

# **Final reports on deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden**

# **Report by the Finnish Defence Forces and the Swedish Armed Forces**

## **1 Background**

In this joint final report the Finnish Defence Forces and Swedish Armed Forces present possibilities for deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden. The analysis has been made in accordance with the Action Plan, signed by the Defence Ministers of Finland and Sweden on 6 May 2014, and has been divided into six focus areas.

The overall assessment at military level is that bilateral cooperation as a whole is well worth doing and gives a significant signal to the surrounding region. If implemented, the recommendations will have an effect on long term development for both nations' armed forces.

Political decisions on widening the cooperation to include both crises and conflicts would increase operational value significantly and avoid unnecessary investments in national redundancy arrangements.

A secure communications network along with information exchange equipment is the key enabler of effective cooperation at all levels.

It is also recommended that external communications be managed at the political level.

The report focuses on both a short and a long term perspective. Benefits stemming from deepened cooperation are operational effect and improved quality rather than increased cost efficiency and savings, at least in the short term. In several focus areas it is estimated that there will be a need for investments in order to fulfil the gain.

## **2 Objectives**

The long term commitment to deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden aims for better security in a regional context and strives for the better use of resources and cost-efficiency in defence-related areas. Furthermore, the cooperation increases interoperability and the capability to act jointly both domestically and internationally.

Based on the already close defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden, the cooperation will be realized both bilaterally as well as within existing forums such as NORDEF, the EU, NATO or the UN, and hence supplement other multinational cooperation.

The international and domestic communication of the objectives and content of the deepened bilateral cooperation between Sweden and Finland will be closely coordinated.

To identify cooperation possibilities at military level, six bilateral working groups, i.e., focus areas, have completed their feasibility studies.

Each service (Navy, Air Force and Army) was tasked to develop a vision including a roadmap with the aims, timeline and objectives of the deepened bilateral defence cooperation. The Navy and Air Force focus areas, with their already long standing cooperation in the field of training and

exercises, emphasised possibilities for a common base infrastructure, combined units and the capability to transfer the Operational Control (OPCON) of units. The Army focus area concentrated on cooperation within exercises, education and training.

Focus area Logistics and materiel procurement was tasked to conduct common feasibility studies, concerning for example a new surface combatant, joint outsourcing and deepened bilateral cooperation in maintenance of services and future capability development.

The aim of focus area Combined units was, in coordination with the services, to look for possibilities to develop and train combined units for participation in international exercises, operations as well as for force registers in the United Nations, the European Union (Battle Group) and NATO (NATO Response Force, NRF).

A key element for success in defence cooperation is the ability to exchange classified information. The focus area for secure communications was established to present a plan for secure communications between tactical, operational and strategic levels. The task was to produce a roadmap with aims, a timetable and objectives for the implementation including the use of tactical data links.

### 3 Key findings

Bilateral Swedish-Finnish defence cooperation has had a good start where common interests in improved exercises and surveillance cooperation have contributed to a comprehensive view for future development. The level and quality of future operational cooperation will be determined by the depth of the bilateral agreements, the political mandate and legal arrangements. Presented below are some of the key findings from each area.

#### 3.1 Navy

The ongoing bilateral naval cooperation has contributed to a comprehensive vision and road map for future development. The Swedish-Finnish Naval Task Group (SFNTG) concept covers all areas of cooperation between the two navies. The main effort of the SFNTG vision 2023 is to find cost-effective and smart ways to utilize the two navies' operational capabilities and capacities into available forces in order to meet today's and tomorrow's security challenges. The SFNTG will be a bilateral tool for different levels of crisis prevention and management in maritime and littoral environments and it will focus on the military approach and the use of capabilities.

The end state of the vision is to have a bilateral standing Naval Task Group prepared to conduct operations up to Protection of Shipping Operation. This means protection of activities or objects in order to uphold security and the freedom of movement at sea and in needed land areas. The higher aim of operations is in general to support military or civilian operations or activities on land. To establish sea control is an implicit means of protection of shipping by denying a counterpart the ability to use the sea.

“Standing” means that the Task Groups are fully trained, equipped and have promulgated and implemented all necessary plans, orders and SOPs in order to carry out the stated type of operation (in this case - *Protection of Shipping Operation*). “Standing” does not specify a certain state of readiness; this will be decided later pending political and military ambition.

In order to reach the agreed vision, the following concrete areas for naval cooperation have been identified; Command and Control, Information and Intelligence, Engagement, Sustainability, Protection, Planning, Force Generation/Organisation, Doctrine/Interoperability, Training and Exercises, Equipment and Procurement, Personnel and, last but not least, Logistics and Infrastructure.

