

# The Internationalisation of the Swedish Armed Forces



# Abstract

In this bachelors thesis I focus on the current change in the Swedish Armed Forces. The new international security context makes the Armed Forces' old strategies inaccurate. New threats are replacing the old ones. Sweden no longer have a need for a grand defence against an invasion and the military has therefore changed towards an internationalised organisation, which is more and more integrated with other countries militaries.

To understand the ongoing change I am using theories from Mary Kaldor, Pertti Joenniemi and Christopher Coker who are approaching the subject in different ways. It is important to use different approaches to understand such an advanced reformation process.

I am discussing what effects the end of the Cold War and an increasing integration in the European Union has on the Armed Forces but also how the change might be understood from a theoretical perspective.

**Keywords:** Armed Forces, Sweden, Change, International Security, Conscription.

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# 1 Introduction

The first Swedish defence plan to transform the military after the Cold War came in 1995. This meant cutbacks and the number of conscripts in Sweden came to decrease enormously the last decade. Lower numbers of conscripts resulted in a lower need of regiments in the country and also a lower number of officers to educate the conscripts. Around 50.000 were educated each year between 1970 and 1990. Today, that number has decreased to somewhere between 5000-8000 per year. The conscription system is still important because it serves as a way to recruit people for international engagements. (Ewa Stenberg, *800 färre värnpliktiga nästa år*) In 1986, 2% of the Swedish soldiers were participating in international missions. In 2005, 7.5% were joining EU, and other, operations and the number is increasing. (Kronsell 2007:12)

In 2008 Sweden will participate in military missions abroad in a way that's new for the country. Sweden will lead what is called the Nordic Battle group, which is one of EU's rapid reaction forces that can be deployed 6000 kilometres away from Brussels within a short time-period. Losses are likely, some would argue, and the question; why and when Sweden went into a situation like this, will surely be raised.

Changes in the Armed Forces are happening now and it has happened before. We are entering a new security context and we are, perhaps, somewhere in the middle of this change right now.

A mix of regular and conscription armies were used in 1815 in the battle of Waterloo. Napoleon Bonaparte introduced the first ones in the end of the 1700-century and they were built upon ideas on defending your own country's territory and that countries ideal and values and it was obligatory to be part of them. Before the change to conscription armies, soldiering was, except for higher risk, like any regular job where you received money for work performed.

The Western European Armies especially, are now entering an era away from conscription, back to professional armies. The trend has reached different impact in different European countries and in Sweden, we seem to be somewhere in the middle of the reformation.

The new wars or today's wars are most often being fought within states and they are thought of, by some, as states of emergency or even as environmental catastrophes that need to be taken cared of. (Kaldor 1999:128) Coalitions of states have to intervene in one way or the other. This means that soldiers are being sent far away from their homes and countries to fight for the international believe in what's ethically the right thing to do.

A wide tradition of obligatory military service, deep rooted in the Swedish society, is slowly being taken away.

The Swedish citizens have through the years of conscription been generally well motivated and as a neutral country the only task for the Armed Forces was to defend the territory and the democratic values. For a long time the potential threat came from Russia or the Soviet Union. The risk of invasion on Swedish territory is today considered low but when the Swedish Defence organisation was at its largest, about 800.000 people could be mobilised and many of them were active in different home guards. This shows how thorough these thoughts were.

Today, threats and crises are more likely to come from "...globalisation, state failure, poverty, terrorism, natural catastrophes, migration..." (Kronsell 2007:3) Therefore it has become unnecessary with an army as big as before.

The institutional change the Swedish Defence organisation is going through changes the relationship between the state, its citizens and the army and also the way the actions by the Swedish Armed Forces are being conducted in international missions. The Armed Forces efforts are changing its tasks toward international missions.

The Supreme Commander, Håkan Syrén, is talking about a "dual" responsibility for the Armed Forces, being both a territorial defence organisation and at the same time an internationalised force.

The organisational change is huge and perhaps we haven't seen such a big change since conscription was ones implemented in Sweden.

## 1.1 Research Question

My understanding is that changes concerning defence policy occur inside a country when outside premises changes and when certain conceptions reach impact in our society.

My primary question is; how may the change in the Swedish Armed Forces be understood?

Secondary questions are; what factors cause this change? What kind of change is happening outside Sweden that may influence Swedish reformation? What parts of the Armed Forces are changing the most? When was it possible to spot the change, was it at the same time as the end of the Cold War ended or perhaps later?

## 1.2 Theories

In this essay it is necessary to lean on a few different theories and approaches to understand my questions and to put the questions into a broader context. There are a bunch of theories concerning militaries, what they should do and what they shouldn't do. I will present three theories that are of interest. I have chosen these

because they, in different ways and with different approaches are explaining changes in the international security context.

To explain the ongoing changes I will use Mary Kaldor and her book *New and Old Wars*. The book addresses the characteristics of new warfare and new wars. New wars are categorized by being of low intensity and also not being fought between states but within them. New wars have to be understood in connection to the globalisation process. (Kaldor 1999:10-11) It is no longer possible to isolate some parts of the world from others, she argues. New wars are about identity, nationality, tribe or religion and she argues that humans a lot more today than before, are participating because of individual reasons.

