NATO was the most important reason for resisting a joint Nordic security guarantee. Then Norwegian minister of foreign affairs Jonas Gahr Støre stated that NATO was Norway's security guarantee, and that he "would never accept any other declaration that would contribute to replacing it."[40] Sweden and Finland, on their part, were also cautious about cooperation that could undermine their military non-alignment.

However, Nordic defense cooperation is now viewed as complementary and, indeed, as strengthening NATO in the North. This conclusion is based on the following premises. The first is that the shared understanding of situations that would trigger Article 5 is shrinking. NATO has slowly evolved, and is still evolving, from a traditional defense alliance to a consultative security policy organization with a military capability.[41] A purely Nordic operation presupposes a continued weakening of the relevance and substance of European security architecture. Security is regionalized to states that have common interests created by shared threats, and NATO functions as an arena where coalitions of the willing can coordinate, and a standardizer that makes joint military action possible.

In this situation, it matters little whether Sweden or Finland is formally inside or outside the alliance. Their contribution will be welcomed by those countries that share their security challenges, for example Norway and Denmark, and neither they nor any other country take assistance automatically for granted. A corollary is that Swedish and Finnish apprehension of cooperation with or indeed membership of NATO that could draw their countries into unwanted conflicts is unfounded. A consequence of NATO moving towards a coalition of the willing is

[40] Saxi (2016), p. 79.
[41] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 78.

that members gain freedom of action. Thus, fear of entrapment has ceased to be a concern in NATO, but fear of abandonment remains, for NATO members as well as for Sweden and Finland.[42]

Swedish and Finnish participation will make it easier to attract other allies to support the Nordic cause. This report will not delve into other possible regional alliances but focuses on the necessary conditions for an (formal or informal) alliance between the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries may serve as the core of a wider alliance or act alone when carrying out the operation. For the purposes of this study, suffice it to say that NATO will not be the obstacle to a Nordic security operation that it has been in the past. As far as NATO is concerned, a purely Nordic operation is possible or even desirable politically. The dissolution of NATO and the EU are not necessary preconditions for Nordic high-intensity operations. Russia may successfully prevent the conflict from escalating to a joint threat to other NATO or EU countries, for example if the Russian ambition is limited to influencing the policies of the Nordic countries towards Russian interests. The desire to counter potential Russian political pressure has served as the basis of Norwegian defense planning since the end of the Cold War. If the national interests of the majority of NATO members are not challenged by Russian pressure on the Nordic states, they may postpone action. Another reason for the alliance to defer collective action is that Norway, or the Nordic states, is judged to have sufficient military capability to handle the challenge. That argument would hold at least until the national interests of NATO members are at stake because of the risk to the general credibility of the institution.

If alliance members are left to engage in high-intensity military operations without assistance, it suggests that NATO's security guarantee has eroded considerably. Be that as it may, for our purposes it suffices to say that NATO is not a stumbling block for a Nordic high-intensity operation. NATO sets technical standards that enable coalitions of the willing to act. As we have seen, the alliance has served this purpose vis-à-vis Sweden and Finland. The increased interoperability encouraged by NATO is also useful for conducting a purely Nordic operation.

There are two conclusions. First, from the perspective of the NATO members Norway and Denmark, cooperation with Nordic non-members Finland and Sweden is now unproblematic, and indeed may even be desirable for NATO. Second, the line between members and non-members is likely to become more blurred. Within NATO, political coalition-building is more likely to precede military action. For states outside NATO, coinciding interests with other states and military interoperability are what enable military cooperation. As far as the latter is concerned, NATO has become and is likely to remain the gold standard for high-intensity operations, and Finland and Sweden's enhanced partnership status ensures that they are the most interoperable among non-members.

As there are thus no institutional barriers from NATO against a Nordic operation, let us move on to consider whether there are any factors that favor Nordic military cooperation.

[42] Michael O'Hanlon (2017), 'NATO's Limits: A New Security Architecture for Eastern Europe'. *Survival* 59: 5, p. 15–16.

3.2 Structural preconditions for Nordic operations

The report *Global trends towards 2040* describes how political and economic trends may move towards a bipolar US–China system or a multipolar system.[43] A rule of thumb in foresight studies is to look twice as far back in history as you want to predict forward.[44] Applying that rule to the possibility of Nordic operations identifies two useful specific categories for the analysis.[45]After World War II, the strategic environment of the Nordic states may be divided into three phases: the Cold War (1945–1991), the expeditionary period (1991–2014) and the multipolar or regional phase (2014 onwards). During the bipolar Cold War, there was no European fear of abandonment, as there was a clear link between American and European security. Denmark and Norway relied on American help, and even Sweden, to a lesser extent, counted on American assistance. During the unipolar expeditionary period, the clear bipolar threat had given way to diffuse threats variously interpreted by the European states, including of course the Nordic states. There was no real threat from Russia to the US. The result was that the Nordic states' fear of abandonment outweighed their concern about entrapment. Specifically, Denmark participated wholeheartedly in expeditionary operations to influence the US, whereas Norway participated conditionally in expeditionary operations out of concern for geopolitical abandonment. As non-members of NATO, Sweden and Finland could not be entrapped, and were therefore left with abandonment as their only concern. Predictably, both Finland and Sweden sought to participate in expeditionary operations as a means to come closer to NATO. Eventually, both sought and were granted special partnership status. In a future multipolar period, the link between American and European security may be weakened further, leaving the Nordic states to seek alliances within their own subsystem, within the wider European system.

The report *Global trends towards 2040* suggests three options that may fill the void in the case of full or partial American withdrawal.[46] The first is general European defense and security cooperation, compatible with both the NATO and the EU frames. A second option is deepening the existing North Sea NATO subgroup (UK, Netherlands, Germany, Iceland, Denmark and Norway), possibly extended to the three Baltic states and Poland, resulting in a grouping of 10 NATO countries. A third option is the so-called group of 12, in which the non-NATO states of Sweden and Finland are added to those 10 inside NATO. The purely Nordic operation discussed in this report constitutes yet another possibility. For the Nordic states, the regional level, however defined, will become more important as the US political and military influence lessens.

For all options, the Nordic states are left without an unambiguous external security guarantee against Russia, the state constituting the only potential military security challenge. The existing security institutions (NATO and the EU) do not automatically offer guarantees against encroachments on Nordic security. Rather, they constitute arenas where the Nordic states can find the necessary security, either among themselves or as the core of a wider alliance. This

[43] My translation, Globale trender mot 2014, Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 19.
[44] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p.12. In the methodology report for the Global Trends project, the need to look far back is justified as a measure to avoid the propensity to overreact to new information – Beadle 2016, p. 55.
[45] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p.12. Beadle 2016, p. 53.
[46] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 80–81.

endeavor is facilitated by the trend that boundaries between security institutions are becoming less important, allowing cooperation between states with different memberships.

As far as security challenges in the region are concerned, Russia is viewed as the remaining military challenge. Russia's power is not favored by global trends, yet it will continue to dominate the Nordic states. Russia's ambition is to be a key player in an emerging multipolar world.[47] Even if successful in this, Russia's global role would be diminished compared with its role during the Cold War as one of two pivotal players in a bipolar world. On the other hand, in Russian thinking, Russia is a great power dominating its immediate surroundings, having a right internationally recognized (by other great powers) to meddle in the internal affairs of its near neighbors. The Nordic region is one of these areas. If not able to play its envisioned role in the world, Russia will remain a significant regional power and one that is likely to be militarily more powerful than its neighbors around the Baltic or in the High North.

