

# POST-NEUTRAL OR PRE-ALLIED?

Finnish and Swedish Policies on the EU  
and NATO as Security Organisations

Tapani Vaahtoranta  
Faculty Member  
Geneva Center for Security Policy  
email: [t.vaahtoranta@gcsp.ch](mailto:t.vaahtoranta@gcsp.ch)

Tuomas Forsberg  
Director  
Finnish Institute of International Affairs  
email: [tuomas.forsberg@upi-fiia.fi](mailto:tuomas.forsberg@upi-fiia.fi)



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Tapani Vaahtoranta - Tuomas Forsberg

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### Finland and Sweden: Twins, Sisters, or Cousins?

At the beginning of the 21st century – a decade after the end of the Cold War – two major developments characterise the transformation of the European security landscape. The first development is the NATO enlargement and its evolving strategic concept that was applied in the Kosovo conflict. The second is the EU enlargement and the construction of the European security and defence policy (ESDP) for the European Union in close contact with NATO. Each and every country in Europe is forced to outline their interests and stance towards these developments.

The developments are of a great significance to Finland and Sweden. These two Nordic countries that were neutral during the Cold War, but joined the European Union in 1995, have had to ask themselves how to influence and adjust to the development of the common security and defence policy of the European Union and whether or not to join NATO. Since the Cold War many changes in their policies have already taken place. Both countries participate actively in the decision making within the Union, cooperate with NATO, and are adjusting their military forces to face the increased cooperation in the field of crisis management and to create interoperability with NATO. However, they have remained militarily non-aligned. Despite the fact that both countries have a positive view of NATO as a security organisation, they have not been willing to join the Alliance.

Neither Sweden nor Finland are often considered the main candidates of the next enlargement of NATO. However, the question of NATO membership is publicly debated in both countries and as members of the European Union, they would most likely be swiftly taken into the alliance if they so wished. Joining NATO would not only change the status of Finland and Sweden, but it would affect the entire security political constellation in Northern Europe and create a new long land boundary between the Alliance and Russia. It would increase NATO's presence in the north and bring in two countries whose security political thinking and interests are not always seen as identical with the Alliance. The bolstering of the EU's defence policy, in turn, raises the question to what extent these non-aligned countries can participate in the

key functions without blurring the distinction between military alignment and non-alignment.

The Finnish and Swedish security policies are not identical, but many basic similarities are striking.<sup>1</sup> Both countries called themselves neutrals during the Cold War but have now ceased to regard themselves as being politically “neutral,” as they have committed themselves to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the Union. Both Sweden and Finland support a stronger role for the EU in issues of international security. They are also cooperating closely with NATO and are observers in the Western European Union. Neither Finland nor Sweden has announced its aim to give up military non-alignment and to join NATO, nor accept European security guarantees via the WEU. Yet, both countries have stated that the option of joining an alliance in the future is kept open. The domestic debate is also parallel. In both countries, the current military non-alignment is supported by a majority of the public opinion, but membership in NATO also has its advocates.

These similarities also affect the bilateral relationship. Cooperation on concrete security and defence-related issues between Finland and Sweden has intensified after the end of the Cold War. The foreign and defence ministers have published common articles containing policy initiatives, and the countries have tried to coordinate their actions in the entire field of security from procurements to supplies. The importance of acting together is also emphasised through public statements. In Finland, cooperation with Sweden occupies a central place in the government’s white papers on security and defence. According to the Finnish view, Finland and Sweden are closer to each other in issues of security policy today than they have ever been since 1809 when Sweden lost Finland to Russia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For recent comparative studies on Finland and Sweden, see Pertti Pesonen – Unto Vesa, *Finland, Sweden and the European Union*. Research Report no. 77 (Tampere Peace Research Institute: Tampere 1998); Tapani Suominen – Anders Björnsson (eds), *Det hotade landet och det skyddade. Sverige och Finland från 1500 talet till våra dagar. Historiska och säkerhetspolitiska berättelser* (Atlantis: Stockholm 1999), pp. 209-219; Hanna Ojanen together with Gunilla Herolf and Rutger Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy. Ambiguity at Work*. The Programme on Northern Dimension of the CFSP no. 7 (The Finnish Institute of International Affairs/Institut für Europäische Politik: Helsinki/Bonn 2000). See also Tuomas Forsberg, “Between Neutrality & Membership. Finland’s & Sweden’s Place in the NATO Family” in *NATO 50. Mapping the Future* (Agenda Publishers: London 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Pertti Torstila, “Yhteen ääneen Ruotsin kanssa”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 May 1998.

Despite these similarities, there are also differences. Finnish foreign minister Tarja Halonen, for example, described the countries as “sisters but not twins.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it has often been noted that the two social democratic prime ministers, Paavo Lipponen and Göran Persson, have different approaches to European integration and that they, every now and then, take issue over various questions such as Baltic cooperation or migration policy in public.<sup>4</sup> Yet the differences between Sweden and Finland are not simply a result of personalities, but can be traced back to more permanent factors. Despite the changes since the end of the Cold War, Finland is still bordering on Russia, while Sweden has Finland between itself and Russia. In view of Max Jakobson, geography still has an impact on Finland and Sweden’s security thinking: “At the higher, level Finland and Sweden are closer together than ever before but at the deeper level the geopolitical boundary has not vanished. Finland is still a border country, Sweden’s buffer towards the east.”<sup>5</sup> Finland and Sweden’s historical experiences are also different. Finland has been, in Krister Wahlbäck’s words, the “threatened country”, whereas Sweden has been the “protected” one.<sup>6</sup> Finland fought two wars against the Soviet Union during the Second World War, while Sweden has been in peace with her neighbors for two hundred years. As a result, Finland is more likely to regard Russia as a potential threat than Sweden. By the same token, the national identities of the countries are different. Although both were officially neutral during the Cold War, the tradition is more firmly rooted in Sweden than in Finland.<sup>7</sup>

Many similarities in Finland and Sweden’s policies during the Cold War stemmed from the fact that Finland tended to be dependent on Sweden in security political decision-making. Finland wanted to gain an international position similar to Sweden. This is, however, no longer the case. The collapse of the Soviet Union changed Finland’s international position as its special relationship to its eastern neighbour was normalised by abolishing the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (FCMA). Both countries, being members of the European Union, are on an equal level in many ways. Furthermore, Finland has also recovered from the economic

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Unto Hämäläinen, *Lännetymisen lyhyt historia* (WSOY: Helsinki 1998), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> “Suomen ja Ruotsin pääministerit tyynnyttelivät kiistojaan”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15 January 1998; Erkki Pennanen, “Naapurukset taas eri linjoilla”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12 April 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Max Jakobson, “Suomen ja Ruotsin suhteet”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 14 January 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Krister Wahlbäck, “Uhattu maa ja sen varjeltu naapuri”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 11 February 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Teija Tiilikainen, “Finland och Sverige. Skillnader och likheter i sätten att förstå världen efter det kalla kriget”, in Tapani Suominen – Anders Björnsson (eds), *Det hotade landet och det skyddade*, pp. 209-219.

recession of the early 1990s and no longer looks at Sweden as its ideal societal model. Mergers in the private sector have integrated the economies of the two countries. Paradoxically, some of the differences in their security political thinking derive from the fact that the bilateral relationship between Finland and Sweden is more equal than in the past. If the previous relationship between the countries was characterised by the dependence of Finland on Sweden, Finland is now showing that it can take crucial political decisions without following Sweden. The clearest sign of the current Finnish readiness to act independently of Sweden was the decision to join the EMU. In short, Finland is no longer the poor cousin that needs Sweden to pave the way or the threatened neighbor that desperately needs the protection of Sweden.

In this report, we analyse the current Finnish and Swedish security policy in order to explain what the “post-neutrality” of these countries is and what it is not. Why do Finland and Sweden appear to be willing to accept almost everything else in the field of security cooperation except the collective defence? What is likely to change their view regarding military non-alignment? We focus on both the similarities and differences between the Swedish and Finnish policy by analyzing their policies in general and the attitudes towards NATO and the European Union as security organisations in particular. The report is divided into four parts. First, we start by defining the neutrality of Finland and Sweden during the Cold War. We argue that, despite the popular image of Finland and Sweden as the neutrals of Northern Europe, their neutralities were different due to the different geopolitical positions the countries had in the international system of the Cold War. We also raise the question of the true nature of their neutralities. Second, we focus on the current similarities between the Finnish and Swedish security policy and suggest that Finland and Sweden’s policy share several common characteristics. Third, we argue that even though the Finnish and Swedish policy are in many ways similar, there are also differences. We suggest that these differences are due to the fact that, despite the change, the geostrategic position of Finland and Sweden are not identical, and that Finland and Sweden have different historical experiences. Also, the values related to security policy seem to be different since moralist tendencies tend to be stronger in Sweden than in Finland. We analyse how these differences may be reflected in the official security policy rhetoric of Finland and Sweden, in the debate on security policy in both countries and in the public opinion and how these differences may affect security policy in both countries.

