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*"The Road to NATO's Riga Summit"*

## **NATO's Enhanced Partnership, International Operations and Nordic Co-operation - The Case of Sweden.**

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### **Introduction**

I appreciate the invitation to participate in this seminar. I notice that the frequency of my contacts with Norway is steadily increasing. In fact I was here only three days ago. That is a good sign in a time when Swedish and Norwegian security and defence interests are running closer than ever.

Co-operation between our countries of course builds on a long tradition. Our interests and concerns for natural reasons are closely connected and often shared.

Without much publicity military people on different levels throughout the cold war maintained and developed contacts and secured a good understanding about how to develop mutually supportive defence plans. Norway also played a vital role in making us in Sweden understand the interests, concerns and the development of the Atlantic alliance.

After the cold war Norway has continued to play an important role in supporting the development of NATO co-operation with countries outside of the alliance.

Today we find our interests coinciding in a new way as we both, from our different platforms, try to harmonise the security and defence work of the EU and NATO.

These introductory words provide a natural bridge to the topics I have been asked to talk about:

- our interests and concerns related to the development of the Enhanced Partnership,
- our involvement and further goals related to international operations
- and last but not least the role of Nordic Co-operation.

The three topics are closely interlinked and in different ways they will all be reflected throughout my presentation.

The Riga Summit, as we have heard this morning, is a summit for NATO members only. This certainly does not mean that it is without interest for Partner countries. On the contrary, in the world and Europe of today, the development of NATO is an important concern for members and Partner countries alike. Sweden has a strong interest in a development that supports our

capability building process and that strengthens our involvement in NATO-led operations to which we contribute.

Before I go further into that let me just very briefly say some words about the present development of the Swedish Armed Forces. It is essential to have this background.

### **The transformation of the Swedish Armed Forces**

The Swedish Armed Forces are in the midst of a fundamental transformation to be able to meet the requirements and challenges in today's world.

It is a fundamental change. We have abandoned the large and nationally oriented territorial defence structure built on general conscription and mobilisation. We are forming a much smaller but readily deployable structure with a strong international focus.

It is a dramatic shift and it is a major undertaking.

- We want to sustain a comprehensive and modern force structure that can meet the needs of today and adapt to the needs of tomorrow.
- We are giving priority to maximising our output, i.e. our capabilities, while adapting and streamlining production to the new needs.
- We are giving priority to increasing our deployable capabilities to international operations.
- International interoperability is a key requirement for most of our forces. The only exception is the home guard which remains reserved for national use in Sweden.
- We are reforming our conscript system. We have to meet the radically different requirements associated with a much smaller total force structure, complex international missions and high demands on readiness.
- We are fundamentally reforming the officer career system, adapting to new manning requirements as a large part of our units are to be deployed in international missions.
  
- and so on – the list is long!

The transformation unavoidably takes time and builds on a sustained effort.

The aims of the transformation are very much in line with the broad transformation going on within EU and NATO, focusing on capabilities, readiness and deployability. We have adopted a comprehensive Net Work Centric approach in which international interoperability is a key concern. Our Network Centric approach is closely linked to the parallel development at NATO ACT and in other countries.

Our defence transformation as you notice is very similar to the development here in Norway. It is thus no coincidence, that we in the last year have found a steadily growing common list of challenges when we compare notes on the road ahead for our forces. In our long term studies we are presently on both sides looking into a broad spectrum of opportunities for co-operation. We expect to be able to present very concrete proposals as we go ahead.

With this background let me now turn to the Enhanced Partnership and our relations with NATO.

## **The Enhanced Partnership and Sweden's relations with NATO**

Sweden remains militarily non-aligned, but international defence co-operation and common multinational peace support operations over the last decade have increasingly emerged as dominating dimensions of defence policy and planning.

Sweden has been an active contributor to the Partnership for Peace programme since its start in 1994 and as a Partner we are today co-operating closely with NATO. We have an ambassador and a delegation to NATO in Brussels since almost 10 years and we have a growing number of officers working in different parts of the NATO-structure.

We are working together with NATO in the Balkans since more than ten years, first in IFOR and SFOR and now in KFOR. Currently we have the lead for the Multinational Task Force Centre in Kosovo as well as for one of the ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan. Among the Partner countries Sweden is the largest troop contributor to ISAF. To provide a full picture I should add that Swedish units are also taking part in UN and EU missions in Lebanon, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Bosnia. However since many years the majority of our forces abroad have been deployed under NATO-command, today it is about two thirds.