A lot more interaction on the economic sector is the case today but also a lot more international networks are important and influencing technology and information processes. (Kaldor 1999:81-83) Kaldors theories and arguments help you understand that the globalisation process is really thorough in most societies and influencing every part of it. Because of the globalisation process, the Swedish (and others) borders are no longer as important as they ones were; since wars are no longer fought between states, Sweden doesn't have to maintain an army as big as it used to. The army has to prepare itself to meet new challenges, both internal and external. Wars have changed and the military is forced to change as well to be able to meet the new threats.

Pertti Joenniemi has written a book about European conscription and how countries in Europe have changed during the last 10-15 years. He uses a distinction between the military and political society and how these are interacting. He also argues that from country to country conscription and its reformation depends on that specific country's attributes. The conception "Neo-conscription" is used to explain the new era some countries are entering.

He argues that for Sweden, a total abolishment of conscription is not something that the country wants to achieve. "... the fate of conscription is ultimately determined by the meaning of conscription." (Leander & Joenniemi 2006:161)

Another interesting angle that the reader should be familiar with is the nation building influence conscription has. What it means to be for example Swedish or Finnish is connected to the conscription in an institutional way.

To Leander and Joenniemi, conscription is an institution and any possible change that this kind of institution may turn towards is depending on how conscription is looked upon in that particular country. (Leander & Joenniemi 2006:168)

Trends are challenging conscription and therefore most parts of the Swedish Armed Forces, which has for a very long time built up their organisation around conscription. For Sweden conscription ones had a purpose, to defend us against threats coming from other countries, other states. The connection between the state and the nation has changed, argues Joenniemi. The Swedish Armed Forces have been depending and has to a large extent been built up on conscription but that is about to change. Conscription has to be either reformed or abolished. Conscription has served as a nation-building factor in Sweden and its connection to Swedish (former) neutrality is/was important for its public support.

Christopher Coker's book *Humane Warfare* is describing and discussing what is humane and what is not, in modern warfare. New trends are putting a new colour on conflicts and how they should be managed and treated. Western societies are fighting humanitarian wars in "...a humane fashion." argues Coker. (Coker 2001:2). It may seem like these humane wars are being fought without casualties; that's not the case, argues Coker. This is more of an approach where it is getting more and more difficult for the western countries to be responsible for deaths when interacting in wars. The atomic bomb is a pure example of inhumane warfare. Coker is arguing for an increase in the responsibility the commanders have for their soldiers (Coker 2001:78) which is, he says, a sign of the post-materialist wars.

Expectations on the soldier today are different and he/she is expected to fight for humanity. This theory affects Sweden when asking why to engage in battles and conflicts on the other side of the planet. The decision to deploy for example, the Nordic Battle Group has to be taken both in Brussels and in Stockholm and politicians have to decide when we want to send soldiers with the purpose to help and save humans and when we don't want to. The soldiers have to be motivated to die for humanity and for mankind. Sweden is participating in international missions through the EU, through NATO and through the UN and the same soldiers are often participating in different missions under the command of one of these three. I will later in this essay argue whether these soldiers change their motives when acting under different flags.

### 1.3 Method and Material

This qualitative essay will be built on literature and on empirical texts relevant to the Swedish situation. I will try to understand the broader perspective of the current change and connect that change to the Swedish case. The subject chosen is a subject that can be found being discussed world wide when being about institutional change and Armed Forces. This particular case focus will be on the Swedish Armed Forces current change in an era of globalisation and new-thinking.

It may seem difficult to catch the subject since it can occur very broad but I will demarcate it to the Swedish changes only. What I have chosen to look at is in a way a subjective decision. They are the ones that seemed most relevant to me. The same kind of study could be conducted in other European Countries and in other countries in the world and similar results may be found.

I was from the start interested in the individual soldiers' choice when joining Swedish military mission abroad but quite soon understood that this was mostly connected to the current change the Armed Forces are dealing with at the moment.

I will look at the worldwide change and try to see what is connected to it and how the Armed Forces is affected by it. The subject chosen is highly relevant in these days and it is also highly relevant to the subject of Peace and Conflict studies.



The first wave of reform in Sweden came about a decade ago and was at the time most visible through the decreasing number of conscripts. When the Nordic Battle Group is ready for deployment in January 2008, this marks another step toward a new military and another step towards an integrated international military.

Many researchers are writing on the subject but what I am trying to investigate is the connection between the huge change and what is really influencing it. My goal is that this will give the reader, not a new view, but a complement perspective to other literature and to all articles that frequently hits us in media. This essay is of a descriptive and explaining art. You may categorise it as a kind of effect-analysis, which is to understand the consequences of something. (Teorell & Svensson 2006:27-28) The globalisation process for example, serves as a variable that is influencing another variable namely the change in the Swedish Armed Forces. Many media articles is about the current change in Sweden and I will use these as well as books, to in a sensitive way search for a way to explain what is going on. I mentioned that media articles and material from the Swedish Armed Forces will serve as empirical material and so is the case, but I will use texts from the Armed Forces with extra caution since I believe these articles might be more positive to the Armed Forces compared to other material.

My understanding is that the Swedish Armed Forces are in a great deal influenced by external trends and events outside the country's borders in other ways and that Sweden as a relatively small country follows larger countries choices to reform.