The difference is that great powers are responded to in the world at large, whereas regional powers *only* determine the polarity of the security complex they are part of. Great powers, of course, determine the structure of the subsystems they are part of.[48] Given the pattern of enmity and amity suggested above, and the relative size of Russia compared to the Nordic states, the conditions will exist for Nordic cooperation, if Russia remains a coherent actor and avoids outright collapse. Furthermore, Russia is likely to remain relatively strongest in the military sphere, with limited economic and ideological appeal. It is likely to continue to view military power as a viable instrument of foreign policy. The Russian threat thus differs from the Soviet threat in three important ways: overall power, geographic reach and political objectives.

Russia's view of itself and its role in the world creates two types of potential challenges to the Nordic states. The first is that, in any bilateral conflict of interest with Russia, the use of military force cannot be ruled out. The second concern for the Nordic states is that Russia may use force in support of its perceived role in the region. These two challenges constitute a *Nordic security complex* – "a group of states whose primary security concerns link them sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."[49] For example, Russia may use force to challenge a military alliance – NATO or a purely Nordic alliance – in the hope of breaking it. In this situation, Russia may challenge the interests of the Nordic states over an issue with little intrinsic value, in the hope that any security guarantee may unravel because the issue has little value to the guarantors and is perceived not to be worth fighting for.

The political threat from Russia requires a different military response to the existential invasion envisioned during the Cold War. The *political* nature demands that the armed forces of the Nordic states need to be able to react more quickly or even immediately. Moreover, as the end is political influence rather than territorial expansion, there is a wider variety of different military options available to Russia. Options such as air strikes, missile strikes, raids or special operation

[47] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 64.

[48] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers: the Structure of International Security*. Cambridge University Pressp. 34–37.

[49] Buzan,1991. p. 190. Buzan and Wæver,2003. p. 3–13.

forces operations may suffice for political purposes. Military options such as exercises, shows of force and military deployment patterns below the actual use of force may be sufficient to create political pressure with a potential impact. Note that the Nordic states now need to counter *threats*, and not the *capabilities* that were the main concern during the Cold War.

In conclusion, the Nordic states belong to the category of states in a multipolar system facing a common threat. Let us move on to look at typical behavior in such a system.

3.3 Behavior in multipolar sybsystems

To ask what is typical state behavior in a multipolar system is to employ an *outside view* of the future of Nordic high-intensity operations. The outside view may, for instance, take statistical frequency as its point of departure to predict the future. The outside view is thus concerned with *the category*, not the particularities of the case. However, before asking what is typical of the category, one must know what the relevant categories to which the Nordic states belong. Let us sum up the historical record (of the inside view) to identify the crucial implicit and explicit premises which have explained the past security choices of the Nordic countries. The problem with the inside view, however, is *anchoring* – one starts calculations (arbitrarily) at a specific outcome and adjusts predictions from there. The anchor influences predictions by pulling predictions closer to it. In the context of the possibility of future Nordic operations, the difficulties and paucity of Nordic defense cooperation is a historical fact that is the obvious anchor for predictions. The result is that the possibility of Nordic defense cooperation may be underestimated or even dismissed.[50] What, then, are the relevant general categories to which the Nordic states belong which will help us to gauge the prospects of Nordic defense cooperation?

In Chapter 2, it was concluded that the Nordic states had not been able to cooperate over security and defense in the past because their interests had been rendered incompatible as they faced different threats, and because some of them had no freedom to act according to their own interests. That their interests are different is neither preordained nor a state of nature. It is a contingent outcome of historical circumstances that may change in the future. To answer how circumstances may change is to map the trends leading to various future scenarios. Norway and Denmark have looked west for security, Sweden has chosen non-alignment, while Finland has had to look to itself for security. As far as Norway and Denmark were concerned, external allies were readily available in NATO and the US, rendering further Nordic allies unnecessary. The first precondition for cooperation is whether the Nordic states now share threats, as discussed in section 3.2. The second precondition is that the Nordic states cannot unequivocally count on other states to provide security. The third precondition is that Sweden (or any other state) cannot provide for its own security alone. The fourth precondition is that Finland (or any other state) is not restrained from participating in an operation.

[50] For introductions to outside and inside views, see Daniel Kahneman (2011), *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux p. 251ff.; Beadle 2016, p. 39–40.

3.3.1 When do states enter alliances?

If states operate military forces together, they are *de facto* allied. In his seminal analysis of why states enter into alliances, Stephen Walt defines an alliance as "a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states."[51] He notes that many states are reluctant to sign formal treaties with allies, and that trying to impose precise definitions upon a phenomenon that varies from case to case risks distorting reality. For this report's purpose, a wide definition is useful, using the necessary minimum requirements for a Nordic high-intensity operation, as well as avoiding any restrictions on how trends will determine the range of outcomes for such operations.

A concrete example is provided by the Finnish–Swedish agreement of 2015.[52] In a crisis, Finland and Sweden have the choice of acting together or alone. As defined in this report, the agreement qualifies as an alliance. The arrangement supports operations, and explicitly requires the necessary operational plans, interoperability, complementing national plans and legislative changes.[53] It has been argued that substantial common military defense planning, of the kind that NATO produces, is necessary, but that seems to be more about increasing the likelihood that a political decision to act will be taken.[54]

Walt discusses five general explanations for alliances. The first two take response to threats as their point of departure, intimately linked to political objectives. States can respond to threats by balancing against them or bandwagoning with them. In the third and fourth, shared ideology or economic ties can be causes of alliances. Finally, transnational penetration may be a cause of alliance formation.[55] Drawing on international relations theory, diplomatic history, game theory and more, he develops a number of specific hypotheses about factors favoring these explanations, producing an outside view of what makes states align with each other. It is particularly useful that his approach avoids making the bipolar aberration from 1945–1990 the norm.

By drawing on the example of the Middle East subsystem, the Nordic region can be analyzed as a member of the category 'subsystem', yielding another source of reference class forecasting.[56] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver fault Walt for analyzing regions empirically as he would analyze the state system at large, without considering how they may differ. However, their own discussion concludes that "happily, it is relatively straightforward to slot in regional level", as

[51] Stephen M. Walt (1987), *The origins of alliances.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Pressp. 12.
[52] Johan Raeder (2016), *Enhanced Defense Cooperation. New Opportunities for US Engagement in the Baltic Sea Region*. Atlantic Council February 10, 2016,
[53] Swedish Ministry of Defence (2015), *Final reports on deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden*. ed. Defence. Stockholm; Heather A. Conley, Jeffrey Rathke and Matthew Melino (2018), *Enhanced Deterrence in the North. A 21st Century European Engagement Strategy*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) p. 18En lag om operativt militärt stöd mellan Sverige och Finland https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2018/04/sou-201831/.
[54] Mike Winnerstig (2017), 'The Causes and Limitations of Swedish-Finnish Defence Cooperation '. 2017.
[55] Walt,1987. p. 17–49.
[56] Beadle 2016, p. 40.

long as security issues are confined to military-political ones.[57] The advantage is that we now may draw on knowledge from two categories for reference class forecasting – subsystems and the regional level – to provide the outside perspective to shed light on the conditions of future Nordic military operations.[58]

Second, drawing on theory, we are able to capture change in the strategic environment from bipolar to multipolar, and analyze the Nordic region as an example of a multipolar system.[59] An example of how the strategic environment matters is provided by Magnus Petersson. He explains the change in European states' willingness to use military force by the change in their strategic environment from being poles in a multipolar system to ordinary states in a bipolar system, whereas Robert Kagan offer a cultural explanation of European and American willingness to use force.[60] The twin dangers of abandonment and entrapment – the alliance dilemma – play out in a new strategic environment for the Nordic states. That is, there is a change in how they experience the inherent dilemma in membership of any alliance between, on the one hand, receiving assistance in a crisis situation without being abandoned and, on the other, being entrapped in conflicts where no national interest is at stake.