Interoperability obviously is a key concern in the further modernisation of the Swedish forces. We are using the NATO PARP-process as a main tool for the interoperability development. Today NATO standards are broadly used within our forces, not only in terms of equipment, but also in training and in the command and control system.

We have come a long way on the road to full interoperability. Today we are often receiving the comment that we have a higher degree of interoperability with NATO than many of its members. Let me give a couple of examples:

Last July a Swedish JAS Gripen unit, seven aircraft, participated very successfully in the overseas Red Flag Exercise in Alaska. It was an important test of long distance deployability as well as of interoperability. We aim to make the Red Flag exercises a regular part of our training as we now prepare our Air Force to contribute to demanding future international operations. We have learnt a lot also by exercising together with the Norwegian Air Force in the Nordic environment.

Another example of interoperability: One of our advanced submarines with air-independent propulsion now is in its second year exercising together with the US Navy on the Pacific coast in California. It is a co-operation that is working extremely well.

The road to international interoperability certainly is not without problems as our established national solutions, when viewed solely in a national context, often are superior to internationally adopted standards. Nevertheless we have concluded, that on the road ahead, there is no alternative to international co-operation built on common standards and interoperability.

Increasingly we are also training and exercising together with potential partners in bilateral as well as multilateral frameworks. The NATO Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) has

been adopted as the primary mechanism for assuring that our units have the necessary capabilities to operate multinationally – be it within a UN, EU or NATO framework.

In the European framework, Sweden contributes actively and substantially to the strengthening of European rapid response capabilities. Sweden is framework nation for the Nordic EU Battle Group (NBG), which shall be ready for deployment during the first six months of 2008. It should be seen as a long-term commitment. The government has just made a commitment for a second term of framework nation responsibility in 2011.

The NBG is a combined unit building on commitments also from your country, Finland and Estonia. Politically, as well as militarily, the NBG therefore also acts as a catalyst for ensuring coordination between the development of the EU BG and the NATO Response Force (NRF). In line with our general interoperability goals, it is vital that training, exercises and certification for the EU BG to the maximal extent possible are based on similar procedures as the NRF. It should be added that the NBG, just like NRF in NATO, serves as an important catalyst for our transformation embodying a core element of the deployable force.

Our active involvement in NATO-led peace support operations, today and in the future, give us a strong interest in strengthening the mechanisms for involvement of non-NATO troop contributing nations (NNTCN) in early consultations and decision shaping. Important decisions on enhancing partner co-operation were taken at the Istanbul summit in 2004. Our practical co-operation in the field in Kosovo and in Afghanistan provides continuous input to their implementation. It involves information and intelligence sharing, involvement in operational planning and consulting mechanisms.

The bottom line from our perspective is to be able to ensure the safety of our personnel and the relevance of our contributions. Relevance means to be able to contribute with the right capabilities at the right time.

These are in broad terms the interests and concerns that we expect to be reflected in the decisions and ambitions expressed at the coming Riga Summit. Together with Finland we have clarified our position on the development of operational and political co-operation between NATO and Partner countries in greater detail in a non-paper that we have circulated to all EAPC countries as an input in the run up to the Riga summit.

When striving to enhance our partner position we often have met the counterargument that the easy way to achieve our goals would be to join NATO as a member. This argument obviously has a lot of merits, but does not today have the support of a majority of the Swedish voters. The response given by foreign minister Carl Bildt recently, when he was asked about the future Swedish relation with NATO may serve as one indicator of where we are heading. The essence of his answer was that he sees a future Swedish membership in NATO as a natural development, although adding that this change will not take place until it has a clear political majority behind it.

What matters today is our aim to build as close a working relationship as possible to maximize possibilities and capabilities for efficient contributions to multinational peace support operations. Today there exist no political restrictions to close co-operation with NATO and NATO countries in training, exercises, procurement, logistics and other key areas. The new defence minister Odenberg, in an interview a few days ago, characterised our

relation with NATO as “relaxed and pragmatic” underlining that the one and only limit is that our relation does not include formal defence guarantees.