Something is affecting something else. Teorell writes about cause and effect and he is using Humes pool balls as an illustration. One ball hits another one and creates a reaction of some kind, simply explained. (Teorell & Svensson 2006:60). But to assume that pool balls in the same situation would react the same way every time another ball hits it is wrong and this can also be thought of as the differences between the changes in different countries and their way to reform their Armed Forces. Further more, by looking at other countries reformations we could get a hint of what the development in Sweden will be like.

In chapter 2 I focus on the external changes and in chapter 3 I will connect these to the Swedish case and also make use of a few relevant conceptions. In chapter 4 I will discuss the subject and connect it to my research question.

## 2 External Changes

The word globalisation is a very wide conception. It is a process, which is inflicting many different areas, not the least, the economic sector. I believe that the influence external processes have on a country's Armed Forces is huge and decides that country's military agenda. That it is external variables that are influencing the Armed Forces can easily be understood when thinking about the historical purpose of the Armed Forces, to defend the country against other countries armies. Since borders play a decreasing role today than before, the old threat against our territorial integrity is no longer something that is high on the military agenda.

Countries are affecting each other toward reformation. Threats that were earlier affecting countries (like the threat from the Soviet Union) are no longer there in the same extension. The last 20 years the communication and information technology has developed enormously and emails, Internet and faxes have especially the last 10 years influenced worldwide networks. Kaldor points out that some scientists argues that the globalisation process is not a new phenomenon and also that the process hasn't stopped yet so that the future for globalisation is not decided. (Kaldor 1999:83)

Joseph Nye is one of many who argue that the globalisation process is not a new phenomenon but points out that today's globalisation is faster, deeper and cheaper then before and the mutual interdependence has increased. (Nye 2004:249)

### 2.1 The Military-Industrial Complex and the Economy

I mentioned that economies are more bound to each other through international networks. It seems necessary to understand how networks are bound to each other in the military-economic area as well. The military industrial complex is a phenomenon that describes the integration between the Armed Forces and the industry producing its weapons and other material.

The military is dependent on the industry and the opposite. One economic event in a geographical area may affect for example the military in countries somewhere else through complex networks. To understand changes in the world, we have to understand in what way the increasing interdependence may become a source of power. (Nye 2004:249-253)

Karlsson points out that if a country decides to buy a weapon system from another country, the buyer might end up tied to the seller for a longer time since the buyer becomes tied to that special weapons system. (Karlsson 2004:156)

An example of how Sweden fits in the MIC (military-industrial complex) is through its JAS 39 Gripen project. Fundamental parts in this very high-tech fighter jet are being produced in the United States. It is therefore of interest to the Swedish Air Force and the Armed Forces to maintain a good relationship with United States to get these parts when needed. To maintain a good relationship with that country involves selling them weapons produced in Sweden. It is a game of high politics with big budgets involved. The countries buying JAS also become bound to Sweden for spare parts and consultation.

(For further reading on the MIC see Svante Karlssons Freds- och Konfliktkunskap page 133-170 or <http://www.militaryindustrialcomplex.com/> )

In an interview with the present Swedish Minister of Defence, Mikael Odenberg, he is telling how fantastic Sweden is since we have developed and produced our own submarines, tanks and airplanes, but points out that this is not a realistic way to continue. Instead it is more important to cooperate with other countries. (Insats och Försvar 2007:2:21) The Swedish weapons industry is connected to Sweden's neutrality politics. We had to produce our own weapons to be able to stay neutral. To buy weapons from someone would be to take sides.

Today the Swedish weapon export is higher than ever before; it's just that we are no longer neutral and with no further need for a national weapons-industry. The motive to have an advanced weapon industry to be able to be neutral doesn't last anymore. (Svenska Freds och Skiljedomsförening)

The supreme commander Håkan Syrén, argues that the old military organisation was built up to defend Sweden against an invasion. Therefore it was necessary to carry stocks of material and weapons and since being neutral, the Swedish industry had to provide the military with whatever they needed. The problem today, as he sees it, is that we are bound to the long-term orders on material in combination with a decreasing defence budget. (Syrén 2004:35) This affects the reformation process in different ways, one of them is that international missions partly have to use material that were meant to be used in an invasion attempt on Sweden, argues Syrén.

Mary Kaldor argues that the old way of conducting war (concerning economics) was with a goal to mobilise as many soldiers as the state budget could afford. Many states produced its own weapons and this affected other areas of productions, which were quite often reduced. In new wars she argues, a very low part of the population is participating and the own production of weapons is small, generally. (Kaldor 1999:105)

I would like to add that Kaldor's focus is often directed towards wars being fought in development countries when she is arguing about the characteristics in new wars, and not that much about the western intervening militaries, one of which, I am focusing on. That being said, it's important to make the connection between wars in development countries and the reformations of the European Armies since this is where most interventions take place.

## 2.2 The end of the Cold War

Changes started to occur after 1989. The Cold War was over and the states in East Europe became independent. An era of globalisation started, which inflicted the Swedish ideas of what tasks, the Armed Forces ought to have.