#### Mutual use of base infrastructure

This is defined as an ability to use each other's naval bases and facilities to provide logistic support. Using each other's base infrastructure could enable the more flexible use of forces in other areas of operation. For example, a Finnish unit operating in the Southern Baltic could use a Swedish base or a Swedish unit operating in the Gulf of Finland could use a Finnish base.

#### Enhanced cooperation on exercises

In order to have a more long term planning perspective for national and bilateral exercise planning, the two navies have agreed to establish a quadrennial plan. The agreed plan will be used in the two national ways of conducting exercise planning and funding.

Anti-Submarine Warfare exercises are included in the quadrennial exercise plan as an integral part of naval exercises.

There will be a need to exchange officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) at all levels from Maritime Component Command to unit level, in order to build confidence in each other by learning the other's way of doing business and culture.

## 3.2 Air Force

The Finnish and Swedish Air Forces' vision is to form a mutually supported and partly integrated Finnish-Swedish air force able to enhance regional security by providing air power. Deep cooperation would confer on both air forces improved capabilities for operations alone and together under all circumstances as well as capabilities for close cooperation during peacetime.

"Partly integrated or integrated" means that both air forces are interoperable and able to work together to build up common air operation or combined unit for international operations. Both air forces are able to give neighbour nation support for other nation's aircraft and it's possible to build up common operational picture.

The activities cover all air force functions and branches, joint efforts and cooperation requirements to support land and maritime operations, and conversely, the means of army and navy contribution to air operations and an integrated air defence capability.

Three mutually supporting capability aims have been identified. These capability aims mirror tasks and milestones in the respective functional areas.

- The aim of a **common air operations** capability is defined as the full spectrum of air operation capabilities in order to achieve air supremacy, contribute to providing joint effects and provide air support to land and maritime operations within an Area of Operation (AO).
- The aim of a **common base operations** capability is defined as an ability to use main and forward operating bases and provide cross service to support quick force deployment and dispersed operations within an AO.

- The aim of a **common command and control (C2)** capability is defined as ability to command and control air and base operations and manage sensors and communications in order to provide situational awareness and support for analysed decisions at different levels.

A key enabler of these aims is a secure communications network and associated information exchange equipment.

To reach the desired aims and objectives described above several areas or actions for cooperation were identified (including secure communications). These areas consist of education, training and exercising, and some are enablers while others are milestones that boost operational capabilities. However, all areas lead towards the aims and end state, either alone or linked together.

### 3.3 Helicopter operations

Focus area Air Force has also looked into cooperation possibilities concerning helicopter operations and the main findings were that for a small operator, the support of a helicopter unit in an international crisis management operation is a big effort. In fact, when deployed, such a unit would drain the domestic operations of even a large nation. A common unit established jointly by Finland and Sweden could enable this important contribution with affordable effort.

Another finding was that operational cooperation in cross border support of other authorities would enable quicker response, wider capability and better aerial coverage for both countries. There is also room for the better use of national assets such as existing repair and overhaul capabilities and training media. Their use would result in the better use of existing investments.

### 3.4 Army

The main mission of Army cooperation is to develop a combined Finnish - Swedish Brigade Framework. This is to include force integration and interoperability via a common exercise platform (Command Post Exercises and Live Exercises) in order to prepare forces to be used, if so decided, for crisis management operations and national defence purposes.

Developing situational awareness between the armies' Tactical Operational Centres (TOC), Brigade/Battle Group-level force structure and combined Forward Air Control (FAC) training and education are examples of capabilities that will significantly enhance Finnish and Swedish capacities to be used in crisis management operations and for national defence purposes.

### 3.5 Logistics

The deepened logistic cooperation between Finland and Sweden is a long term commitment and the aim is to optimize the use of resources, common procurements, increase interoperability and achieve capability for combined action both domestically and internationally. This is done through cooperation in development, production and the sustainment of systems identified by the operational users as particularly relevant in bilateral activities.

The core objectives of armaments cooperation are in general

- a) operational - to increase military effectiveness through interoperability,
- b) economic - to reduce weapons acquisition costs by sharing costs or avoiding duplication of

development efforts,

c) technical - to access the best defence technology and help minimise the capabilities gap.

The logistics and armaments cooperation facilitates the operational cooperation. To ensure maximal economic gain the armaments cooperation actively seeks other cooperation items beyond explicit service branch requirements where cooperation can give added value.

Secondary objectives of this nature are e.g. Security of Supply issues, External Resource Management and Coordinated Procurement striving for benefits through economy of scale.