Fourth, we present our interpretation of the Swedish and Finnish policy, define the current relationship between the countries in the field of security, and assess whether and on what conditions Finland and Sweden will change their basic security policy, in particular, with regard to the policy of military non-alignment.

### The Past: Neutrals or “Neutrals”?

Although the Cold War system has radically changed, past experiences and memories still shape the attitude in Sweden and Finland towards the EU and NATO. The understanding of Finland and Sweden’s neutrality in the past also affects the way the current Swedish and Finnish security policy are perceived. Therefore, a closer look at the basis of Finnish and Swedish security policy in the Cold-War era is needed here. Two questions are important. First, what kind of neutrals were Finland and Sweden? Second, what kind of a role did neutrality play in their security policies?

Officially both Sweden and Finland were neutral during the Cold War. However, it is claimed here that despite this common image and the similarities between the Swedish and Finnish policy, their policies were quite different from each other. In brief, the countries pursued different policies of neutrality because their geopolitical positions were different. As a consequence of the Second World War, Finland was left in the Soviet sphere of influence and the Finnish neutrality was a function of the dependence of Helsinki on Moscow. Sweden’s position was clearly different, since Sweden was outside the Soviet sphere of influence. Consequently, the Swedish neutrality differed from the Finnish one.

Sweden’s policy of neutrality is particularly significant here. Since it is regarded as a success story, it still influences the thinking on security in Sweden. As an example, a leading Swedish daily concluded in November 1999 that, since the military non-alignment has enabled Sweden to avoid war in the past, it can do the same even in the future.<sup>8</sup> Sweden’s neutrality dates back to the time when the country lost its status as a Northern great power. Since then, Sweden has experienced a long period of peace. It managed to steer clear of the Crimean War in 1855, the First World War and the Second World War. The policy of neutrality practised since the Second World War



differed from the preceding forms of Swedish neutrality. Sweden developed a strong defence force and emphasised its political position outside the alliances. It was typical of the Swedish policy to criticise publicly both sides of the Cold War conflict. Indeed, Sweden was seen as an example of a truly neutral but active country in the international society.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s, however, this view of Swedish neutrality has changed as a result of new information about what was going on behind the scenes. It is now known that while Sweden was officially pursuing a policy of neutrality, it at the same time made secret preparations for military cooperation with NATO should the Soviet Union have attacked Sweden or perhaps even before such an attack.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it now seems likely that, had the peacetime policy of neutrality failed, Sweden would have cooperated with the West.

There are both official and unofficial sources that provide information about the preparation for cooperation with the West. In 1994, the Commission on Neutrality Policy published its report covering the years 1946-1969. According to the Commission, Sweden assessed that it would need Western assistance to resist a Soviet attack and that the West deemed assisting Sweden to be in its own interest. Thus, preparations for cooperation were made, although Sweden did not take measures in that period for receiving any large-scale direct assistance from NATO, and no formal security guarantee from any Western great powers existed. The emphasis was on indirect assistance. Sweden took measures that would have enabled the United States, in particular, to take military action against targets in the Soviet Union across the Baltic Sea. The most relevant form of such indirect assistance would have been strategic bombing operations against airbases and embarkation ports in the Baltic countries. The Commission identified five steps taken by Sweden to receive the indirect assistance. High-level personal contacts were maintained with key Western

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<sup>8</sup> "Inget behov av Natomedlemskap", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 9 November 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Nils Andrén, *Maktbalans och alliansfrihet. Svensk utrikespolitik under 1900-talet* (Nordstedts Juridik: Stockholm 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm Agrell, *Den stora lögnen i alltför många akter*. 1991; "Had There Been a War..." Preparations for the reception of military assistance 1946-1969". Report of the Commission on Neutrality Policy, *SOU 1994:11* (Graphic Systems AB: Göteborg 1994). See also Ola Tunander, "The Uneasy Imbrication of Nation-State and NATO: the Case of Sweden", *Cooperation and Conflict* vol. 34, no. 2, 1999, pp. 169-204; Kjell Engelbrekt, "Den sjuttonde alliansmedlemmen?", *Internationella Studier* vol. no. 4, 1999, pp. 61-72; and a series of articles based on NATO documents that were published in *Svenska Dagbladet* written by Mikael Holmström: "Sverige levde farligt i 40 år", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 5 October 1999, "Sverige skulle försvara Natobröder", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 October 1999, "Nato var redo försvara Sverige med kärnvapen", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10 October 1999, "Östersjön skulle delas med Nato i krig", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 24 October 1999.

states. Secure means of communications were established with Norway and Denmark making a general coordination of air operations between Sweden and NATO possible. Runways were expanded to enable bombers to make emergency landings in Sweden on their way back from the East. Sweden also coordinated air-surveillance and exchanged air defence intelligence with NATO.<sup>11</sup> These preparations continued until the end of the Cold War. For example, the communication links with Norway and Denmark were modernised as late as in the end of the 1980s and Swedish personnel stayed until the end of the decade at secret headquarters in Britain that were established for an exile government.<sup>12</sup>

The cooperation between Sweden and NATO was not only based on the Swedish wish to receive outside assistance, but NATO was planning to defend the whole of Scandinavia, including Sweden. The Commission on Neutrality Policy referred to the U.S. decision in 1960 to be prepared to come to the assistance of Sweden in the event of Soviet Bloc aggression against Sweden.<sup>13</sup> Sweden was, in fact, covered by NATO's security guarantees and the United States was prepared to defend Sweden with nuclear weapons.<sup>14</sup> NATO was believed to have been interested in defending Sweden because it regarded Sweden as strategically important. Sweden was considered the key for the defence of Norway and Denmark and thus for maintaining the sea lines across the Atlantic Ocean. It is particularly significant that NATO did not believe that Sweden could stay neutral should war break out. Neither did NATO consider Sweden's neutrality an obstacle to military cooperation, but expected that Sweden would join the West in the fight against a Soviet attack. Thus, there are reasons to call Sweden a "pro-Western neutral" or the "seventeenth member" of NATO.<sup>15</sup>

Finland's international position during the Cold War differed from the Swedish one since the outcome of the Second World War left Finland in the Soviet sphere of influence. As a consequence, in 1948, Finland signed the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, containing stipulations on

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<sup>11</sup> "Had There Been a War"... pp. 238-243.

<sup>12</sup> Mikael Holmström, "Erlander och Palme misstrodde neutralitet", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 August 1998.

<sup>13</sup> "Had There Been a War"... p. 111.

<sup>14</sup> Holmström, "Nato var redo försvara Sverige med kärnvapen"...

<sup>15</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "The Precarious Partnership: America and Europe in a New Era" in Charles A Kupchan (ed.), *Atlantic Security* (Council on Foreign Relations: Lillington 1998), p. 19; Kjell Engelbrekt, "Den sjuttonde alliansmedlemmen?", *Internationella Studier*, no 4, 1999, pp. 61-72.

potential military cooperation between the two countries. Yet, the preamble of the treaty also referred to Finland's aim to stay outside of great power conflicts. During the Cold War, Finnish politicians regularly praised the treaty and saw it as the cornerstone of Finland's security. However, the aim of Finnish policy in the after-war period was to avoid the realisation of the military clauses in the treaty. By the same token, Finland did not want to be seen as a Soviet satellite in the West. The policy of neutrality that was developed since the mid 1950s was a means to attain these goals.<sup>16</sup>

The Finnish policy of neutrality was successful in the sense that Finland maintained its independence from Moscow, but that did not prevent the Soviet Union from interfering into the domestic affairs of Finland. Finns accepted that to a certain degree political flexibility was a means to protect their national culture and will to defend. The bilateral relationship with the Soviet Union also had a strong impact on Finnish foreign policy. The tension between the FCMA Treaty and neutrality policy was particularly significant. Keijo Korhonen, the former foreign minister of Finland and a close advisor to President Kekkonen, describes the relationship as a continuous trench warfare in which the Soviet Union underlined the FCMA Treaty as the basis of Finnish foreign policy in general in order to keep Finland in the Soviet sphere of influence, whereas Finland put emphasis on neutrality to keep a distance from Moscow.<sup>17</sup> The willingness of the Soviet Union to accept the Finnish neutrality depended on the Soviet view of neutrality in general. When neutrality was seen as being in line with the interests of the Soviet foreign policy, as in the 1950s, the neutrality of Finland was acceptable. When that view changed as a consequence of the Spring of Prague in 1968, the tension between neutrality and the FCMA Treaty began to burden the relationship. The Soviet Union denied the neutrality of Finland. Finland managed, however, to avoid military cooperation with the Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev agreed to postpone proposed military consultations during the so-called Note crisis in 1961 and Finland turned down the proposal by the Soviet Minister of Defence in 1978 for Finnish-Soviet military exercises. The neutral status of Finland was not acknowledged by the Soviet Union until 1989 when Mikhail Gorbachev visited Finland. However, by that time the change in Europe had diminished the

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<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Max Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe* (Praeger: Westport 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Keijo Korhonen, *Sattumakorpraali* (Otava: Helsinki 1999), pp. 156-193. This is not only the view in Finland, but, for example, Juri Derjabin, a former Russian ambassador to Helsinki, confirms with the

usefulness of neutrality as a means of Finnish foreign policy. When the Soviet Union was willing to accept neutrality as a way to define Finland's post-Cold War international position, Finland had already perceived the continuation of the policy of neutrality as an obstacle to joining the Western institutions.