In the 1990's many regiments were closed in favour of missions abroad. There were no longer a potential threat, coming from Russia to deal with, so the organisation had to change. The realist (Realism) approach was no longer the most important way of thinking when deciding the security agenda. From a realist view, a solidarity action would be nothing but an action taken to show "...novel projection of national military power..." argues Bergman (2004:173)

John Baylis points out that there are the ones believing that international relations will still be as violent as before; the end of the Cold War didn't changed much. Then there are the ones believing that the end of the Cold War has opened up for opportunities to co-operate in global security. (Baylis 2001:253)

An increasing global awareness had been the case after the end of the Cold War, which included an increase in global social movements, and a fragmentation of the nation-states. Baylis 2001:269)

In the beginning of the 90's great optimism concerning solving wars permeated thinking in ongoing conflicts. Issues being discussed in the UN Security Council were no longer being blocked by one of the two former super powers. The amount of peace building missions increased and the duty and responsibility to intervene for the humanitarian purpose was often the case. 'The responsibility to protect' is a conception used to motivate and justify humanitarian interventions.

Unfortunately, the UN was humiliated and places like Rwanda and Srebrenica are examples of total disasters for the UN, argues Kaldor. (Kaldor 1999:127-128) The most important reason to the different failures she argues is because of an inability to understand the logic in new wars and what is inflicting them. (Kaldor 1999:128) The creation of the Battle Groups is said to be a European reaction to the United Nations lack of action.

## 2.3 The European Union

The United Nations has in too many conflicts reacted too slowly. The Rwanda conflict is probably the worst of them.

In The Democratic Republic of Congo, Swedish and French Special Forces fought together in Operation Artemis. In opposite to the Congo operation, an operation that was given less attention was the one in Macedonia in 2003 on an invitation from the Macedonian government. This was the first EU operation ever and the first test of what would become the ERF (European Rapid Reaction Force). (Terriff 2004:150) There's a discussion whether The Congo-operation served as a

starting point or a source of motivation in the motivation of the Swedish participation in the Battle Groups.

Swedish National Television made a documentary about the Nordic Battle Group. Most people in the NBG will come from today's conscripts. That means that most soldiers are in their 20's. The documentary argues whether this is a good way to put together this group when soldiers are supposed to be more like diplomats than like soldiers. An officer gives this strategy critique since older participants/soldiers may solve situations better than young ones when it comes to diplomatic/civilian tasks.

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh was positive to the development of NBG and in the documentary it is being argued that she and others had been inspired of the success in the Dem. Rep. of Congo under Operation Artemis. (SVT, Ung svensk Soldat)

A world-citizenship and cosmopolitan identity values are growing stronger and stronger argues Kaldor. A higher sense of duty with other humans and higher acceptance toward different identities is the case. In international organisations like the European Union a starting point for a world citizenship can be visualized. (Kaldor 1999:101) She points out though, the importance of an organisation like this to be including instead of excluding. This kind of institution (concerning security questions) has to increase its legitimacy and its responsibility to be able to develop a cosmopolitan rule and to be able to authorize legal violence, argues Kaldor. (1999:166) More of European integration can be seen for example in Kosovo too, where Sweden is participating with 440 men and women. (Försvarsmakten, KFOR) (For further reading on the NGB and other current international missions see [www.mil.se](http://www.mil.se))

The TV documentary continues by discussing if the Swedish population have understood that the Nordic Battle Group, most probably will engage in battle and the consequences that follows from battles, especially since they will be the first to be deployed when a conflict breaks out. (SVT, Ung svensk Soldat)

Thomas Christiansen is discussing the European integration. He mentions that the development in the common foreign and security sector is much slower than for example the economic sector where Europe has reached quite a deep regional integration. During the Cold War the European states felt that they had to reach a unification to be able to influence the two superpowers, but also after 1989 they felt a need to unite since most military interventions relied on US participation and even leadership and many of the European States disagreed on many of the policies coming from US. (Christiansen 2001:507-508) We have to remember that there was great optimism regarding international interventions during the 90's (since the bi-polar domination in the world suddenly vanished) and it was important for the EU to speak with one voice to be taken seriously.

*“Even if Nordic internationalism and solidarity have recently come under strain because of the pressures emerging out of a distinctly neoliberal process of globalisation generally, and the sharp rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in Denmark and Norway (recently starkly reflected in the introduction of highly restrictive immigration policies in Denmark) more specifically, it continues*

*to provide a 'leeway for a generative grammar that goes beyond the dictates of states sovereignty'". (Bergman 2004:170)*

Bergman argues whether the globalisation process has influenced the Nordic Countries toward a more internationalist way of thinking or, quite the opposite, that these countries were already before the globalisation process started to be a subject on everybody's tongues, countries with high commitments to solidarity. Solidarity, argues the author, has for a long time being implemented in political culture in these countries through the Social Democratic welfare state. (Bergman 2004:170)

It was the Maastrich treaty in 1993 that resulted in the development of the CFSP, The Common Foreign and Security Policy. (The Council of the European Union) The ability for the European Union to conduct peacekeeping operations as well as humanitarian and rescue operations was the goal. According to "Headline Goal 2010" the union should be able to deploy forces 5-10 days after the political decision has been taken to do so. (Muller-Hansen 2006:10)