3.3.2 Specific mechanisms of behavior

Walt finds that balancing behavior (aligning against threating states), when possible, is far more common than bandwagoning behavior (aligning with the most threatening state), for several reasons. First, balancing is less risky. After all, bandwagoning implies placing one's trust in the continued benevolence of the most threatening power. Balancing, on the other hand, is allying with those least likely to dominate you. Second, joining the weaker side may increase the state's influence within the alliance.[61] Moving on to why states enter into alliances, he discusses the following factors: balancing against capabilities or threats, ideology and the role of aid. Ideology is defined as a tendency for states to align with states with similar internal characteristics. Investigating the matter empirically, both quantitatively and qualitatively, he finds that states balance against threats rather than capabilities. In a Nordic context, if states balanced capabilities, the Nordic states would have aligned with Russia to counter the USA, but since they are more concerned with threats, they try to enlist US support against Russia. The degree of threat is a function of geographic proximity, the strength of offensive capabilities and the perceived aggressiveness of intentions.[62] Balance of threat and ideological explanations each contributed useful insights; the other hypothesis that alignment was influenced by aid fared less well.[63]

[57] That is because geographical proximity matters more for security than, say, economics, see Buzan and Wæver,2003. p. 28, 45.
[58] Kahneman,2011, *Thinking, fast and slow*. p. 251. Beadle 2016, p. 40.
[59] Beadle 2016, p. 91.
[60] Magnus Petersson (2013), 'From Mars to Venus? European Use of Force from a Historical Perspective'. In *NATO's European Allies. Military Capability and Political Will*, eds. Matlary and Petersson. London: Palgrave Macmillan (2013), p. 26–30. Robert Kagan (2004), *Of paradise and power: America and Europe in the new world order.* Vintage.
[61] Walt,1987. p.5, 18–19.
[62] Walt,1987. p. 32.
[63] Walt,1987. p. 262ff.

Ideology and aid were found to exert less influence on states' alignments and when coinciding prone to lead to frequent realignments. Walt finds ideology alone has little impact on alignment, but with interesting nuances. Pan-Arabism not only failed to produce alliances, but proved outright divisive, because it threatened the autonomy of the existing states. In contrast, monarchies in the Middle East were capable of cooperation, even when they were rivals, because they did not pose an internal threat to each other, and even shared a common ideological threat in pan-Arabism. This suggests an indirectly unifying factor for the Nordic countries. Their continued success as states may be considered a domestic threat by Russia. Their high-trust societies are models of successful liberal democracy, political stability and economic prosperity. It has been suggested that what the Russian regime fears is not military attack, but the delegitimizing influence of democracy and economic success. Ukraine was primarily targeted for Russian domestic political reasons. It was paramount to prevent the spread of the ideas of the 'color revolutions' to Russia.[64] However, the Nordic states are probably too small to figure prominently in the collective Russian consciousness. On the other hand, direct attempts to spread Western ideas are perceived as acts of hostility by Russia. Most importantly, for Russia, military means are not the most effective way to counter this threat.

The values of the Nordic countries make them among the most homogeneous groups internally, and set them apart from the rest of the world.[65] They all have long abandoned any thoughts of local or regional domination, and the military power rivalry among them is past and does not pose a threat to the autonomy of any of them. As noted in section 2.2, Nordic defense cooperation is an idea that everyone initially likes, until other competing factors enter into consideration.

Ideologically, Nordic cooperation is uncontroversial and indeed relatively popular. There is shared language, history and culture. One shared cultural trait is the exceptionally high social trust in the Nordic countries – *Nordic exceptionalism* – attributed to a four-factor syndrome: (i) Protestantism, (ii) economic wealth, (iii) little corruption, and (iv) egalitarianism (ethnic and economic).[66] Historically, the idea that the Nordic countries ought to ally or even join has waxed and waned. The historic setbacks in the security domain in 1864, 1939–40 and 1946–47 have caused the skepticism of today's inside view. However, theory and practice agree on ideology: the impact of ideology is highest when threats are low. According to the outside view, ideology is most influential when accompanied by a mutually reinforcing threat.[67]

The main problem from 2007 onwards was the absence of a sufficiently clear, imminent threat. It was duly noted that the security of the Nordic states was so intertwined that a military conflict in one would inevitably affect the others so much that they could not stay out of it. But as long as the expectation of all was that no military conflict would occur in their area, this idea proved insufficient to create an informal or formal alliance. In 2008, the war between Georgia and Russia was judged to stem from causes that were not relevant in Norway's case, and in any case

[64] Francis Fukuyama (2017), *State building: Governance and world order in the 21st century*. Profile Books.
[65] See the group labeled "Protestant" in http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp
[66] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 34. 23–24; Fukuyama,2017. Jan Delhey and Kenneth Newton (2005), 'Predicting Cross-National Levels of Social Trust: Global Patterns or Nordic Exceptionalism'. *European Social Review* 21: 4.
[67] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 263; Westberg (2015), p. 95.

NATO was a credible deterrent.[68] In Finland, it was viewed as a vindication of Finnish defense planning.[69] In Sweden, it led to the insertion of more robust objectives in the defense bill, but the emphasis remained on peace-time operations and keeping costs down.[70] Denmark also believed that its NATO membership made changes to its defense thinking unnecessary.

That changed in 2014, when Russia used force against its neighbor Ukraine, first in the Crimea and then in Donbass, in breach of the Budapest agreement guaranteeing Ukraine's territory and international law. These interventions created a disturbing pattern of aggression, accompanied by threats, violations of Nordic airspace and military bullying by Russia. Before that, the rather general observation that the Nordic countries were small states compared to the regional great power Russia, the only state thought not to have renounced the use of military force as an instrument of foreign policy, did not create sufficient incentives to move forward.

3.4 Bringing the inside view back in: Nordic specifics

In this section, the report aims to identify the common objections to the feasibility of a joint Nordic military operation and to assess their validity. First, since membership of different security institutions has prevented Nordic military cooperation in the past, its future significance warrants a few words. The report then takes Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni's comprehensive discussion of balance-of-power theory as its point of departure to provide an updated (compared to Stephen Walt) *outside view* of objections.[71] The four reasons that *may* prevent the Nordic states from operating military forces together are: (1) it is great powers that engage in balancing behavior, not small states; (2) collective action problems; (3) domestic political obstacles; and (4) uncertainty about the threat. The report will therefore discuss these potential obstacles in a future Nordic context, taking an inside view.