Due to the relationship with the Soviet Union, political cooperation with the West in general and the attitude towards NATO in particular were sensitive issues in Finland during the Cold War era. Although Finland was a country with a long-standing tradition of democracy and a market economy, Moscow set limits to Finland's relationship with the Western political and economic institutions. Unlike in the case of Sweden, the real alternative to neutrality was integration with the East, not with the West. Because from the Soviet perspective NATO was a hostile organization, contacts with NATO at any level were kept to a minimum.<sup>18</sup> Even in the framework of Nordic cooperation, talk on security was rare because of the presence of Danes and Norwegians.

Finland and Sweden's neutrality during the Cold War had some significant differences and even some paradoxical elements. As to their reactions to international crises, Sweden was actively condemning both the U.S. and the Soviet Union while Finland avoided criticising either of the super powers. Despite its sharp criticism of the war in Vietnam, Sweden was, however, widely seen as genuinely neutral in the West. Finland, in turn, was often perceived in the West as leaning towards the East and being "Finlandised", in other words controlled by Moscow. For example, an American diplomat who served at the Embassy in Helsinki wrote that Finland went too far in understanding the actions by the Soviet Union while not having the same restraint when commenting upon the policies of the West or the United States.<sup>19</sup> In reality, however, it has turned out that it was actually Finland and not Sweden whose true policy aimed at neutrality in war. In the light of the current information Sweden made preparations for cooperating NATO whereas Finland, despite the FCMA Treaty, was prepared to fight against all possible foreign troops on Finland's soil. In sum, though both countries claimed to be neutral, they pursued different security policies.

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interpretation. See Paavo Keisalo, "Juri Derjabin: Suomi ei saanut olla länsimaa", *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 5 December 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Pauli Järvenpää, "What comes after Madrid? A view from Helsinki", *NATO Review*, vol. 45, no. 5, 1997, pp. 30-31.

When the Cold War ended, Finland and Sweden joined the European Union committing themselves to the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Union. It is noteworthy in this context that for Finland seeking security was the main motivation for joining the EU whereas political and economic motivations paved the way for Swedish membership.<sup>20</sup> In the words of President Mauno Koivisto, “[t]he strongest reason for seeking EC membership seemed to me to lie in the realm of security policy. The economic reasons were secondary.” His memoirs can also be interpreted to mean that in deciding to join the EU, Finland chose alliance with the West. Whereas in Finland’s Cold War policy it was essential for Finland “not to join a front against the Soviet Union”, Koivisto crystallised the new policy during the period of Russia’s internal political crisis in 1993 as follows: “We could not separate ourselves from the general Western stances without weakening our own position, even if matters in Russia went in a direction that was worse for Yeltsin. We had to face the consequences and if necessary seek more external support for our security.”<sup>21</sup> Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, in turn, relied on much more general motives about the importance of participating in international cooperation for Sweden. According to him “(a)s a member, Sweden’s possibilities of influencing this future cooperation – in political, economic and social terms – would be improved. We share the Community’s long-term goals...and we want to work for their realisation together with the other members of the Community”.<sup>22</sup>

It now seems that the Swedish neutrality applied only to peacetime. Officially Sweden was non-aligned in peacetime in order to stay neutral at war, but in reality she seems to have pursued the policy of neutrality in peacetime aiming at aligning herself had war broken out. This conclusion raises two related questions. To what extent did neutrality form the basis of Sweden’s security? Why did Sweden pursue the policy of neutrality in the first place? As for the first question, much depends on what the

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<sup>19</sup> James Ford Cooper, *Asemamaana Suomi*, (Tammi: Helsinki 1998), pp. 104-105, 172, 174-175, 180.

<sup>20</sup> Tomas Ries, “North Ho! The New Nordic Security Environment and the European Union’s Northern Expansion”. *Arbeitspapier, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, 1994, pp. 23; Jukka Salovaara, “Finnish Integration Policy - From an Economic to Security Motivation”, *Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy* (Finnish Institute of International Affairs: Helsinki 1993), pp. 16-23; Ojanen, Herolf and Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy...* p. 227.

<sup>21</sup> Mauno Koivisto, *Witness to History. The Memoirs of Mauno Koivisto. President of Finland 1982-1994*, (Hurst & Co: London 1997), pp. 246, 279.

Soviet Union knew about the cooperation between Sweden and NATO. If she did not know, neutrality was crucial for Sweden's security. However, if the Soviet Union knew about the NATO cooperation, as is claimed,<sup>23</sup> the Swedish neutrality would have had a more narrow peacetime significance of a political nature aiming at keeping the tension low in Northern Europe by maintaining the "Nordic balance". A major reason for Sweden staying outside NATO would have been the concern for Finland. In case Sweden had joined NATO, the Soviet Union may have strengthened its hold on Finland. These steps could have increased the level of tension in Northern Europe and perhaps lowered the threshold of open hostilities between the military blocs. Of course Sweden's aim at strengthening her own security helped Finland stay independent.<sup>24</sup>

Regardless of the new information about the cooperation with NATO during the Cold War, neutrality has maintained a positive connotation among the Swedish public. The common view in Sweden is that neutrality has worked as it has kept Sweden out of war during the last two hundred years. Thus, neutrality is positively associated with the past, although the reinterpretation of Sweden's Cold War history may gradually change this view. For Finland, the experience of neutrality is different. In the inter-war period Finland sought allies against the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union. After that policy had failed, the attempt of the late 1930's to pursue the policy of neutrality was shattered when the Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939. In the after-war period, the official conclusion of this failure was that Finland should avoid creating suspicions in Moscow that the Finnish territory could be used by a third party for an attack against the Soviet Union. Therefore, confidential relations with the Soviet Union and the policy of neutrality were deemed as the best security political choice. Now it is acknowledged that Finland's policy of neutrality was a continuous trench war against the Soviet Union that ended only when the Cold War system collapsed. For many Finns it is, therefore, easier to give up the rhetoric of neutrality, because neutrality is seen either as a failed policy or as a means to achieve distance from Moscow.

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<sup>22</sup> Ingvar Carlsson, quoted in Ojanen, Herolf and Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy...* p.175.

<sup>23</sup> Mikael Holmström, "Sovjet trodde inte på neutralt Sverige", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 August 1998.

<sup>24</sup> For this motivation behind Sweden's policy, see Krister Wahlbäck, "Finland's sak är vår – en missförstådd paroll", *Briefing från UD*, no. 4, 1996, pp. 3-9.

### Deeds: The Line Drawn

Finland and Sweden have taken strikingly similar steps after the end of the Cold War to reformulate their security policies and to strengthen their relationships with the EU and NATO. Both countries joined the EU in 1995 and now take part in formulating and developing the common policy on security and defence of the Union. Finland and Sweden also cooperate intensively with NATO and are observers of the WEU, while maintaining their status of military non-alignment.

Finland and Sweden have followed the steps that the EU has taken during last few years to bolster its security policy. In fact, the countries have actively participated in the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. Sweden and Finland submitted a joint proposal in 1996 for the Amsterdam Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to strengthen the crisis-management capability of the Union that formed the basis of the achieved agreement. This proposal aimed at enhancing the competence for the EU in conflict management by including humanitarian and rescue operations, peacekeeping and crisis management (Petersberg tasks) into the CFSP and to establish a reinforced institutional link between the EU and the WEU in order to enable the WEU to implement decisions on crisis management adopted by the EU.<sup>25</sup>

A further step was taken at the Cologne Summit in 1999 where the EU agreed to develop more effective military capabilities in order to respond to international crises. At Cologne, the EU agreed that it will decide by the end of the year 2000 that the functions of the WEU will be transferred to the European Union. Finland and Sweden went along with the decision but on the condition that they do not have to give up the status of military non-alignment. Accordingly, the Cologne Summit stated that “[t]he different status of Member States with regard to collective defence guarantees will not be affected” by the decision.<sup>26</sup> As Finland took over the Presidency after Germany, the development of the EU’s security policy became one of the main issues of the Presidency in 1999. The non-aligned status did not prevent Finland from playing an active role in the preparatory work leading to the Helsinki Summit in December. On the contrary, Finland emphasised that it was positive to develop the EU’s security and

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<sup>25</sup> The IGC and the Common Security and Defence Dimension - Towards an Enhanced EU Role in Crisis Management, Memorandum by Finland and Sweden, 25 April 1996.

defence policy in order to improve the ability of the Union to strengthen stability in Europe.<sup>27</sup>