The most important component in the development is the 13 battle groups. These forces should be able to be deployed 6000 kilometres away from Brussels and be able to stay in the area for 120 days. Sweden will lead one of these 13 battle groups and will participate with 1100 of the 1500 persons this battle group will exist of. The other countries are Finland, Norway, Ireland and Estonia. The international element in the Swedish conscription increase argues Muller-Hansen. (Muller-Hansen 2006:12) He believes further that the conflicts where the battle groups most likely will be deployed are in Africa. The Swedish participation is voluntary and the decision depends on the current government, a decision has to be taken both in Brussels and by the individual countries governments to send forces. Muller-Hansen writes that Sweden is going toward solidarity with the other countries in Europe, which will conflict with Swedish non-alliance policy. (Muller-Hansen 2006:25)

A system built on economical benefits included in the conscription will make younger people apply for the international service. This will make it easier for the Armed Forces to recruit. The Swedish Defence needs to re-organise itself to afford these international commitments, argues Erikson och Jarlsvik. (Erikson & Jarlsvik 2002:10)

### 3 Internal Changes

The Swedish Supreme Commander, Håkan Syrén, argues that we, only together with other countries forces, should be able to secure the peace today and in the future. At the same time we should be able to defend Sweden on Swedish territory. These two tasks is demanding a reformation of the Armed Forces (Syrén 2004:8) New threats are emerging that are not threatening borders and countries and these new threats are only met through European co-operation which will influence our Armed Forces a lot, Syrén continues. (Syrén 2004:16) What he calls the network-based defence (NBF, nätverksbaserade försvaret) is another part in the Swedish reformation, which is essential to be able to communicate in missions with other countries. A lot is different and new if we compare with the peacekeeping missions the Swedish Armed Forces participated in, in the 50's, which were under UN-mandate.

Our own security is connected to the rest of the world, argues Syrén. (Syrén 2004:18) In a couple of years, Sweden will need about 2500 soldiers for missions abroad where 1500 of them are in the Nordic Battle Group. (Syrén 2004:20) Syrén wants the Swedish law on conscription to remain the primary way to recruit but it has to be adapted to the international security context. (Syrén 2004:44)The Baltic Sea has changed from being a divide between East and West and has today more of a uniting purpose, says Syrén.

In a book by Syrén written two years later, (*Både och*) which is directed to the staff in the Armed Forces, he continues to try to make his employees motivated and engaged in the ongoing reform. An interesting discussion he has is the one about women in the international missions. Through women, he argues, we will be able to reach structures where men aren't aloud.

Kronsell refers to the former defence minister Leni Björklund who argues for a defence organisation that mirrors most people in the society will gain public support. (Kronsell 2007:9) If soldiers in international missions mirror the population where they act this will perhaps make their missions easier. Perhaps to 'win the hearts and minds of the natives' is what results in success.

The task inside Sweden is to claim the national territory but also to support the society, Syrén argues. Today it is easier for the military to support the police if that is necessary. Another interesting angle which shows that the Armed Forces has been influenced by international trends is that it is even more important to defend our democratic values and economic freedom than the national territory says Syrén. (Syrén 2006:44) Syrén's book contains loads of; we have to do this and we have to do that to reach our goals, which shows that there are many steps left in the reformation process.

### 3.1 The Cosmopolitan Soldier

In 2001 Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, argued that Sweden would no longer be seen as a neutral state. This would affect the way soldiers and battalions are acting in international missions. A Swedish soldier has always seen himself or herself in the light of a “just warrior”. In the new security era the Swedish soldier will perhaps continue to look at himself as a just warrior, fighting for democratic values and so on, but in an international context. (Kronsell & Svedberg 2006:152)

Nowadays the Swedish defence has to face threats inside Sweden as well as outside the country instead of just facing threats connected to the Swedish border.

One could question whether the military can play a dual part, both as servants of cosmopolitan values and as defenders of the state. This subject is partly the building block throughout Elliot and Cheesemans book, *Forces For Good*.

To save a stranger far away from your own country will require different individual motives to engage in battle than the motives to save your country and your fellow citizens like the Swedish Armed Forces historically have been used to. (Elliot & Cheeseman 2004:4) “The cosmopolitan soldier is expected to ‘represent, in person, the new citizens of the emerging global community’ rather than the particularistic interests of the nation-state of their co-nationals.” (p 5) The cosmopolitan soldier is also being forced to literally sacrifice or at least risk him or herself to save a total stranger. Cosmopolitan ideals are replacing the old patriotism.

A good example of a non-cosmopolitan action is the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 writes Elliott. (Elliott 2004:27) NATO participated in that war by dropping bombs from Fighter Jets, 10.000 feet up in the air. In other words, the countries participating in Kosovo were not willing to send their soldiers to die for a stranger.

It is impossible not to think of the intervene-or not-intervene-debate when dealing with this subject. We most often have to weight the importance of state sovereignty versus violations against human rights and democratic values. It is important at least to have a clue about the ongoing debate.

The military is in a way re-inventing itself from a “force in being” to a “civilianised military” argues Elliott (p 27). This may quite easily be applied to the Swedish case, which, in a way, is telling us that the Swedish Armed Forces are not different from any other military organisation.

A quite interesting discrepancy I found in the book (*Forces For Good*) is the difference between missions with Swedish participants under European Union- flag and missions carried out under the United Nations or the NATO. It is all about being more or less cosmopolitan actually. The participants in the Nordic Battle Group and the participants in other international military missions will perhaps in great extent be the same individuals.