3.4.1 Nordic balancing or bandwagoning

From the Cold War to the present, the Nordic countries have demonstrated a strong propensity to balance against threat rather than to bandwagon. Norway and Denmark chose to join NATO in 1949, in spite of historical misgiving about being involved in great power politics. Sweden's "non-alignment" during the Cold War was a lot more aligned to the West than officially recognized.[72] Finland's relationship with the Soviet Union was a constant struggle to preserve and increase freedom of political action.[73] In the case of Finland, there was balancing behavior, but joining any Western alliance was simply not feasible because the Soviet Union blocked all Finnish political cooperation with the West. The shared Nordic interest in withstanding Soviet

[68] Tor Bukkvoll, Sigurd Glærum, Iver Johansen and Jan H. Pay (2009), 'FFI-rapport 2009/00268 Krigen i Georgia – konsekvenser for Norge? '. https://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/09-00268.pdf
[69] Jyri Raitasalo (2017), 'The Finnish Defence Planning Problematique'. In *Strategic Outlook 7*, eds. Wiklund, et al. Stockholm: FOI (2017), p. 107.
[70] Robert Dalsjø and Michael Jonsson ibid.'National Defence and the Baltic Sea Region: Sweden's New Focus'. p. 10.
[71] Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2009), 'The End of Balance-of-Power Theory? A Comment on Wohlforth et al.'sTesting Balance-of-Power Theory in World History". *European Journal of International Relations* 15: 2.
[72] Dalsjö,2006.
[73] Forsberg (2018), 'Finland and NATO. Strategic choices and identity conceptions'. p. 3–4.

military pressure and indeed military attack during the Cold War was blocked by the external US–Soviet conflict, the so-called *overlay*.[74] As we have seen, the division between the western alliance and the neutrals was less sharp than portrayed at the time, at least in the case of Sweden. The Nordic countries have also reacted to the increased Russian threat after Crimea and Donbass in 2014 in the same balancing manner: Individual defense spending has increased and Nordic defense cooperation has deepened.[75] The latter includes training and exercises for joint Nordic operations.

3.4.2 Future alliance politics

Any future Nordic alliance will produce a collective good – increased deterrence against Russia or increased military capability to counter aggression if that fails. Any collective good is (by definition) subject to the danger of free-riding. As Roger Dalsjö presciently warns us, from the perspective of each individual country and the individuals making the decision, in security policy one decision is paramount:

> …only one balancing act remain, although a hard and existential one. It is in the hour of need to weigh the danger of being alone with an attacker, without any help, against risking to help an alliance brother in need, thereby being drawn into a war you otherwise could have avoided.[76]

In terms of international politics, each Nordic country faces the alliance security dilemma, as described in the section 3.3.1. In *Globale trends*, the alliance dilemma was discussed in the context of NATO.[77] The risk of free-riding within NATO is one factor making the option of a Nordic high-intensity operation worth exploring. Walt notes that multipolar, regional subsystems are especially prone to passing the buck.[78] In the regional Nordic context, however, the alliance dilemma is ameliorated by four factors. First, the alliance would have only three or four members, making monitoring easier and buck-passing harder.[79] Second, unlike NATO's situation during the expeditionary period, the combined power of the Nordic countries alone would be at least precarious, and possibly insufficient. The possibility of passing the buck is limited, as they would all need to contribute to be effective against the threat.[80] Third, the fear of entrapment is also limited, because the Nordic countries, in important respects, will be facing the same threat.[81] Finally, a related point is that there is little fear of entrapment, as it is widely understood that the small Nordic countries do not harbor offensive plans against anyone.

[74] Buzan,1991. 219–220. Buzan and Wæver,2003.
[75] Dahl (2016), 'Ett nytt normalläge: rysk aggression och nordisk respons i Östersjön'. p. 52.
[76] My translation ".. så återstår en enda avvägning, men svår och existentiell till sin karaktär. Det är risken att i nödens stund ensam mot en angripare, utan hjälp, som ska vägas mot risken att behöva hjälpa en alliansbroder i nöd, och därmed dras in ett krig man annars kunnat endgå" Robert Dalsjö (2015), 'Från neutralitet til solidaritet: Omgestaltningen av Sveriges sakerhetspolitik efter det kalla kriget'. In *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen*, eds. Engelbrekt, et al. Stockholm: Norstedsts juridik (2015), p. 188.
[77] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 80.
[78] Walt, Origins of Alliances, p. 266.
[79] M. Olson (1965), *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups.* Harvard University PressElinor Ostrom (2015), *Governing the commons.* Cambridge university press.
[80] Thomas J Christensen and Jack Snyder (1990), 'Chain gangs and passed bucks: Predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity'. *International Organization*, p. 23-24.
[81] Glenn H. Snyder (1984), 'The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics'. *World politics* 36: 4.

3.4.3 Domestic barriers: underbalancing

The theory of "underbalancing" predicts that high political and social cohesion is more likely to lead to successful balancing, since they are more likely to produce domestic support for the reforms that are required. By contrast, socially fragmented states are prone to underreact to threats, because they do not perceive a uniform threat or because they find it difficult to mobilize the necessary resources for the strategy from a divided society.[82]In section 3.3.2, it was concluded that the Nordic states were both among the most homogeneous domestically in the world, and, as a group, among the most similar in the world. However, *Global trends* found a social trend towards more fragmented identities in all the Nordic states.[83]

3.4.4 Uncertainty about the threat

In addition to being materially and politically feasible, Nordic high-intensity operations need to be politically desirable. As explained above, the Nordic states' propensity toward balancing behavior is an expression of their desire to protect the autonomy of their political decision-making systems. Security threats against the Nordic countries may be viewed either by each state individually or as a joint group. The first option assumes that geography makes their security so intertwined that a threat against one necessarily encroaches on the interests of the others, regardless of other factors. For example, successful Russian military pressure that neutralizes Norwegian decision-making will necessarily make the situation of Sweden and Finland more serious and vice versa. The second option assumes that the Nordic states have a sufficiently shared interest in resisting Russian military pressure to form a formal or informal alliance. The alliance is founded on the idea that each gives the others assistance against military pressure from Russia, in return for assistance if they face Russian pressure themselves. In other words, each Nordic state will be better off in the long term if it engages also when it is not not directly forced to do so in the short term.