During the negotiation process leading to the document on the EU's defence dimension adopted at Helsinki Summit in December 2000, Sweden was seen as being more "neutral" than Finland. From the Sweden's point of view, the pace of the development of the EU's crisis management appeared to be too quick and too heavily focused on military means. For this reason Sweden emphasised the need of packing military crisis management with civilian crisis management.<sup>28</sup> For Finland, the construction of the defence dimension for the Union seemed to be less problematic. Moreover, the fact that Finland held the EU presidency during the negotiations may have explained the Finnish activism because it had to represent the position of the middle. In any case, both Finland and Sweden assured at Helsinki that they were satisfied with the results of the Summit. The prime ministers wanted, however, to emphasise that the question was of the EU's crisis management capability and not of common defence. Thus, it seems that Finland and Sweden are ready to accept measures to bolster the security policy of the European Union as long as the process does not endanger their status of military non-alignment.<sup>29</sup>

Emphasising the difference between contributing to the development of the European Union and its ability to act on crises and the status as militarily non-aligned countries has been a consistent part of the Swedish and Finnish policy. Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen defended in 1998 the "integrity" of NATO as well as of the WEU and argued that the specific character of the defence choices of the member countries should be "respected". His concern was that steps towards an enhanced competence in the fields of security and defence should not affect the status of members as states

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<sup>26</sup> Cologne European Council – Presidency Conclusions, Press Release, No. 150, 1999, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Jan-Erik Enestam, "EU luo valmiutta omaan kriisinhallintaan", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 19 November 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Hanna Ojanen, "Participation and influence: Finland, Sweden and the post-Amsterdam development of the CFSP". *WEU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Papers* no. 11, 2000, pp.19-20; "EU soti turvallisuusraportista: jäsenmaat eri linjoilla siitä miten puolustusta kehitetään Helsingin jälkeen", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8 December 1999.

<sup>29</sup> A further step will be taken by Finland and Sweden when they join the Western European Armaments Group. The WEAG was established in 1976 by the European NATO members (except Iceland) to coordinate their arms procurement and production. In November 1999, the WEAG agreed that also the non-aligned EU members and Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic may now join the organisation. Finland decided in May 2000 to apply for membership. Sweden is expected to do the same.



pursuing independent or common defence.<sup>30</sup> The Finnish president, Tarja Halonen, was explicit on this issue when she spoke in Stockholm right after her inauguration in May 2000: “I do not see a need to add a mutual defence obligation to the EU’s functions.”<sup>31</sup> Swedes have argued along the same lines. The government declared in the spring of 1999 that Sweden wants to strengthen the EU’s crisis management capability, but “[a] clear line between crisis management and territorial defence should be upheld”.<sup>32</sup>

Finland and Sweden’s relationship with NATO also look alike. Despite military non-alignment, both countries are increasingly cooperating with NATO. They joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1994 and started PfP’s Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1995. The second part of the PARP process was initiated in 1997 and a large number of new Interoperability Objectives were set for the Finnish and Swedish armed forces. On a regular basis Finnish and Swedish soldiers attend PfP exercises, courses, and seminars and also arrange and host them. In 1997, Sweden established a PfP Training Centre offering training in civil defence. As a result, it is estimated by NATO that Finland and Sweden are already almost interoperable with NATO. The countries have participated in the NATO-led IFOR and SFOR operations in Bosnia and the KFOR operation in Kosovo from the beginning. Finland has also participated in the Intensified Dialogue with NATO since 1996. Both countries joined the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997, Finland having been an observer of NACC since 1992. Finland and Sweden also established diplomatic missions to NATO and have officers and civil servants working as Partner Staff Elements in NATO’s staff structures. In short, with regard to the cooperation with NATO, everything else seems to be acceptable except Article 5.

Although military non-alignment sets limits to the cooperation with NATO and the United States, both Finland and Sweden welcome the presence of the Alliance as well as the United States in Northern Europe. The countries are, however, cautious about NATO enlargement because they see the danger of destabilisation in it.<sup>33</sup> Helsinki and

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<sup>30</sup> Paavo Lipponen, “Jatkuvuus ja muutos Suomen ulkopolitiikassa”, talk at the Paasikivi Society in Helsinki, 3 September 1998, see *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4 September 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Tarja Halonen, “At the Core of Europe as a Non-Participant in Military Alliances – Finnish Thoughts and Experiences”, talk at the University of Stockholm, 2 May 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, 10 February 1999.

<sup>33</sup> Hugh Carnegie, “Finnish PM cautions on NATO growth risks”, *Financial Times*, 17 September 1996.

Stockholm are worried about the potential negative impact that NATO enlargement might have on Russian development and policy and consequently on the security of the Baltic states. The first enlargement was, nevertheless, not seen as influencing Finland's security.<sup>34</sup> If there will be a new round of enlargement that does not include the Baltic states, it is nevertheless still feared that the enlargement could worsen the relationship between Russia and the Baltic states and consequently impact security in the whole Baltic Sea region. As a result, the best policy is still to try to influence Russia without any of the states joining the alliance. The way Finland and Sweden are trying to deal with these concerns is by making sure that they can influence NATO's decision making processes and also by keeping NATO's door open by emphasising that each country – according to the OSCE principles - has the right to choose its security solution.<sup>35</sup>

Finland and Sweden have tacitly tried to give advice to the Baltic States to focus on the EU membership rather than on joining NATO. Paavo Lipponen accused conservative circles in the Nordic countries for giving false promises to the Baltic countries about their future NATO alliance. According to Lipponen, it is easier to support Baltic NATO membership the further away one is from the Baltic States. The NATO enlargement and its relationship to Russia is to him a complex process and can not easily be understood.<sup>36</sup> Sweden and Finland also rule out their own membership of NATO at least in the foreseeable future. As a consequence of this policy, the issue of influencing NATO's decisions poses a problem for Sweden and Finland. Though Sweden and Finland do not intend to join NATO, they, nevertheless, find it important to be able to influence NATO's behavior. It was first hoped that the EAPC would be a solution to this problem, but, for example, the Kosovo crisis may have shown the limits of the EAPC in influencing NATO's decisions.<sup>37</sup>

Finland and Sweden have intensified their bilateral cooperation in the field of security. A particular characteristic of this evolving cooperation is its visibility. Finland and Sweden have underlined their mutual closeness through common articles written by

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<sup>34</sup> "Ahtisaari: Nato-laajentuminen ei vaikuta merkittävästi Suomeen", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 10 July 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Tarja Halonen and Lena Hjelm-Wallén, "Suomi, Ruotsi ja Naton laajeneminen", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15 March 1997; "Finland och Sverige inför Natos utvidgning", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 15 March 1997.

<sup>36</sup> "Rådgivare vilseleder balter", *Dagens Nyheter*, 4 December 1996; "Lipponen moittii baltteja Natoon yllyttäviä maita", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4 December 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Ojanen, "Participation and Influence"...

the foreign and defence ministers and through common initiatives and visits to the NATO headquarters and Moscow. These measures highlight the similarity particularly in four fields. Finland and Sweden have made it known that they share similar views and interests concerning the development of the EU's security policy, the role of NATO in Northern European security, the development of the security in the Baltic Sea region and intensifying their bilateral security cooperation.<sup>38</sup>

In 1997 the foreign ministers of Sweden and Finland published an article drawing attention to the security of those countries that did not intend to join NATO and to their ability to influence NATO's decision making. The ministers emphasised that both countries want to have broad cooperation with NATO but without joining the common defence and not having NATO's security guarantees. However, they left the door open for joining NATO in the future by stating that non-alignment is a means and not an end as well as by keeping the choice of changing security policy in their own hands. In other words, the policy of military non-alignment is the best choice for Finland and Sweden in the "foreseeable future."<sup>39</sup>

Besides the common initiative on strengthening the EU's crisis management capability, Finland and Sweden presented a common proposal for enhancing security in the Baltic Sea region by focusing on the role of confidence and security building measures in 1998.<sup>40</sup> The proposal was a response to the initiatives put forward by Russia that was aimed at creating a neutral zone consisting of Finland, Sweden and the Baltic states. The Russian proposals were regarded as being unacceptable in Stockholm and Helsinki since they could have led to isolating the Baltic Sea region from the European security integration. Thus, the foreign ministers did not support the idea of establishing a separate regional table for discussing security questions. Rather, they supported the expansion of the cooperation within the PfP, gave their support to the EAPC as a forum for discussing security cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, and emphasised the importance of considering regional aspects within the process of revision of the 1994 Vienna Document. They also emphasised the need to intensify cooperation in areas related to the welfare of societies and civic security, and

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<sup>38</sup> Torstila, "Yhteen ääneen Ruotsin kanssa"...

<sup>39</sup> Halonen and Hjälm-Wallén, "Suomi, Ruotsi ja Naton laajeneminen"...; Finland och Sverige inför Natos utvidgning"....