I have already mentioned the recent examples of Red Flag Alaska and our submarine in the Pacific, but I could also add that the Swedish Air Force is co-operating closely with the air forces of Hungary and the Czech Republic, which are now both operating the JAS Gripen multi-role system. We have also decided to join the negotiations in the European Nato-initiative to establish a pool of C-17 strategic transport aircraft. A growing number of NATO countries are also taking advantage of our large exercise- and test-ranges in northern Sweden.

### **Nordic co-operation**

Before I go further into the Nordic Co-operation, let me widen the discussion of our needs for co-operation. I have so far mainly talked about the requirements set by our aims to contribute to multinational missions.

But there is another very important dimension. As we look ahead, almost all European countries are facing a situation, which makes it economically infeasible to maintain a full comprehensive force structure with units capable to meet tomorrow’s requirements. In Sweden, just as in Norway, we are rapidly approaching critically low quantitative levels, which make it imperative to increase co-operation between the forces in different countries.

We simply have to use common training, exercising, procurement and logistic support if we want to maintain a reasonably full spectrum of capabilities and competence. In designing our co-operative structures there are many different aspects that have to be considered, military effectiveness, links to international missions and other political aspects.

The Nordic framework ranks high from almost all criterias. We share political interests, concerns and traditions, we are geographically close, we have a long tradition of military co-operation in international missions. Through co-operation we can strengthen our influence to assert regional interests in both NATO and the EU.

As I look on the current international missions to which we contribute, the usefulness of co-operation between the Nordic countries stands out very clearly. It is true in Kosovo, it is true in Afghanistan, it is true in Lebanon and it will be true if and when we go into Sudan. The Nordic framework of course does not mean that all Nordic countries are included in every case. However, it means that it is useful to use the Nordic framework for coordination and preparations. The Nordic Battle Group is a good example.

To a large extent we already have the necessary tools for this. We have the NORDCAPS as a basis for our co-operation in international missions and we have the NORDAC for armaments co-operation, both building on agreed and formalised memorandum of understandings (MoU). In addition we have our well developed bilateral co-operation.

During my almost three years as chief of the Swedish Armed Forces I have become increasingly aware of and convinced about the importance and of the possibilities for strengthening co-operation between the armed forces of the Nordic countries.

Without in any way underestimating the importance of our military co-operation with Finland and Denmark, it is nevertheless worth emphasising that Sweden and Norway right now are in a situation, which makes it particularly interesting to explore the possibilities for further enhanced co-operation. As I have already emphasized we are both transforming on very parallel tracks and we are both facing very similar challenges as we are looking ahead.

That Norway is a member of NATO and Sweden is a member of the EU in fact could be seen as an additional argument for close co-operation. As we are demonstrating in the Nordic Battle Group our practical co-operation acts as an instrument for harmonizing the development of the two organisations. As we look beyond the present horizon I personally am quite convinced that we will see a continued harmonization between the two organisations.

Against this background it should come as no surprise that our headquarters are presently in the midst of a common study to explore the opportunities for further co-operation across the board. Without running ahead of this analysis, I think Sverre Diesen shares my assessment that it is looking very promising. We will learn more as we dig deeper into the practical aspects and implications.

### **Conclusion – Summary**

The three themes of this presentation, the enhanced Partnership, international operations and Nordic co-operation in my Swedish perspective are closely interconnected.

- Sweden has the ambition to maintain a modern and comprehensive defence structure with increased capacity to contribute to international operations.
- A close relation with NATO is vital both in the development of our capabilities and as a framework for a large part of operations to which we will contribute.
- A continued enhancement of the partner co-operation to ensure our full involvement in NATO-led operations is a strong Swedish interest.
- We expect the Riga summit to take further steps on this road, building on the results of the last summit in Istanbul.
- A close co-operation among the Nordic countries is beneficial by providing for greater possibilities to contribute and by giving us all greater weight and influence in Europe and in an transatlantic context.
- Sweden has to develop its co-operation with other countries in order to sustain and develop modern forces. The Nordic framework is a very natural starting point.

Finally and particularly relevant when talking here in Oslo today: the opportunities for mutually strengthening co-operation between the Swedish and the Norwegian Armed Forces are greater than ever.

It is an important and stimulating challenge to which I and Sverre Diesen are both strongly committed.

I thank you for your attention!