Is the Nordic perception of the Russian threat after 2014 an aberration? If so, the Nordic states may be overreacting to the Russian interventions in Ukraine in 2014.[84] First, what constitutes short term is heavily dependent on context, but nearly five years of Russian political and military bullying, accompanied by a disruptive information strategy targeting Western political vulnerabilities is arguably more than short term.[85] Second, the normal position is arguably that the small neighbors of a great power have a well-defined long-term security challenge, and that the strong Nordic reduction in military defense was an overreaction to Russia's weakness in the period 1991–2008. The notable exception was Finland, who left its defense policies unchanged during this period. Jyrki Raitasala sagely comments that "Whether this is due to the strategic competence of Finnish policymakers or the effects of inertia in decision-making over the past 25

[82] Randall L Schweller (2004), 'Unanswered threats: A neoclassical realist theory of underbalancing'. *International Security* 29: 2Randall L Schweller (2010), *Unanswered threats: Political constraints on the balance of power*. Princeton University Press.
[83] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 33ff.
[84] On overreacting to new information, see Beadle 2016, p. 43.
[85] Sverre Diesen (2018), *Lavintensivt angrep på Norge i en fremtidig konflikt*: FFI, p. 39 https://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/18-00080.pdf

years is a question best left for future analysis and political debate."[86] Third, the discussion of what is short term and what is long term is useful in pointing out how essential threat perceptions are to the future of Nordic defense cooperation. A shared threat perception is an environment favoring a Nordic alliance. Without a shared threat, such an alliance is much less likely. However, there is an economic theory that purports to explain political integration that offers an alternative path to the political integration that could bring about a Nordic operation – and that is neo-functionalism, as explained in the next chapter.

4 Economic Challenges for Defense

Let us turn to the argument that economic and technological trends will make it increasingly difficult for the Nordic states to pay for national defense systems, including force generation, planning, procurement, training, logistics and other support. Add that the unit cost per military platform increases faster than the average inflation rate, and that one effect of a shrinking defense structure is that the combat effect achieved for any set amount of money decreases, and all Nordic states will find it increasingly difficult to pay for a balanced national defense structure.[87] Increased Nordic defense cooperation might be the answer for such small European states that face economic and demographic trends that will make it difficult to increase the relative size of their defense expenditure. The increased incentives to make defense structures more operationally cost-effective are an additional driver of Nordic alliance politics.

However, one solution may be that the Nordic states pool resources in ways that go beyond the alliance analyzed above – i.e. Nordic defense *integration*. Defense integration either paves the way for joint Nordic operations, or even makes them necessary if it makes it impossible for any one country to operate joint armed forces. Several of the works cited as giving the inside view were produced in response to policy initiatives that tried to cope with this economic challenge. The analysis of the expected response to these economic pressures according to the outside view follows next in the chapter. First, under what general circumstances will states seek economic integration of a sector to make it more cost-effective? Then the chapter will examine what may make the defense sector different.

4.1 Neo-Functionalist theory and Nordic operations

Neo-functionalist theory explains political integration as the outcome of economic pressure. Therefore, the theory can serve as the starting point for an outside view of whether economic challenges in paying for defense in the future will pave the way for future Nordic military operations. The chapter will consider both the neo-functionalist theory and the views of some of

[86] Raitasalo (2017), p. 108.
[87] For the complete argument, see Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 46–49.

its most prominent critics, as the critics seem to dominate the discussion of how frequently political integration is caused by economic pressures. In other words, there are important critics who believe that economic pressure alone is not sufficient to cause economic integration. Under what economic circumstances, therefore, is defense integration possible?

There are three types of cooperation that may reduce costs: role specialization, pooling and sharing, and joint force generation.[88] In role specialization, countries divide tasks between them. A crude Nordic example for illustrative purposes would be a situation where Sweden provides the Air Force, Norway the Navy and Finland the Army. In pooling and sharing, countries create a joint force or capability. In a Nordic context, that would mean that the Nordic states created joint capabilities patterned on NATO's Heavy Airlift Wing of C-17 aircraft. The Heavy Airlift Wing is a truly joint capability under the permanent command of NATO, and each participating state receives flight hours proportional to the share paid into the asset. The third type of cooperation, joint force generation, is the one being attempted in NORDEFCO and is very similar to pooling and sharing. The idea is that each state retains its spectrum of capabilities but shares a common logistic and training organization in support of the forces. Each method has its pro and cons. In role specialization, the ability to act on one's own in a crisis is negligible. On the other hand, there is no need to construct elaborate (and often costly) schemes to generate the capability. In pooling and sharing, the participating states will often retain some ability to act alone, although obviously less so if other states withdraw their nationals from the capability. In joint force generation, the participating states retain immediate operational independence in a crisis, with the mutual dependence being long term and in the field of logistics and support.

Neo-functionalism explains increased integration between states through spill-over effects. Integration in one area spills over to other areas. Originally, it was developed as a theory and political program to explain and promote European integration. Treated as a general theory, it has been used both for regional sublevels, even directly in the Nordic region,[89] and for other regions.[90] It developed from the assumption that there are three kinds of spillover effects: functional (also called technical), cultivated and political. Functional spillover occurs because integration in one economic sector creates pressure to integrate in other sectors that are functionally dependent. Integration of the coal and steel industries will, for example, create pressure for the integration of the energy sector that these industries depend on, in turn creating a need to integrate infrastructure. The fact that areas differ in the pressure for further integration they create leads to a need for strategic planning of policy areas, or cultivated spillover. Political spillover is linked to the build-up of interest groups connected to already integrated sectors who lobby for further integration across international boundaries.[91] It is in part a theory to explain

[88] Sverre Diesen (2013), 'Towards an Affordable European and Security and Defence Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration'. In *NATO's European Allies. Military Capability and Political Will*, eds. Matlary and Petersson. London: Palgrave Macmillan (2013), p. 61ff.
[89] The concept of functional spillover originated in Ernst B Haas (2008 [1964]), *Beyond the nation state: Functionalism and international organization.* United Kingdom: ECPR Press. Employed on Nordic defense spending, see Westberg (2015), p. 91.
[90] Karin Dokken (2010), 'State responses to transnational challenges: The evolution of regional security organisations in Africa'. In *Troubled regions and failing states: the clustering and contagion of armed conflicts*, ed. Harpviken. United Kingdon: Emerald Group Publishing Limited (2010).
[91] Westberg (2015), p. 98–99.

integration within the EU and in part a political program aimed at increased European cooperation.

The distinction between low politics (economy and welfare) and high politics (foreign, security and defense policy) is crucial within neo-functionalism. The idea was that cooperation within low-politics areas was easier to achieve, because it did not challenge national sovereignty directly, and that a spillover to high-politics areas would follow. The choice of beginning with the integration of economic sectors was thus deliberate, as it was believed that more harmonious interests would make integration easier. In fact, the Nordic initiative for increased cooperation has been linked to desecuritization of the defense sector, where the Nordic countries no longer plan for existential war, but for expeditionary wars of choice.[92]

The theory has been challenged empirically in two ways. The first is that backlash and disintegration were always possible and indeed have occurred in the past. The second reinforces the idea that the distinction between high and low politics is fundamental, so fundamental that integration of high politics does not follow from integration of low politics. The leading critic Stanley Hoffmann pointed out early that security objectives and strategies associated with high politics followed a logic of *diversity* that would prevent spillover.[93] To be concrete, all states have an incentive to train and equip their armed forces in the most cost-effective way, but what they intend to use them for is likely to differ. Moreover, political leaders are more reluctant to surrender autonomy over a core value like sovereignty than over the technical and economic issues associated with low politics. Finally, a corollary might be that defense spillover may occur when the political cost of accepting it is less than the political cost of abandoning a weapon system altogether as it becomes too costly to retain nationally.