<sup>40</sup> Non-paper by Finland and Sweden on Cooperative security for the Baltic Sea region, 17 April 1998.

suggested that the number of evaluation visits and inspections between the littoral states be increased. Besides, the foreign ministers raised once again the need to bolster the EU's crisis management capability in 1998 emphasising that "Finland and Sweden are ready to shoulder their share of responsibility."<sup>41</sup>

The defence ministers of Sweden and Finland also published in 1998 a common article demonstrating their mutual closeness. They repeated many of the views expressed earlier in relation to strengthening the EU, cooperating with but not joining NATO and increasing the security and confidence building measures in the Baltic Sea region. In addition, they also listed the steps that Finland and Sweden are taking to increase their bilateral cooperation on practical security matters. These include arms procurement, marine surveillance, Nordic participation in peace support activities and an exchange of personnel.<sup>42</sup>

In their most recent common article in April 2000 the Swedish and Finnish foreign ministers addressed their views on civilian crisis management. They urged the European Union to increase its ability to manage crises through civilian means. According to the ministers, relying only on the military crisis management is not enough. The EU also needs to be able to send a sufficient number of police to crisis regions, to provide a functioning judicial system, to build a local administration, and to provide rescue services.<sup>43</sup>

### Words: The Line Explained

Despite the fact that Finland and Sweden pursued different policies during the Cold War and that their historical experiences and geostrategic locations are different, they define their current security policies in a similar way. Both describe the policy as military non-alignment and it is motivated in the same manner. In Finland, the government argues that the best way for Finland to promote stability in the existing

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<sup>41</sup> Tarja Halonen and Anna Lindh, "EU kehittää kriisinhallintakykyään", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 5 December 1998; "Vi vill vara nära Nato. Sveriges och Finlands utrikesministrar skriver gemensamt om säkerhetspolitiken", *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 December 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Anneli Taina and Björn von Sydow, "Yhteistyö syvenee viidellä alueella", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13 June 1998; "Svenskt-finskt försvarssamarbete", *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 June 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Anna Lindh and Erkki Tuomioja, "EU:n siviilikriisinhallintaa on vahvistettava", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 April 2000; "Katastrofhjälpen duger inte. Sverige och Finland i gemensamt EU-initiativ: Civil krishantering måste rustas upp snabbt", *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 April 2000.

circumstances is to remain militarily non-aligned.<sup>44</sup> The Swedish formulation is similar: “Sweden’s military non-alignment contributes to stability in a part of Europe where great changes are in progress in our immediate vicinity”.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, military non-alignment is understood in a very narrow and flexible way.<sup>46</sup> In both countries its content has been significantly scaled down and relativised from that of the Cold War. While Cold War neutrality was maximalistic in scope, non-alignment within the European Union is minimalistic in its scope.<sup>47</sup> According to the classic Swedish definition, non-alignment aimed at neutrality in war. A doctrinal change took place in 1992 when this definition was modified so that Swedish neutrality was seen as applying only to the conflicts in nearby area. Some politicians tried to adopt this definition also in Finland but President Mauno Koivisto preferred not to give any exact definition of Finland’s security political position.<sup>48</sup>

Today, neutrality in war is regarded in both countries only as an option, not as the only alternative. In Sweden, the non-participation in military alliances is said to aim at “*retaining the possibility* of neutrality in the event of war in our vicinity”.<sup>49</sup> According to a recent clarification by Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, Sweden could not stay totally neutral if, for example, Norway or Estonia were attacked.<sup>50</sup> In other words, while during the Cold War the policy of non-alignment was defined as necessarily implying neutrality in wartime, the current formulation implies that Sweden may stay neutral in the event of a conflict in its vicinity, should Sweden wish to do so. Yet, the change in the wording does not appear too dramatic if one keeps in mind that the current formulation better corresponds with the actual policy pursued during the Cold War. Even one of the main architects of Sweden’s post-war neutrality policy, Sverker Åström, maintains that in today’s circumstances Sweden should give up using the

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<sup>44</sup> Programme of Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen’s Second Government, <http://www.vn.fi/vn/english/index.htm>, 14 April 1999.

<sup>45</sup> Björn von Sydow, *Sweden’s Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (Regeringskansliet: Stockholm 1999), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Ojanen, Herolf and Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy*...

<sup>47</sup> Risto Penttilä, “Non-alignment – Obsolete in Today’s Europe?”, in Mathias Jopp and Hanna Ojanen (eds.) *European Security Integration. Implication for Non-alignment and Alliances* The Programme on Northern Dimension of the CFSP no. 7 (The Finnish Institute of International Affairs/Institut für Europäische Politik: Helsinki/Bonn 2000), p. 171.

<sup>48</sup> Paavo Väyrynen, *Suomen puolueettomuus uudessa Euroopassa. Kansallinen doktriini ympäristön murroksessa*, (Otava: Helsinki 1996), pp. 146, 156-161.

<sup>49</sup> Statement of Government in the Parliament Debate on Foreign Affairs, 10 February 1999, <http://www.ud.se/english/policy/poliang/english99.htm>, 7.

concept of neutrality. To him, neutrality has become obsolete since it will no longer be possible for Sweden to remain neutral in a war. Åström does not, however, conclude, that Sweden should join NATO. Sweden should, in his view, maintain military non-alignment since Russia's reactions to Sweden's NATO membership would have unforeseen consequences for the stability in Europe.<sup>51</sup>

In Finland, the change in the security political doctrine has been more fundamental.<sup>52</sup> While during the Cold War a major goal of Finnish policy was to avoid any military cooperation with third powers, receiving outside military assistance was now regarded as an option. According to the white paper on defence, “[i]f Finland's own resources are not sufficient, she can, in accordance with the UN Charter, request the assistance of other countries in repelling the attack”.<sup>53</sup> Also, the programme of Lipponen's second government does no longer refer to “independent” defence, but speaks only of “credible” defence instead.<sup>54</sup> Finland is hence taking into consideration the option of receiving military assistance. Sweden has not made a similar reference to foreign military help though it made preparations during the Cold War to cooperate with NATO and the United States.

Furthermore, Sweden and Finland regard military non-alignment in peacetime as an option, a policy choice, the utility of which depends on prevailing circumstances. In 1992, the change in the European security order was seen to be so rapid that Foreign Minister Paavo Väyrynen, who has been regarded as one of the most firm advocates of neutrality policy, argued that Finland's membership of NATO is possible in principle.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, when explaining Finland and Sweden's relationship with NATO before the first post-Cold War enlargement, foreign ministers Halonen and Hjelm-Wallén maintained that Finnish and Swedish policy may change in the future.

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<sup>50</sup> Dick Ljungberg, “Doktrinen kvar Lindhs besked, Utrikesministern ville avdramatisera frågan i riksdagens utrikesutskott”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 10 February 2000.

<sup>51</sup> Sverker Åström, “Dags att slopa neutraliteten”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 8 February 2000. See also Sverker Åström, “Efter neutraliteten – ny svensk doktrin behövs”, *Internationella Studier* no.2, 2000, pp. 24-39.

<sup>52</sup> Kari Möttölä, “Between Order, Uncertainty and Possible – Outlining the Finnish Security Policy as a Member of the European Union”, in *Knowledge, Power and World Politics. Scripta in honorem professoris Osmo Apunen sexagesimum annum complentis* (Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Tampere: Tampere 1998).

<sup>53</sup> The European Security Development and Finnish Defence, Report by the Council of State to Parliament, 17 March 1997, p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> See Max Jakobson, “Eurooppalainen uskontunnustus”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 23 April 1999.

<sup>55</sup> “Ulkoministeri Paavo Väyrynen: Suomen jäsenyys Natossa ‘periaatteessa mahdollinen’”, *Turun Sanomat*, 22 March 1992.

They also emphasised that only Finland and Sweden have the right to choose the way they commit themselves to European security and military cooperation.<sup>56</sup> In Prime Minister Lipponen's terms, military non-alignment implies that Finland may also ally itself. Thus, Finland and Sweden have wanted to leave the door to NATO open. Even though it is constantly repeated that the policy of non-alignment rests on a firm basis, it is defined not as a goal but as a means to provide security to the countries.<sup>57</sup> However, even if Finland and Sweden aimed at keeping the NATO option open, the policy is not to emphasise it in public statements. In Finland, where the "option line" was articulated more clearly than in Sweden, less is heard of keeping the NATO door open than was a year or two ago. In particular, President Halonen does not stress that non-alignment applies only to the prevailing circumstances but holds that a need to prepare for membership in NATO is not an aspect of the joint position that she had approved as a member of the government.<sup>58</sup> She is also bringing back the concept of "independent" when characterising the Finnish defence.<sup>59</sup> Although she thinks that NATO door has not been locked, she does not regard NATO membership as a serious option.<sup>60</sup>

In regard to the EU, Finland and Sweden's view of the Union as an actor in the field of security is clearly a positive one. In Finland, the view is that even though EU membership does not provide military security guarantees, belonging to the Union nevertheless enhances the security of the member state. This perception is sometimes defined as the "mutual solidarity" within the EU, which is assumed to entail protection to the members.<sup>61</sup> The main problem to Sweden and Finland is that the Union has been too weak, in particular, in the field of crisis management. Therefore, they are in favor of enhancing the EU's security role. They have emphasised that – even though they are militarily non-aligned – they are interested in and able to contribute to the strengthening of the EU's role in security policy. Since Finland had a security motivation to join the EU, it does not come as a surprise that "Finland

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<sup>56</sup> Halonen and Hjelm-Wallén, "Suomi, Ruotsi ja Naton laajeneminen"; "Finland och Sverige inför Natos utvidgning"...