Annual meetings between the chiefs of logistics and armaments and senior national representatives within procurement organizations are also recommended.

### **3.6 Secure communications**

At present Finland and Sweden do not have secure lines of communications at strategic and political level, with the exception of diplomatic courier. With the new ambition of deeper defence cooperation it is therefore important to establish new possibilities for exchanging classified information. Focus area secure communications recommends that secure connections are established at political, strategic and operational level. At tactical (service) level the aim is to support the decided actions within the respective focus area.

To be able to coordinate work and avoid sub-optimization between the different focus areas, work should be conducted according to normal principals where C4ISR<sup>1</sup> departments are responsible for the secure communications. POCs appointed by C4ISR departments are to coordinate and synchronize respective focus areas' work regarding secure communications.

Existing structures and agreements should be utilised as much as possible in order to avoid excess costs and administration.

### **3.7 Combined Units**

Combined units are to develop a common baseline for crisis-management operations, which includes bilateral planning for the operations, common force packages, pre-deployment training, command and control of the operations, logistic concepts and actions for crisis management operations.

Focus area combined units will also provide strategic-level support, when needed, to the services (Army, Air Force and Navy).

## **4 Opportunities**

### **4.1 Navy**

#### Increased operational capability.

Deepened cooperation will increase the knowledge base thanks to the enhanced exchange of

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<sup>1</sup> C4ISR = Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

experiences and best practices. It will also allow for the possibility to operate with bigger units and utilise better target activities (e.g., submarines in anti-submarine warfare exercises and air targets in anti-air warfare exercises). The use of each other's base infrastructure will enable the more flexible use of forces in other areas of operation and situational awareness will be improved due to the higher level of information exchange. The cooperation will therefore also enable better execution of national duties (surveillance and protection of integrity).

#### Increased interoperability.

By using standard procedures and English language, instead of national procedures, the interoperability and operational effect will increase, but the importance of understanding each other's native tongue should not be underestimated.

## **4.2 Air Force**

In the short term mainly operational advantages from deepened cooperation between the air forces will be seen. Improved operational capabilities will increase security in a regional context, enable the flexible use of resources and can bring increased cost-efficiency.

Although achieving the proposed aims will take a long time, a number of activities can be initiated at earliest opportunity to achieve quick and operationally relevant benefits, for instance a common recognised air picture (RAP) and secure communications.

Attention to capability development in the short term is necessary and can provide significant benefits in the long term perspective. Capabilities that would benefit from coordinated or mutual development include: long-range precision strike, air command and control, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance, ground based air defence, and forward operating base units.

## **4.3 Army**

The analysis has concentrated on topics that could significantly improve both armies' interoperability, operational capabilities and moreover facilitate the cost effectiveness of their national efforts. Facilitating cooperation within the Brigade Framework will significantly enhance the use of Finnish and Swedish military capacities in crisis management operations and for national defence purposes.

Sharing information on capability development plans may enable complementary capability development, greater interoperability and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication or overlap of capabilities. Tactical-operational-level live and staff exercises, combined winter, urban terrain and forward air control training are examples of training that would benefit from coordinated or mutual development.

## 4.4 Log

### Operational Logistics

The level of operational support through commonalities in operational logistics support will potentially be significantly more capable through cooperation. This is brought by the enabling factors of geographical distribution, licensed and skilled personnel and timely response. Cooperation in operational logistics enables longer and more effective operational activities for all identified platforms and contributors. The value is not necessarily dependant on the commonality of the platform itself. This aspect can be valid in all threat scenarios, including crisis management operations.

### Security of Supply

When it comes to both the security of supplies and services, cooperation increases the level of security. The effect is most significantly achieved with common systems using common parts, but the value can also be gained with diverse systems using common spare parts. The industrial base in both countries can have a positive reach back to the security of supply, where through cooperation, the formerly only national supply capability can be guaranteed for the partner. Another form of security of supply can be reached by dispersing the in-house stock, i.e. flexibly using both nations' physical warehouses for a virtual mutual supply.

### Economical

The most obvious benefit is reached through the economy of scale factor, where by synchronising both requirements and timings, larger consignments can be ordered with better conditions and contracts. This means that even small-scale harmonisations of technical requirements may have beneficial effects at a later stage. Another positive economical effect is reached by information-sharing and benchmarking, where valuable lessons reported to each other leads to better decisions on procurements and avoidance of a duplication of costly mistakes or errors in market approach. A third significant factor is strategic sourcing of the defence industry market. The external resource management conducted in cooperation leads to significantly stronger positions as buyers, due to the different positions of the two nations in the market. The strength one of the nations has in some market niche can be used by both and the strength of the other can be used in another niche, maximizing the advantage for both.