4.2 NORDEFCO 2007–2017

The fate of the 2007–09 initiative to increase Nordic security cooperation seems to corroborate the skepticism. The initiative has usefully been divided into the initiation phase 2007–09, the institutionalization phase 2009–10 and the implementation phase 2010 to the present.[94] On January 31, 2007, Norwegian CHOD Sverre Diesen and his Sweden's CHOD Håkan Syren publicized a feasibility study about mutually reinforcing military defense solutions that was handed over to their respective defense departments.[95] Less than a year later, a revised reinforced study *Nordic Supportive Defence Structures* (NORDSUP), produced with Finnish CHOD Juhani Kaskela too, identified 140 areas of military cooperation.[96] Denmark did not join. In November 2008, the initiative received political blessing, in the shape of an agreement about strengthened Nordic military–political cooperation. On December 5, 2009, an agreement on all

[92] Westberg (2015).
[93] Robert Owen Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann (1991), *The new European Community: Decisionmaking and institutional change.* Westview Press Boulder, CO.: Westview Press.
[94] Westberg (2015), p. 98-99.
[95] Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence (2007), 'Ömsesidgt förstärkande försvarslösningar: Norsk-svensk studie av möjligheterna till fördjupat samarbete'. *Norwegian and Swedish Armed Forces*.
[96] Norwegian MoD (2008), *Memorandum of Understanding on Nordic Supportive Defence Structures (NORDSUP).* Oslo

existing and future Nordic defense cooperation was reached under the same leadership and decision-making structure – the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO). The agreement had nine overarching objectives – to:

a. Establish a comprehensive, enhanced and long-term approach to defense-related issues;
b. Identify, discuss and strive for a common understanding of defense-related strategic and policy issues of common interest;
c. Increase the operational effect and quality of the armed forces;
d. Strive for optimum resource allocation and cost-efficiency in defense-related areas;
e. Enhance interoperability within existing standards and the capability to act jointly;
f. Develop cooperation in the area of multinational operations, defense-related security sector reform and capability building in support of international peace and security;
g. Achieve technological benefits;
h. Promote the competitiveness of the defense industry; and
i. Strengthen cooperation on any other possible future area of cooperation.[97]

Interestingly, the increased Nordic defense cooperation emerged bottom up, initiated by the military in response to increasing economic difficulties in financing key capabilities in their armed forces, and was only later sanctioned politically and finally given a political steering structure.[98] NORDEFCO may not have fulfilled the ambitious goals set, but it has cleared some obstacles to Nordic defense cooperation. In the process, mutual Nordic interests have become clearer, producing an economic rationale for Nordic defense cooperation.

The fate of NORDEFCO may serve as a yardstick for what forces shape Nordic cooperation today. The ability to carry out a conventional high-intensity operation did not emerge as a practical goal. However, moving towards fulfilling any of its nine objectives will move the Nordic countries closer to being able to carry out a joint military operation. In sum, there are no real obstacles left standing in the way. What is needed are only the establishment of the shared interests that make such operations beneficial to all countries involved, and a move toward achieving the practicalities of making it happen.

Economic reasons provided the common interest to launch the present increased defense cooperation among the Nordic states. The rising technological costs per unit, making the number of platforms fewer and the costs per unit ever higher, are likely to continue into the future.[99] For small states, that will make it difficult to maintain a number of items in the defense inventory, making a reasonable balanced defense impossible. The crucial moment occurs when the state faces the choice of cooperating with others over a weapon system or not having it at all. Denmark had abandoned the national defense of home territory as the defining ambition for its Armed Forces. Instead, the Danish Armed Forces were transformed into an expeditionary force to deliver niche capacities into NATO-led coalitions out of area. When weapon systems for territorial defense, for example submarines, artillery and ground based air defense, became

[97] Norwegian MoD (2009), *NORDEFCO. Memorandum of understanding on Nordic Defence Cooperation. Oslo: .* Oslo.
[98] Petersson (2010), 'Komplement eller konkurrent? Några reflexioner kring det nordiska militärpolitiska samarbetet'. p. 245.
[99] Beadle and Diesen 2015. Westberg (2015), p. 98–99.

too expensive, they could simply be abandoned.[100] Denmark was perceived as "not particularly purposeful as far as Nordic cooperation is concerned", although it was a participant.[101] Likewise, it has recently been suggested that both Swedish and Norwegian military interest in defense cooperation actually *decreased* as the perceived threat from Russia increased, because the threat led defense budgets to increase sufficiently to maintain entire weapons systems nationally,[102] thereby confirming the idea that integrating defense systems truly is the last resort. The problem is of course that this might be an unhelpful overreaction to current events, if the result is to postpone the inevitable at increased cost.

The hypothesis that integration of weapon systems is only possible when national solutions are impossible is corroborated by the story of Nordic defense integration 2007–2017. Whether the need for integration may reassert itself in a compelling manner in the future will be discussed below. Arguably, the joint defense initiative failed because it was too far ahead of its time, or, rather, because the factors that triggered the initiative changed.

How has NORDEFCO fared as an example of functionalist integration? The need for political clarification about how the military capacities would be used in a crisis before there was any practical cooperation about building joint military capacities was clearly recognized by Thorvald Stoltenberg. In June 2008, he had been asked by the Nordic foreign ministers to find concrete proposals to strengthen Nordic defense cooperation. The result was the so-called Stoltenberg report from February 2009. He suggested in proposal 13 a joint Nordic declaration of solidarity that would clarify how the Nordic countries would react if one of them were subject to political pressure or a military attack.[103] However, no such declaration was forthcoming as long as economic logic was the only driver of Nordic defense cooperation. In 2011, only a vague Nordic solidarity declaration followed, promising to solve problems in a "spirit of solidarity" and that the others should assist with "relevant means." Moreover, Nordic cooperation should only complement European (art 42.7) and transatlantic (art. 5) cooperation.[104] It seems that the intergovernalist critique levelled against neo-functionalist theory is thus corroborated.

Practical cooperation over exercises, training and operations has progressed fastest, and according to some remarkably fast. Two marginal personnel groups, de-mining and drivers, also established joint training. The term "low-hanging fruit" was in vogue, and it was in those areas that challenged national military training systems or equipment procurement that most was achieved. In addition, a Swedish investigation from 2013 suggested that increased training and operations had led to increased levels of trust, network-building and shared experiences among

[100] Saxi (2016), p. 68.
[101] The Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre (2008), *Å gjøre en forskjell: refleksjoner fra en norsk utenriksminister*. Cappelen Damm Oslop. 34–35.
[102] Saxi (2016), p. 75–76, 78.
[103] Saxi (2016), p. 67.
[104] Utenriksdepartementet (2011), "Den nordiske solidaritetserklæringen"; Saxi (2016), p. 79.

Swedish officers. According to the same source, cooperation had also widened in scope and across areas, as suggested by neo-functionalist theory.[105]

However, the attempts to buy joint helicopters, fighter aircraft, submarines, artillery systems or trucks all failed.[106] It is true that the momentum from 2007 that primarily had economic rationale led to joint Nordic political statements about increased cooperation. Nevertheless, joint education and procurement did not follow. The progress in functionalist cooperation also failed to spill over to a joint security policy or solidarity. Security interests, objectives and strategies remained too diverse in the 2007–2014 period, as intergovernmentalism had predicted. In conclusion, the outside view provides a good explanation of Nordic defense integration or the lack thereof. Practical cooperation that does not involve integration has progressed. Procurement that would necessitate real security integration has by and large failed. And economic pressure has failed to impact defense integration when confronted with divided security interests. It should be noted that the defense sector has a unique challenge in that, in peacetime, it solves a hypothetical task. As there is no real-life feedback as to whether the defense structure actually can fulfill its intended mission, it is possible to claim that it does, postponing the moment when a country finds that it cannot pay for an entire weapons system. In other sectors of society, underfunding usually leads to visible and public failures to meet standards.