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., Göran Persson, "Security in a changing world", speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm, 10 March 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Tarja Halonen, address to Parliament, 1 March 2000.

<sup>59</sup> Tarja Halonen, talk at the promotion ceremony of cadet officers, 4 June 2000.

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., Kyösti Karvonen, "Halonen valmis 'kuuntelemaan' EU-keskustelua puolustuksesta", *Turun Sanomat*, 2 July 2000.

<sup>61</sup> The European Security Development and Finnish Defence..., p. 48.

supports a strengthening of the EU's effectiveness in the field of foreign policy and security".<sup>62</sup> Neither does Prime Minister Lipponen see any fundamental problems in the development of crisis management capability for the Union.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson describes the Union as the "most useful and powerful security policy tool"<sup>64</sup> and the Swedish government emphasises that the EU enhances Sweden's ability to safeguard its economic and security interests. Thus, Sweden is in favour, for example, of strengthening the EU's crisis management capability.<sup>65</sup> However, the non-aligned Sweden and Finland do not support moves towards a common defence arguing that it does not correspond to the needs in strengthening the ability of the Union to operate.

Since both Sweden and Finland regard the security role of the EU as important, they want to make sure that they can influence the security policy of the Union. They have expressed this concern by emphasising that all the EU member states should be able to participate in the preparations for and decisions on carrying out actions in the field of security. In other words, those member countries not belonging to NATO must be in an equal position to influence EU's policy with those members belonging to NATO. Both Finland and Sweden do not see a contradiction with active participation in the CFSP and their military non-alignment. For example President Halonen argues that "we have shown through our own deeds that a country can have a role at the core of Europe without having to belong to a military alliance. We intend to continue pursuing this policy."<sup>66</sup> In a similar way, it is also assured in Stockholm that it is possible for Sweden to engage in "extensive cooperation" on the CFSP while maintaining the principle of non-participation in alliances.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the fact that Finland and Sweden are not members of NATO, they do not want to weaken the transatlantic ties. That is one of the reasons why these countries do not want to hasten the construction of EU's defence dimension. The EU should recognise the strong U.S. presence and its benefits. In the view of a Finnish official, "drifting apart would not only jeopardise the ongoing operations but would also cast a shadow

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Paavo Lipponen, "Tiiviimpi unioni on Suomen etu", *Turun Sanomat*, 29 May 2000.

<sup>64</sup> Persson, "Security in a changing world"...

<sup>65</sup> Statement of Government in the Parliament Debate on Foreign Affairs, 10 February 1999, pp. 5, 7.

<sup>66</sup> Halonen, "At the Core of Europe as a Non-Participant in Military Alliances..."

<sup>67</sup> Björn von Sydow, *Sweden's Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...*, p. 15.



over the developing European security and defence policy and be detrimental to NATO's cohesion".<sup>68</sup> And, "(a)n erosion of the transatlantic ties because of too far fledged 'autonomic' arrangements of the European security and defence policy would not be in the interest of the Union members".<sup>69</sup> In other words, the weakening of the transatlantic ties would not contribute to Northern European security, and, consequently, a functioning relationship between the EU and NATO is in the interests of the non-aligned countries.<sup>70</sup>

Finland and Sweden are also against the further harmonisation of national defence structures. For the Finns, the talk about convergence criteria when developing the European defence dimension can be only applied to peace support operation forces. It makes sense to develop common standards of performance for those troops, but not for national defence. It is seen as quintessential that Finland can decide itself whether it wants to keep its own defence system based on conscription and territorial defence.<sup>71</sup>

Though militarily non-aligned, both Sweden and Finland acknowledge NATO as a pillar of the European security. Also, cooperation with NATO is seen as necessary in building up a more secure Europe.<sup>72</sup> However, the PfP cooperation is not to be regarded as a waiting room for full membership but as a channel for participating in practical cooperation and crisis management. Thus, Sweden and Finland are in favour of strengthening the role of the PfP, making it a permanent and dynamic element of European cooperation structures, and developing the EAPC as an effective cooperation forum.<sup>73</sup> According to President Martti Ahtisaari's view, the capability of the EAPC and of the enhanced PfP will depend - to a crucial extent - on the Alliance's

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<sup>68</sup> Pertti Torstila, "EU and NATO", Comment at the Seminar of the Atlantic Council of Finland in Helsinki, 31 March 2000, in Tomas Ries (ed.) *NATO Tomorrow*, Research Reports Nr. 7 (Department of Strategic and Defence Studies National Defence College: Helsinki 2000).

<sup>69</sup> Pertti Torstila, "Reflections on the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) during the Finnish EU Presidency in 1999", Second Annual Conference on Atlanticism, Hungarian Atlantic Council, Budapest, 3-4 March 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Jan-Erik Enestam, "EU:n kriisinhallintakyky etenee", *Turun Sanomat*, 19 May 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Paaavo Lipponen, "Euroopan unionin keskityttävä kriisinhallintaan", *Turun Sanomat*, September 20 1999.

<sup>72</sup> Jan Eliasson, "Internationella insatser", *The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences Proceedings and Journal* Vol. 202, no. 6 1998; Klaus Korhonen, "Suomi hyötyy rauhankumppanuudesta", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 11 November 1998.

<sup>73</sup> Jan Eliasson, "Internationella insatser", *The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences Proceedings and Journal* Vol. 202, no. 6 1998; Klaus Korhonen, "Suomi hyötyy rauhankumppanuudesta", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 11 November 1998.

willingness to share with its partners as much as possible the issues of substance that it deals with".<sup>74</sup> The PfP cooperation is seen in a positive light due to its military benefits and its role as an pre-emptive measure.<sup>75</sup> Enhanced interoperability is therefore considered natural and necessary.<sup>76</sup> In Finland, moreover, the PfP cooperation is said to also improve the ability to receive foreign military assistance in times of crisis that hits the country.<sup>77</sup>

In Finland, cooperation within NATO-structures has been added along with credible defence, non-alignment and EU-membership as an element that describes Finland's basic security policy orientation.<sup>78</sup> As noted earlier, it is also acknowledged that cooperation with NATO increases Finland's possibilities of receiving assistance from abroad. None of this, however, implies that Finland is planning to join NATO. Indeed, Defence Minister Anneli Taina deviated too far from the government's line when she said in an interview that "Finland has engaged with NATO but the wedding day has not been decided yet."<sup>79</sup> This evoked critical comments from the Prime Minister who assured that the current line is clear and firm and reminded that loose talk on NATO-membership should be avoided.

An important reason for not intending to join NATO now is the interest in preserving stability and fostering positive development in Russia. NATO membership is seen as potentially jeopardising to the cooperative relationship between Russia and the countries in Europe's north. However, since NATO may enlarge without Finland, Sweden and the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden stress that NATO enlargement must not weaken the securities of Finland and Sweden themselves, but also those of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. As for Finnish and Swedish security, the concern is that the Baltic Sea security could be separated from the overall European security.

Although both countries feel positively toward NATO's role in crisis management, they still put a strong emphasis on the importance of the UN. In the view of Finland

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<sup>74</sup> Martti Ahtisaari, statement at the Working Session, Madrid Summit, 9 July 1997.

<sup>75</sup> Arto Rätty, "Rauhankumppanuuden sotilaalliset edut", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 3 June 1998.

<sup>76</sup> See Eliasson, "Internationella insatser ...p. 148.

<sup>77</sup> Unto Hämäläinen, "Puolustusministeri Anneli Taina ennustaa: Koko Euroopan sotilaallinen turvallisuus nojaa jatkossa Natoon", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29 January 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Martti Ahtisaari, speech in Parliament, 4 February 1998.