## 4.5 Secure communications

One of the biggest advantages is that it will allow for the immediate possibility to communicate through secure communications when needed. This will allow for the more effective use of time and money.

Knowledge-sharing could shorten the time between C2-procurement and full operational capability.

The use of common solutions could create cost effectiveness and also further develop joint methods.

## 4.6 Areas of further study

It is recommended that possibilities of deepening the cooperation between the national defence courses organized by the Finnish National Defence University and Swedish National Defence College be explored.



Concerning cooperation possibilities relating to the Cyber dimension, the exchange of information between Sweden's and Finland's military Computer Emergency Response Teams is proposed. This information exchange should focus on sharing information on malware threats and other actor-driven threats against IT systems. Further Cyber cooperation possibilities can be studied.

Other possible areas of cooperation are Ground-based Air Defence, Joint Fires and other joint functions.

## 5 Challenges

As always in multinational cooperation there are challenges related to differences in legislation and regulations which must be tackled at the appropriate level in order to reach the high level ambition. Some immediate regulatory and harmonising actions are required to pave the way for deepened bilateral cooperation.

In order to get the full effect from the deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden, it is estimated that it would initially require additional personnel and financial resources. Otherwise the deepened cooperation has to be facilitated by allocating and focusing already existing resources, with the risk that national priorities will prevail and the effect of the cooperation will be delayed.

Another challenge is that one has to be aware of cultural and practical differences. In the bilateral cooperation between Finland and Sweden it becomes obvious that the respective systems of the armed forces are different. The Finnish system is based on conscription and Sweden uses only professional forces. Differences in systems can pose challenges in terms of readiness.

Furthermore, a secure communications network along with information exchange equipment is a key enabler of effective cooperation at all levels. It is crucial that regulations for classified information exchange are defined, approved and implemented prior to entering deeper cooperation.

When deepening one cooperation area, there is the risk of creating sub-optimization regarding the duplication of work in other cooperation, whether bilateral or within organisations such as NORDEFCO, the EU and NATO. It is important not to start any parallel work and to utilise already existing cooperation areas. In several ongoing cooperation areas the same personnel deals with the questions at hand and no additional resources are made available just because a decision has been made to deepen cooperation.

## **Report from the Finnish Ministry of Defence and the Swedish Ministry of Defence**

The Action Plan adopted by the defence ministers in May 2014 states three areas on ministry level where possibilities for deepened cooperation should be studied. A joint preliminary report on feasible cooperation areas was delivered in October 2014 and a final report by January 2015. The political decisions concerning deepened bilateral cooperation in specific areas both at the MoD and Defence Forces level will be made continuously starting in February 2015 or at a time when defence ministers agree upon initiating work within a specific area.

The following actions have been taken at the areas studied at the Mod level:

### **1. Develop appropriate communications in order to facilitate secured connections at different levels of cooperation, including a secure VTC link.**

The aim is to establish secured connections on both armed forces level and ministry level. A working group on defence forces level is currently studying different options. It would be preferable if the ministries could use the same solution as the defence forces and for now such a solution seems possible. A timeline for implementation remains to be decided but the initial estimation by the armed forces is that a solution could be in place during 2015. There is a need for both a secure VTC as well as encrypted phone lines. The costs associated with installation and different technical solutions will be presented later.

### **2. Revitalize the personnel exchange between Ministries of Defence.**

A personnel exchange programme between the Swedish and Finnish MoD:s was established during the late 1990s and resulted in an exchange of six co-workers in total. The latest exchange took place in 2009 when Finland sent personnel to Sweden during the Swedish presidency of the EU.

A revitalization of the exchange offers a way to enhance the mutual understanding of each other's administrations and would help to realize the other cooperation areas stated in the action plan. In view of these advantages the aim is to have the exchange up and running during 2015.

Flexibility must be the guiding principle when deciding on time scale, purpose and legal arrangements of the exchange.

Current agreements are to be looked in to and updated if needed. The aim is to begin the exchange programme during fall 2015 at the latest.

### **3. Cooperation on studies concerning issues such as common challenges and defence cooperation**

Closer cooperation in the area of studies is possible on both ministry level and between agencies (Swedish Defence Research Institute, FOI and Finnish Defence Research Institute). Policy relevant

analysis, including the development of the European security environment and Russian military policy are of mutual interest and interesting study objects on both levels.

During 2015 two joint research seminars are planned, one in each country.