A cosmopolitan military is not the case under EU-flag since the ERRF (European Rapid Reaction Force) purposes are to “...stabilise closely located crises that may adversely affect the internal stability or security of the Union”, it is



being argued. (Terriff 2004:162) The EU is called a hybrid institution because its actions may look cosmopolitan but are only really conducted because of self-interest of the Union and of the nation states in it. Individuals serving the ERF may be more loyal to their own countries than toward other European soldier-friends. (p 162) So; missions under EU-flag are not cosmopolitan, but what about missions under the UN?

Annika Bergman argues later in the same book (*Forces For Good*) that the Nordic countries with their long tradition of participation in UN missions more than anyone else could claim to be cosmopolitan. With a sense of international duty the Nordic militaries are forces for good. (Bergman 2004:168)

I have to add that there's a difference between the Nordic countries as well, concerning their military organisation and this will be better understood after reading chapter 3.2. What does this make Sweden, both cosmopolitan and not cosmopolitan (but particularistic), at the same time? To be cosmopolitan or not can not just change from day to day. Either you feel for humanity and feel that you can sacrifice/risk your life for strangers, or you just don't.

Since 1948, 72 Swedes have died during international missions. Out of these 72, 10 have died in battle related situations, 7 in the Dem. Rep. Of Congo in the 1960's. (Säkerhetspolitik.se) The last time Sweden lost soldiers was in Afghanistan in 2005.

Annika Kronsell argues, similar to Annika Bergman, that Sweden is one of the first countries to reform its defence agenda to one with cosmopolitan values. She put lots of effort into gender and homosexuality-issues among the organisation's staff. (Kronsell 2007:2) If the military organisation mirrors the population it will be easier to achieve support for the military from the people. National identity is no longer connected with conscription, argues Kronsell. She questions though, if the new military will obtain the same kind of wide support it had during the era of neutrality. (Kronsell 2007:9)

The demands on today's soldiers are different from before. There is a discussion going on among the academics, on how the soldier in international missions becomes more and more of a civilian and less of a military, like fire-fighters putting out sudden fires.

Christopher Coker argues that the military is developing to a civilianised military. He uses John Keegan, who says that soldiers are not like other men and that militaries historically has existed parallel to the civilian life without really belonging to the civilian world. Coker continues and argues that a post-modern society has changed the relation between the state, the people and the army and that a "...the revenge of civil society..." will lead the military towards a civilianisation where the military holds civilian and humanitarian values. (Coker 2002:91-93)

He continues by arguing that the military no longer plays a role as a nation builder, through conscription mostly. Instead, the military is becoming more and more democratised from the inside of the organisation. "...the soldier is being required to act more and more like a citizen." (Coker 2002:94) Through new forms of interdependence within the civil society and through more individual autonomy and diversity, a new soldier has developed, a more humane one. (p 96)

Coker argues in another book called *Waging Wars Without Warriors* that the future battles will be distanced from real life and replaced by technical instruments making warfare and battles post-human. Wars will no longer be of an existential purpose. (Coker 2002:160-161) Coker points out though, that this is not a prediction of the future but a way to approach the development of western warfare. (p 194) This is another kind of development of the Armed Forces.

It should be added that unmanned airplanes are being tried out and developed by Saab (in Sweden) as we speak, but this is so far a very small part of the reformation of the military. (Ny Teknik, 2005)

I would argue that the risk of being hurt or killed in international missions has historically been low for Swedish personnel abroad, compared to other countries. This kind of thinking may still be dominating when applicants enthusiastically applies to join missions. This is probably connected with how UN is looked upon by citizens where missions are conducted. Lately this has changed and UN is more often engaged in battles instead of just showing their presence.

## 3.2 Conscription for who and what for?

The largest and most visible change in the reformation process is probably the change of the number of conscripts educate. Since this number has decreased a majority of the regiments has been closed and many officers have been without work.

Håkan Syrén has through brochures directed to his staff at the Armed Forces, tried to explain the ongoing change the Armed Forces are dealing with. In the book “Både och, en liten bok om dubbla uppgifter och framtidens krav” Syrén is explaining the dual tasks the Armed Forces have to be able to deal with.

Most countries in Europe required large conscription armies to defend themselves from the Soviet Union and other states and these grand armies are not needed anymore, argues Joenniemi. (Joenniemi 2006:3)

Joenniemi believes that the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have further contributed to “...an atmosphere of change.” Terms like freedom and human rights are more and more often the reason to conflict instead of sovereignty and territory. (Joenniemi 2006:3) Conscription has served as a uniting source to the nation and a sense of ‘we’ as a nation has come with conscription, Argues Joenniemi. (p 6)

“One might actually claim that the purely military side of general conscription merely stood out as a side-effect in view of the real purpose, that is the welding together of a broad variety of subjects to nationals and likeminded citizens to a nation” (Joenniemi 2006:6)

Joenniemi is talking about Neo-Conscription, a term he seem to be quite alone to use. By Neo-Conscription he tries to explain today’s conscription and what new conscription develops toward. This would be a function between civilian and military purposes. Conscription wouldn’t vanish but at the same time

not remain the way it ones were. Joenniemi 2006:10) The voluntary third semester for Swedish conscripts fits Joenniemi's description. The third semester is voluntary and during this semester the soldier is being trained for foreign missions. Joenniemi quotes Kaldor and she is discussing what she calls the "...social contract at a global level..." (Joenniemi 2006:11) which, as I understand it, is the feeling of belonging to the same world and to feel that it is one's responsibility to create the abilities for everyone to live a good life.