5 The Inside View Reconsidered: Nordic Integration

It was only in 2015, with the joint statement from the Nordic ministers of defense, that the joint Nordic political agenda moved forward again. It was not due to functionalist demands for cooperation but to a new joint security concern. The joint Nordic statement from 2015 explicitly named the common threat from Russia. The outside view to discuss the prospects of Nordic defense cooperation was provided by neo-functionalist theory, originally developed for understanding the European great powers. States such as France, the United Kingdom and Germany constituted the poles of the state system or at least the poles in the European security complex, which was embedded in the global one. By definition, the security interests of such poles differ.

Whether the security interests of small states such as the Nordic countries really are too diverse to allow defense cooperation is an empirical question and not a theoretical one. As argued above, a more assertive Russia now constitutes a common threat. Finland never forgot about Russia. Norway and Denmark have refocused on national security instead of the international operations that they, for different reasons and to different degrees, had made a priority.

[105] Westberg (2015), p. 109.
[106] Saxi (2016), p. 69–73.

Denmark designed its armed forces to contribute internationally, whereas Norway contributed internationally with forces developed for other purposes.[107]And Sweden has rediscovered security again. In short, the security interests of the Nordic states became markedly more similar after 2014. Håkon Lunde Saxi, for example, suggests that Nordic cooperation needs to be driven by security concerns and not by economics.[108]

Finally, there is also an economic point about which we are in uncharted territory. So far, the Nordic countries have only faced the situation where the costs per unit of defense systems have been rising. What any Nordic state will do in a situation where it urgently needs an expensive weapons system in order to preserve the balanced defense deemed necessary, and cannot afford it without hurting other equally important systems, is an open question. It is true that Denmark abandoned air defense and submarines, but these were weapon systems the Danes did not need in international operations against technologically inferior adversaries. Once a threat to Danish territory reemerged, procuring air defense capabilities swiftly became a priority.[109] Looking to the past for the answer does not work, as no Nordic country has really faced this dilemma.

Logically, the following three options seem available. First, one may ignore the need for the new system and hope for the best. Looking at the historic record immediately after the Cold War, this arguably is typically done by procuring the system while underfunding servicing it as well as the rest of the defense sector to pay for it, while pretending it is functioning. Today and in the future, the Armed Forces of the Nordic countries may face threats that force them to carry out daily missions to convey a political message of ability and determination. Second, one may increase defense spending. “Cannot afford” is of course an elastic and subjective concept. If the Nordic states moved back to Cold War defense-spending levels or the current levels of Russia or the US, they obviously would be able to postpone the moment when they would not be able to pay for what they deem necessary. Third, the Nordic states may try to balance cost and needs through increased cooperation, leading to a future capability for joint Nordic high-intensity operations. One path is to integrate their armed forces in a manner that would make it necessary for them to operate together. It should be pointed out that such a level of integration is not necessary for a Nordic operation; it is just one path that may lead to it.

Finally, is it possible, as Russia claims, that a Nordic alliance is a self-fulfilling prophesy about the Russian threat: Russia becomes a threat to the Nordic states in response to a Nordic alliance? It should be pointed out that a Nordic alliance would be particularly useful, when the Nordic countries are alone, without NATO or other regional allies. Furthermore, Russia usually complains about NATO’s aggressive intentions and not those of the Nordic states per se. Finally, Finland and Sweden have been under more political–military pressure than Denmark and Norway, suggesting that Russia is more motivated by dominating its small neighbors than by fear of them. Let us examine military power in the context of the relationship between Russia and the Nordic states.

[107] Kristoffer Egeberg (2017), *Fredsnasjonen Norge.* Oslo: Kagge.
[108] Saxi (2016), p. 85.
[109] Udenrigsministeriet (2017).The so-called ‘defense compromise’ 2018–23 (forsvarsforliget) Forsvarsdepartementet.

5.1 Are Nordic operations a feasible answer to the challenge?

Any Nordic operation is based on commonality of interests among the Nordic states; their interests need to be compatible but not identical, to serve as the basis for a joint military operation.[110] Russia's military power is a potential threat to the interests of all Nordic states, although obviously not in the same way. Underlying this is the trivial observation that the Nordic countries need someone to conduct military operations against, and Russia is the most likely candidate. However, a brief justification of the plausibility of Russia as an enduring challenge is offered by Eliot Cohen. He suggests that the power of nationalism and Russian exceptionalism as an ideology was underestimated in the 1990s. Two issues explain Vladimir Putin's behavior: the desire to restore Russian prestige and control, and the desire to weaken and perhaps destroy NATO. He finds it reasonable to expect a revisionist Russian state to pursue those goals after Putin passes from the scene too.[111]

5.1.1 Russia as a threat

Russia's overall power is significantly less than the Soviet Union's was. Population, economy and the dissolution of the Warsaw pact have all made Russia a smaller player globally compared to the Soviet Union. Regionally, the loss of coastline in the former East Germany, Poland and the Baltic states has profoundly influenced the ability of the Russian military to operate against the Nordic countries. Since they have all reduced their own forces, and since Russia remains a much larger country in terms of population and the size of its armed forces, the relative situation may be less fortunate. Viewing these hard facts in isolation, the security situation of the Nordic countries has been much improved since the Cold War.[112] In addition, the Nordic states face an intellectual challenge in containing Russia.

First, the purpose of the armed forces includes being a political instrument.[113] Russia clearly views its military as a political instrument. The pattern of Russian military exercises, violation of airspace and diplomatic pressure constitute political pressure. For the Nordic states, the military has historically not been a generic policy instrument but a national emergency instrument for when national existence itself is threatened. The present Russian threat demands that a different understanding and use of the armed forces is added – as a political instrument. It is demanding for the small Nordic states to modify their understanding of the purpose of their militaries, especially if they are to act together. For the Nordic countries, traditional small states, it will be demanding to think about defense and security policy also in terms of power and influence, finding ways to develop and harness military power for political ends *together*. A

[110] Graeme P Herd and John Kriendler (2013), 'NATO in an Age of Uncertainty-Structural Shifts and Transatlantic Bargains?'. In *Understanding NATO in the 21st century. Alliance strategies, security and global governance*, eds. Herd and Kriendler. London: Routledge (2013), p. 2.
[111] Cohen,2017. 152–153.
[112] Andreas Bjurner (2015), In *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen*, eds. Engelbrekt, et al. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik (2015), p. 119–120.
[113] Robert Dalsjö ibid.'Från neutralitet til solidaritet: Omgestaltningen av Sveriges sakerhetspolitik efter det kalla kriget'. eds. Engelbrekt, et al.: Norstedsts juridik p. 182.

final challenge is that this needs to be done in a situation where the sharp dichotomy between peace and war may no longer be valid, if it ever were.