<sup>79</sup> "Kihloissa ollaan mutta hääpäivää ei ole määrätty", *Ilta-Sanomat*, 16 December 1998.

and Sweden, NATO should have a UN mandate for its peace support operations. The UN mandate may appear important both for the reason of integrating Russia and for creating an international system based on common norms. Yet, Finland and Sweden's reactions to the Kosovo crisis indicate that they need to compromise ideals with reality. Both countries felt it difficult to support NATO's air campaign against Serbia, but they shared the view that Milosevic was to be blamed for the atrocities and as EU members they also needed to support the common policy. The foreign ministers of both countries eventually accepted the EU statement, according to which the air strikes were deemed as "necessary and warranted".<sup>80</sup>

Finland's foreign policy leadership reacted first in a cautious manner, when NATO started its air campaign. President Ahtisaari accused Yugoslavia's President Milosevic of human rights abuses and stressed Finland's willingness to contribute to the rebuilding process. He carefully avoided mentioning the role of the UN or NATO. Later he pledged his support for the bombing campaign more explicitly: "The Kosovo crisis teaches all of us that peace needs structures that will last: democracy, cooperation and trust. If these structures are not in place, in extreme cases, aggression must be met with aggression in order to guarantee security and protect the innocent."<sup>81</sup> Sweden had a similar approach. Prime Minister Persson regretted that NATO attacked Yugoslavia without a UN mandate. Foreign Minister Lindh, for her part, said that she was very concerned about the development in Yugoslavia but that she considered the NATO strikes inevitable.<sup>82</sup>

The Kosovo crisis did not, however, influence the official stance on NATO membership. The Director of the Political Affairs Section of the Finnish MFA assured that Kosovo did not change the consistent policy of military non-alignment although it still taught many lessons about the importance of NATO maintaining its stable and central position in the European security order.<sup>83</sup> In Sweden the views were similar. Foreign Minister Lindh and Defence Minister von Sydow claimed that a Swedish

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<sup>80</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, "Finland and the Kosovo Crisis. At the Crossroads of Neutrality and Europeanism", *Northern Dimensions. Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy* (Finnish Institute of International Affairs: Helsinki 2000), pp. 41-49.

<sup>81</sup> Forsberg, "Finland and the Kosovo Crisis"...

<sup>82</sup> Hans Bergström, "Svenskt vankelmod i Europa", *Dagens Nyheter*, 26 March 1999.

<sup>83</sup> Pertti Torstila, "Mitä Kosovo merkitsee Suomelle", speech at the Paasikivi Society in Helsinki, 13 October 1999.

NATO-membership would not serve the challenges that Europe faced. The Kosovo crisis showed that non-alignment was, in their view, still an asset and not a burden.<sup>84</sup>

The mandating question has remained a difficult one for both Finland and Sweden. It is worth noting here that the European Union was not explicit at the Helsinki Summit on the necessity of the UN mandate for EU crisis management. According to the Presidency conclusions, the Union will contribute to international security “in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.” However, it does not state that the EU needs a UN mandate to launch and conduct its military operations. The new Finnish law on peacekeeping, however, still requires that the operation – unless it is a humanitarian one - has to be approved by the UN.<sup>85</sup>

### The Debate: The Line Challenged

In both countries the prevailing policy of non-alignment added with intensive participation in the construction of the EU’s defence dimension and cooperation with NATO has not gone unchallenged. Some people have argued that the present line is unclear and detrimental to non-alignment that best serves the country’s interests, while others think that in the present situation it would be logical to join NATO. Participation in crisis management operations and cooperation with NATO has not evoked as much debate as the question of membership. While the arguments used in the Swedish and Finnish debate resemble each other, there has probably been more political debate on the issue of NATO membership in Sweden. This reflects the old tendency in Finland to have respect for authority in foreign and security policy. In Sweden, the challenge to military non-alignment also comes from political parties, whereas in Finland independent researchers and columnists rather than politicians advocate joining NATO.

Two Swedish parties have adopted a positive attitude toward NATO membership. The Swedish Liberal Party (*Svenska Folkpartiet*) is explicitly urging Sweden to join NATO. The chairman of the party, Lars Leijonborg, gives four reasons for changing

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<sup>84</sup> Anna Lindh and Björn von Sydow, “Alliansfriheten är vår styrka”, *Aftonbladet*, 20 November 1999.

<sup>85</sup> Miia Aro, “Finland’s Peacekeeping Operations from 1991-1999: Transition and Readjustment”, *Northern Dimensions. Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy* (Finnish Institute of International Affairs: Helsinki 2000) pp. 50-62.

Sweden's basic security choice. The first one is influence. Since he regards NATO as the most important security organisation in Europe, Sweden should join the alliance to be at the table where European security is decided. The second reason resembles Samuel Huntington's thesis of the civilisations. Sweden is part of the European and North American democracies, which have a common interest in collective security. Third, Leijonborg stresses the importance of the transatlantic link and urges Sweden to join NATO in order to preserve the link. Fourth, Leijonborg claims that the best way to contribute to the stability in the Baltic Sea region is if Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic states join NATO together.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, in his opinion Sweden should not fear the Russian protest against NATO enlargement because NATO would never attack Russia and therefore Russia has nothing to be afraid of.<sup>87</sup>

The conservative Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*) also supports NATO membership but is more cautious than the Liberal Party. The party pays attention to the significance of making Russia part of the European security order and to the development of the EU's security policy, but it also believes that Swedish NATO membership would be a natural step in the Swedish policy to increase security cooperation. Like the Liberal Party, the Moderates assume that the best solution in the Baltic Sea region is that, not only Sweden, but also Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania join NATO as well. The chairman of the Moderate Party, Carl Bildt, argued in 1997 for Sweden's membership in NATO as a means to promote European security cooperation.<sup>88</sup> However, unlike the Liberals, the Moderate Party believes that there is no hurry in realising the membership. While Sweden should join NATO one day, both Bildt and his successor as chairman, Bo Lundgren, believe that there is no need to do it now.<sup>89</sup> Bildt, himself, has later focused more on the need to bolster the EU's security policy arguing that the security cooperation between the EU and the United States would function better if the Europeans were more powerful. According to him, "we cannot always rely on the Americans and think that they could resolve Europe's problems. Europe must stand on its own feet".<sup>90</sup> Thus, the Europeans should develop their own military capacity.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Lars Leijonborg, "Sverige, Nato och den europeiska säkerheten", speech at the Folk och Försvar's conference in Sälen, 23 January 2000.

<sup>87</sup> Lars Leijonborg, "Sverige bör snarast gå med i Nato", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 8 February 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Heidi Avellan, "Bildt vill se Sverige i det "nya" Nato", *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 5 January 1997.

<sup>89</sup> Carl Bildt, speech at Folk och Försvar's conference in Sälen, 19 January 1998; Bo Lundgren, "Den europeiska fredsvägen", speech at Folk och Försvar's conference in Sälen, 23 January 2000.

<sup>90</sup> Peter Bratt, "Vi kan inte alltid räkna med USA", *Dagens Nyheter*, 10 January 1999.

<sup>91</sup> Carl Bildt and Henrik Landerholm, "Jas blir inte stridsdugligt", *Dagens Nyheter*, 10 March 1999.

In Sweden, the Greens (*Miljöpartiet*), the Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*), and the left wing of the Social Democrats oppose giving up military non-alignment. This is sometimes referred to as the “domestic impediment” that complicates Sweden’s participation in the European security integration. The Center Party, as well as the Christian Democrats, also prefer military non-alignment to alliance membership, but at the same time they see cooperation with NATO in a positive light and do not want to exclude the possibility of joining the Alliance.

In Finland, the government’s unified stance, known as the “option line” towards NATO membership, hides some differences within the governing coalition. The Social Democratic Party has been more reluctant to consider the NATO option than the conservative National Coalition Party (*Kokoomus*). The difference is most clearly seen in the attitudes of the youth organisations. At the party congress in 1996, the youth organisation of the Social Democratic Party suggested a formulation, which was finally adopted, according to which there is “no reason for Finland to join NATO.” The party leadership had originally proposed a formulation according to which “there are no reasons *in view* for Finland to join NATO” (*italics added*).<sup>92</sup> A year later the party congress of the National Coalition Party, in turn, accepted the view according to which “Finland should be prepared for the membership in NATO” while the youth organisation of the party wanted Finland to apply for full membership.<sup>93</sup>

The Swedish People’s Party (*Svenska folkpartiet*) has probably the most favourable attitude towards NATO in Finland, but even its representatives have only suggested that Finland should consider NATO membership or, alternatively, they have predicted that it is likely that Finland will eventually join NATO. The presidential candidate of the party, Elisabeth Rehn, suggested in her campaign that an “independent” study should be made on the implications of Finland’s NATO membership.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the only party that has taken a clear stance in favour of Finland’s NATO membership is the Young Finns (*Nuorsuomalaiset*). Its chairman, Risto Penttilä, gave three reasons for giving up military non-alignment. First, Finland has to join NATO for the sake of

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<sup>92</sup> “SDP:n johtajat tulkitsivat puolueen tiukkaa NATO-kantaa”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20 November 1996.

<sup>93</sup> “Kokoomus: Suomen pitää varautua Nato-jäsenyyteen”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9 June 1997.