The country that seems to have been abandoned conscription the least is Finland. Perhaps not that strange since it is a country with a long border toward Russia and also with a history of war with that eastern giant. Conscription in Finland is still highly connected to 'Finnishness', what it is like, to be from Finland. (Laitinen 2006:42)

Steps are taken from the concept of pure duty, to more voluntarily and motivated men and women who are the ones needed in the new military. The Armed Forces have to compete with for example the Universities and the whole labour market to get enough soldiers to join their organisation.

Perhaps it is easier to predict where the Swedish development is directing by looking at countries around us. Other countries in Europe, in France for example, the reformation away from conscription has gone quicker than in Sweden. In 1997 France had abandoned conscription armies and implemented (at least theoretically, maybe not fully) a professional army. (Lecomte 2006:77). Why that happened so quickly is perhaps the subject for another essay. At the moment it is enough just to know that the change in France was a lot quicker than in Sweden.

Sweden has historically, in comparison to most other European countries, stayed neutral. This was also the case during the Second World War when Sweden avoided being invaded by Nazi-Germany.

Swedish conscription has been radically reformed, writes Leander. In 1994 the law on defence duty (värnplikt) was replaced by a law called total-defence duty (totalförsvarsplikt) The later one includes everyone that is above 16 and below 70 years old. Why conscription wasn't abandoned, argues Leander, is because of the special relation to other key institutions, both social and political. The neutral policy, Sweden had, has also influenced conscription, which is resting on this neutral terrain. (Leander 2006:119)

A Lieutenant colonel says that "If, by conscription, we understand that a large majority of the male population receives a longer military education, then conscription has de facto been abolished." (Leander 2006:129) Swedish conscription was something that everyone should go through. Today only a few percentages are obliged to serve the Swedish 'crown' so according to the Lt Colonel, Sweden has abandoned conscription already. The number of conscripts has decreased from about 80 per cent during the cold war to about 17 percent in 2005 and decreasing even more to 10 percent in the future. (Leander 2006:129)

Military Sweden points out that conscription is necessary to get enough people for their international engagements. In the end it is the politicians in Sweden that has to decide whether to keep the conscript system or not and they in turn, have to listen to people's wishes and thoughts. In 1999 "...half of the

Swedish population favoured a military recruitment based entirely on voluntary engagement. (Leander 2006:133)

One of Joenniemi's most important conclusions is as partly mentioned before, that conscription is connected to a "broader political project". By that he means that conscription often is connected to national and military identity and is central for the state and the nation. A building block in other words. (Leander & Joenniemi 2006:167) A reformation of conscription in a country is therefore effected and also influenced by other institutions in that country. Even though anchored in the society as well as the other political institutions, the abolishment of conscription is knocking on the door, argues Leander and Joenniemi. (p 172)

### 3.3 Institutional Change

Friis argues that the military institution in Norway in a way is "...ahead of the political establishment..." (Friis 2006:100) The end of the cold war required new thinking; there was no longer a need to defend the country through conscription. Conservatism may partly explain the delays but also that it took time for the new international security situation to be understood by politicians and accepted by the military. The dominating old Realist thinking was replaced by Neo-realism, which meant new actors and new definitions of risk. (Friis 2006:101)

Adaptations to a new international security system seem to be a slow process for countries in Europe, for some countries slower than for others and different countries have reacted differently to the new international security situation. In Norway, the reformation of conscription and the Armed Forces is a few steps ahead of the Swedish reformation. Conscription in Norway, it is being argued in Joenniemi's book, serves as a way to recruit but also as an anchor between the people and the military. (Friis 2006:112) Since Norway is a member of NATO, this has perhaps influenced Norway in a way that hasn't been the case for example Sweden and Finland.

By calling the Swedish conscription a virtuous institution, one can understand that it is deeply rooted in the Swedish society and also connected to the Swedish identity and citizenship. (Leander 2006:120) A discrepancy is made by the same author; between the political and the military Sweden and I will in short explain how. The reason to the division is that it seems easier to explain changes concerning conscription if one knows where the actual pressure for changes comes from. Military Sweden was for example pressing for the introduction of conscription in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Leander 2006:121) The keeping of conscription was also a way for the military to keep getting material and larger budgets, in the end decided by political Sweden. (p 122) By looking at individual rights, social hierarchies and politics Joenniemi shows the connection between the politicians and the military. The change of Swedish conscription, and therefore also the Armed Forces, seems to have occurred without much noise. That this change could happen, it is being argued in Joenniemi's book is because the vagueness of conscription. A vagueness that is

supposed to have influenced both political and military Sweden to reach a consensus. This is also the reason to why today's reforms could pass so easily. (Leander 2006:133)

## 4 Concluding Discussion

Let us view back and look at the research question again. We wanted to understand how the change in the Swedish Armed Forces could be understood. We also wanted to understand what influences this change. There's no given answer to any of my research questions. I have provided the reader with potential explanations. Many issues could be discussed in this thesis and I will discuss the ones I have found most interesting and leave other issues to the reader to think about him or herself.