5.1.2 The Nordic defense potential relative Russia

But can the Nordic countries be powerful enough to put together a joint operation that is militarily sufficient to protect their political autonomy? Together, they need to be strong enough to be able to act effectively against the more limited threat posed by Russia. Nordic operations need to be materially as well as politically feasible. Weak and divided states may simply lack the combined capabilities to counter a great power.[114] Measuring the power of coalitions or alliances involves the additional challenge of measuring their political cohesion.[115] Fortunately, to measure the feasibility of a Nordic operation a rough estimate will suffice. Let us examine the hard facts, taking the items used in Stephen Walt's attempt to measure the power of the Cold War Soviet and US alliance systems: population, GDP and defense expenditures.[116] More is still better, but the size of armed forces has been omitted as a direct indicator of military power, as the increased role of technology has made it a less useful indicator, and it strongely correlated with the three indicators included.

	Population Million	GDP US$ Billion	GDP/Capita $ 1000	Total Defense expenditures	Defense/Capita
Norway	5.2	387	74.35	7377 US$ m	1.5%
Sweden	9.8	460	49.90	6578 US$ m	1.1%
Finland	5.5	232	42.32	3563 US$ m	1.3%
Denmark	5.7	295	51.99	4130 US$ m	1.2%
Nordic (3)	20.5	1.078	52.64	17,518 US$ m	
Nordic (4)	27.2	1.372	52.46	21,648 US$ m	
Russia	144.1	1.326	9.20	91,081 US$ m	5.4%

Table 5.1 Comparison of the Nordic alliance systems and Russia in 2015.

As we can see, economically the Nordic countries are a match for Russia. Indeed, the GDP of the four Nordic countries are larger than that of Russia. Since the work that inspired this report did not include Denmark because it focused on the High North,[117] the table also lists the

[114] Kenneth N. Waltz (2000), 'Globalization and American power'. *The National Interest*: 59, p. 37.
[115] Kenneth N. Waltz (1979), *Theory of international politics.* New York: McGraw-HillHans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton (2006), *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace.* Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
[116] Walt,1987. p. 274–275.
[117] Diesen 2016, 'Forsvarets fremtidige operasjoner. En morfologisk analyse av operasjonsspekteret FFI-rapport 16/02096'.

numbers without Denmark (Nordic 3). When Denmark is included (Nordic 4), the Nordic GDP is actually larger than Russia's. Russia's military dominance over these three countries is due to the priority it gives to its military forces, spending 5.4 % of total GDP on defense, compared to 1.2–1.3% average among the Nordic countries. More practically, with reasonable defense expenditures, it seems feasible for the Nordic countries together to develop a defensive military deterrent against today's less existential threats.

A number of global trends may weaken the Russian economy in the future. Its economy is heavily dependent upon energy and has demonstrated limited ability to transform to be globally competitive. That makes Russia more vulnerable to economic strategic shocks, technological breakthroughs in energy production and the move away from fossil fuel.[118] In short, its future GDP relative to the Nordic countries is likely to worsen. Russia also has other, more vital military preoccupations than dominating the Nordic security complex. The Nordic area or even the wider North European area is far from the only area that demands Russian attention and resources. Southern Europe, the Caucasus and China are all concerns, liabilities and opportunities that compete for limited Russian resources.

So far we have proceeded as if Russia and the Nordic countries separately will get the same returns on their investments in defense. Note that Nordic economic strength seemingly gives the four countries a military potential comparable to Russia. However, this conclusion is modified if economies of scale and purchasing power parities (PPPs) are factored in. Economy of scale drive the Nordic efforts to cooperate effectively on defense. As will be recalled, the objective for the initiative that set Nordic defense cooperation on its current path was an attempt to create greater national and joint military capability to act. One of the reasons that greater national military capability was needed was that all the Nordic countries approached the point where neither major weapons systems nor a complete spectrum of conventional capabilities could be maintained. At present, due to the size of its military, Russia will have a larger return for each dollar spent on defense. Lower living standards will result in Russian production and operational costs that are lower than in the Nordic countries, giving Russia more military power for similar amounts of money.

The argument that a Nordic operation will be able to fulfill the political objectives of participating Nordic countries is contingent upon combined Nordic defense expenditures producing a future military capability corresponding to their joint economic potential. In sum, there are many reasons to expect that in the future Russia will struggle to preserve its global economic and military position. Regardless, if Russia continues to prioritize its defense in roughly the same manner, its size will ensure sufficient capability to pose a threat against each individual Nordic state. Our argument is that global trends suggest that a Nordic operation has become more feasible and will continue to become so. A Nordic operation may suffice to counter many security threats against the Nordic states.

[118] Beadle and Diesen 2015, p. 65.

5.1.3 Three Scenarios for Future Nordic Alliance Operations

The report has argued that a future Nordic operation is possible and that there are several different paths leading to it. To illustrate the scope for future Nordic operations, three scenarios have been developed. They were originally part of this report, but it was decided that it was more practical to publish them separately.[119] The first is a situation in which Russia exercises coercive diplomacy towards Norway; the second situation involving a limited *fait accompli*; and, the third and final, a large Russian attack on three Nordic countries, albeit for limited objectives. The scenarios show ways in which Nordic operations may be useful, in situations involving varying degrees of force and of cooperation with countries outside the Nordic region. This report demonstrates how Nordic operations are particularly relevant for the present politico-military challenges, where a short response time, the political effects of military support and possessing military instruments tailored to the situation become ever more important.

[119] Tore Nyhamar (2019), *FFI-rapport 19/00447 Three Scenarios for Future Nordic Alliance Operations*: FFI,

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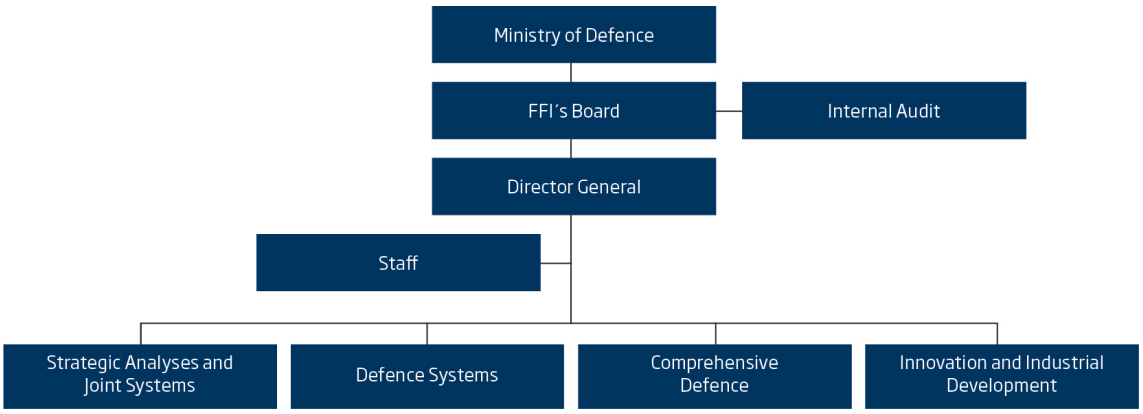

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