The three theories I have used comes from; Kaldor, Coker and Joenniemi and these complement each other by approaching the subject from different angles. I later found Cokers arguments slightly vague when writing about the humane soldier and the democratised military. Still, he contributed to the essay in a good way.

To easier explain the change I would argue for a divided view looked at in two different sections. First we have the one that is about the concrete structure and then the other one that is kind of intangible or constructed.

The first one can most easily be seen in the decreasing number of conscripts since the Swedish Armed Forces to a high extent was built on conscription. It can also be seen in fewer regiments and fewer officers employed by the organisation.

The other way of looking at the change is by looking at theoretical conceptions like cosmopolitan values and the conception 'Forces for good'. These conceptions can be assumed to influence politicians, but also the supreme commander and everyone below him in the military hierarchy. These conceptions serves as a source of motivation, which decides the military policy and agenda.

The external changes are influencing the Armed Forces. The end of the Cold War and the increasing integration in the European Union both serves as important variables in the international security context. After the Cold War nothing really happened in the Swedish military organisation. Perhaps politicians and the military institution was too used to the invasion-threat that this new context was hard to understand. Then, when the common foreign and security policy started to develop in Europe, the Swedish military found a way to motivate its own existence for the politicians. The Armed Forces had participated in many international missions before and now the army, more then ever before, had its chance to proof that 'we can do this too'.

A huge problem in the reformation process is how to recruit motivated and qualified soldiers for the new missions abroad. Because of this, conscription changed from being a duty to a voluntarily activity. At the moment it seems impossible to fully abandon conscription and therefore the structure of

conscription have changed. As soon as the Armed Forces have developed effective ways to recruit soldiers, I believe that conscription will vanish.

Conscription is connected to public support for the Armed Forces. I would argue though, that today's conscription in Sweden should at least be called something else. It is no longer an obligatory part in young men and women's lives to defend Sweden; instead the old and publicly approved conscription-concept is used to recruit people to a more and more professional-like army.

I find the cosmopolitan discussion, applied on the Swedish case a bit contradictory. Some argue that the Nordic countries are more cosmopolitan than others, while some argue that the European Union is an organisation that is only looking after its own interests when participating in international military missions. Swedish soldiers participate in both European missions, NATO-missions and UN missions and these soldiers are quite often the same ones shifting from mission to mission. Therefore, I don't believe in the pure Swedish cosmopolitan motives. I guess that the realist (theory) in me dominates my thinking at least concerning this subject and I don't find it hard to find Swedish motives for, not only participating in the Nordic Battle Group, but also to in fact lead it that are not of cosmopolitan nature; the commercial motive is one example. It sounds really good to claim that we are there to save the lives of people we don't even know.

I am going to make a quite controversial comparison. Sweden has a history of being a country that is giving a lot of aid and donations to developing countries. Many of these countries are today well-established business partners to Swedish companies. One could argue that these contributions served a purpose, to let the world know that there's exists a country up north somewhere, which should be thought of. My believe is that there's another reason than the feeling for other peoples when participating in international missions. The reason for participating in the European battle groups could be that the Swedish governments feel that this is necessary to be heard and respected in a growing organisation.

When discussing that the world peace has to be reached through participation in international missions one could add that the terrorist threat against Sweden has increased because of our military presence in Afghanistan (SVT Nyheter, 2007) What I am trying to say is that the argument that the Swedish Armed Forces way to protect the Swedish citizens through missions abroad perhaps is wrong. The threat against Sweden is increasing instead decreasing because of our presence in Afghanistan. It is therefore probably a good thing that the military will be able to give assistance to the police again even if I thought that strategy was tried out and heavily opposed to, after the Ådalen-events in 1931!

Further more, if soldiers are able to protect both their countries own territory as well as participating in peacekeeping and peace forcing missions what should they be called it not professional armies?

Something else that I found interesting is the lack of discussion about what the Swedish Armed Forces tasks should do. Some critique came from officers when regiments were shut down but if we compare this huge change to how much

it has been discussed in public I don't think it is enough. Perhaps the military establishment has gone in advance of the politicians.

## 4.1 What does the future hold for the Armed Forces?

Are we in the middle of a reformation process or has it just started? Well, we have already seen huge changes compared to the static organisation the Swedish Armed Forces has been last hundred years. Conscription will perhaps be totally abandoned and perhaps the theoretical motives of participating in wars will be different.

This Bachelor Thesis has been focusing on the current change in the Swedish Armed Forces and how this change may be understood. The change can be viewed from different angles. From the military's own view, the change was necessary for its future existence.

If I could continue this research I would look at the way decisions has been taken by the politicians. I would also analyse the connection between the military and the government more in detail.

I will with interest follow the development of the Armed Forces, both as a student in Peace and Conflict studies and as a Swedish citizen to see where we are heading. The deployment of the Nordic Battle Group in January 2008 is the next big step in the reformation process and will most probably bring both positive and negative consequences.

What will defence minister Mikael Odenberg say when the dust from dead soldiers is flown back to Sweden? This will be the case; it's just a question of when...



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