<sup>94</sup> Elisabeth Rehn, “Suomi-neidon ei pidä vikistä, vaan viedä”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4 December 1999.

influence. NATO membership is needed to be in the core of Europe. Secondly, if Finland remains outside NATO it will prevent Estonia from joining the alliance, which will form a security vacuum close to Finland. Thirdly, Finland and Sweden should join NATO to enable genuine Nordic military cooperation.<sup>95</sup> The Young Finns, however, did not manage to get any seats in the 1999 parliamentary elections and the party decided subsequently to close down. The topic of NATO membership seemed to be a burden also in the recent presidential elections. The two candidates, Tarja Halonen and the Chairman of the Center Party, Esko Aho, who made it to the second round, explicitly argued for maintaining the military non-alignment. The defeat of Elisabeth Rehn was partly seen caused by her pro-NATO views and the only candidate who suggested that Finland should join NATO, Risto Kuisma, received only one percent of the votes in the first round.<sup>96</sup>

As in Sweden, the Greens, the Left Party (*Vasemmistoliitto*) and the Center Party oppose membership in NATO. In the view of the Chairman of the Greens, Satu Hassi, there is no sensible reason to join the Western Alliance. On the contrary, Finland can contribute better to European and global security as a non-aligned country.<sup>97</sup> Suvianne Siimes of the Left Party suggested that a referendum on Finland's membership in NATO should be held in order to prevent the government from deciding on the issue without consulting the people.<sup>98</sup>

The foreign policy leadership in Finland has had to defend the "option line" in the question of military alignment in two directions. On one hand, Prime Minister Lipponen accused the National Coalition Party and the Swedish People's Party of flirting with NATO membership and lacking sufficient self-confidence. In his view, Finland has not been a satellite and continuity has prevailed in foreign policy. By the same token, however, he also criticised those still regarding NATO as a Cold War military alliance. To him the option to join NATO is one tool in Finland's foreign policy. If Finland were to state that it will never join NATO, then the latitude of its foreign policy would be scaled down. On the other hand he criticised those politicians

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<sup>95</sup> Risto Penttilä, "Nato laajentukoon pohjoiseen", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 23 February 1999.

<sup>96</sup> Unto Hämäläinen, "Finland and NATO", <http://virtual.finland.fi/news/>, 8 December 1999.

<sup>97</sup> "Vihreiden Satu Hassi: Suomen Nato-jäsenyys loisi pikemminkin epävakautta", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15 February 1999.

<sup>98</sup> "Nato-kansainvälistys pulmana vasemmistoliiton valtuustossa", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 November 1998.

speculating NATO membership, arguing that they should explain why Finland's status and relationship to NATO should be reappraised.<sup>99</sup> Similarly in Sweden, the representatives of the government have argued that discussion on Sweden's membership in NATO is not needed and is irresponsible.<sup>100</sup>

As to independent foreign policy experts, there are individuals in both Sweden and Finland who argue for NATO membership. In Finland, former ambassador Max Jakobson, in particular, has actively participated in the public debate on Finland's security choice and he is also often referred to in the Swedish debate. Even though Jakobson emphasises that he has never said that Finland should join NATO, he is regarded as one of the main proponents of giving up the military non-alignment. Jakobson has long argued that NATO is the central security organisation in Europe, and, consequently, Finland's ability to influence European security would be limited if she did not sit at the NATO table. Jakobson has also questioned the assumption of Finland's ability to influence Russia's behavior. While the Finnish government is reluctant to give up military non-alignment because of the potential negative reaction in Russia, Jakobson claims that Swedish and Finnish NATO membership would not affect Russia and that Russia would strive for its great power status regardless of Finland's and Sweden's behavior.<sup>101</sup> Jakobson also emphasises the security significance of the European Union. According to him, EU membership includes a tacit security guarantee. As a result, Finland no longer needs to be afraid that it would be left alone with its big eastern neighbour. He asks, however, whether belonging to the EMU will be enough for Finland to make sure that it will belong in all situations to the core of the Union.<sup>102</sup> Another person who has actively participated in the debate is Tomas Ries of the National Defence College. His main contribution to the debate was a report on Finland and NATO in which he argued that without NATO

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<sup>99</sup> "Lipponen: Kokoomus ja RKP flirttailevat NATO-jäsenyydellä", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 December 1998.

<sup>100</sup> "Bildt ruotii puolustusmäärärahojen leikkauksia", *STT-TT*, 4 January 1997.

<sup>101</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finland och Sverige i ett föränderligt Europa*, En debattserie från – försvarsdepartementet, (Regeringskansliet: Stockholm 1998); Max Jakobson, "Finland: A Nation that Dwells Alone", *The Washington Quarterly*, no. 4, vol. 19, Autumn 1996, pp. 37-58. Jukka Tarkka also argues that Finnish NATO membership would not have any major impact on Russian behavior, "Vanhat asenteet ohjaavat uutta turvallisuusajattelua", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8 July 2000.

<sup>102</sup> Max Jakobson, "Turvallisuuspolitiikka II", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 26 May 2000.



membership, Finland risks finding itself in a dangerously exposed situation in any east – west crisis.<sup>103</sup>

There is, however, no active lobby for Finland's membership in NATO. The Atlantic Council of Finland was founded as late as December 1999. So far, it has been more a forum of debate than a mouthpiece of Finland's membership in the Alliance. Its chairman, Jaakko Itoniemi, has not explicitly argued for joining the Alliance but has suggested instead that the question needs serious reflection and an analysis of the benefits and costs of membership should be conducted.<sup>104</sup>

In Sweden, the Atlantic Council has been actively supporting NATO membership. Its chairman, Bo Hugemark, argues that Sweden is already dependent on NATO and its nuclear umbrella, but as a military non-aligned country it cannot influence what kind of assistance it may receive and when. He also sees Sweden and Finland's membership in NATO as a precondition for the Baltic States joining the alliance.<sup>105</sup> Ann-Sofie Dahl, a member of the board of the Atlantic Council, concludes that the question is not whether Sweden should join NATO but when and how she should do it. By referring to the cooperation Sweden had during the Cold War with NATO, she argues that Swedish NATO membership would only formalise and intensify the linkage. Dahl dismisses the argument that Sweden should take the Russia factor into consideration in her policy on NATO by claiming that the Soviet Union never trusted Swedish neutrality.<sup>106</sup>

Former ambassador Leif Leifland suggests that Sweden should join NATO because the Finland factor in the Swedish decision-making may have totally changed. If Finland was, during the Cold War, an impediment to Sweden's policy towards NATO, it is possible in the new situation that Finland may decide to join NATO before Sweden does.<sup>107</sup> Commander Göran Frisk of the Defence Academy, in turn, sees four reasons for Swedish NATO membership: 1) Sweden is strongly dependent on NATO

<sup>103</sup> Tomas Ries, *Finland and NATO* (National Defence College: Helsinki 1999).

<sup>104</sup> Jaakko Itoniemi, "Euroopan turvallisuus ja puolustus", *Maanpuolustus no. 67*, 1999, pp. 45-52.

<sup>105</sup> Bo Hugemark, "Vårt beroende av Nato", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 29 March 2000.

<sup>106</sup> Ann-Sofie Dahl, *Svenskarna och NATO* (Timbro: Stockholm 1999); Ann-Sofie Dahl, "Tunga argument för svenskt Nato-medlemskap", in Claes Arvidsson (ed.), *Farväl till neutraliteten?* (Ekerlids Förlag: Stockholm 1998), pp. 41-64.

<sup>107</sup> Leif Leifland, "Sverige bör söka medlemskap i Nato" in Arvidsson (ed.), *Farväl till neutraliteten?*... p. 38.

2) Sweden belongs to the Western world 3) almost all Sweden's neighbours are in NATO 4) Sweden's membership would increase the European influence in NATO.<sup>108</sup> Ingemar Dörfer of the Swedish Defence Research Institute is also concerned about Sweden's influence. He argues that Finland and Sweden should join NATO to sustain the interest of the United States in the Nordic security.<sup>109</sup>

The leading newspapers in Sweden and Finland often discuss NATO membership with fairly favourable tunes. *Dagens Nyheter* in Sweden argues openly for Swedish NATO membership. The Finnish daily, the *Helsingin Sanomat*, has been more carefully worded as to its editorials, but some of its leading columnists are favourable to Finland's NATO membership. Olli Kivinen, for example, argued as early as 1992 that Finland's and Sweden's place is in NATO.<sup>110</sup>

The Kosovo conflict was followed in both countries by an intensified debate on NATO.<sup>111</sup> In Finland, mixed conclusions were drawn. Former President Koivisto emphasised that NATO had violated international law as well as its own founding act. In his view, Kosovo made it clear that NATO was dominated by big powers.<sup>112</sup> Thus, if Finland joined NATO, its chances to influence the decision-making of the Alliance would be marginal.<sup>113</sup> Columnist Pentti Sadeniemi, who writes for *Helsingin Sanomat*, claimed that NATO membership has become more valuable – not less valuable – due to the Kosovo crisis. In his view, Kosovo revealed the political and military supremacy of the United States in relation to Europe, which is likely to prevail for the next decades. A seat at the NATO table would be much more important than EU membership, if Finland wants to have more influence.<sup>114</sup> The security policy advisor to former President Ahtisaari, Alpo Rusi, expressed his concern about the anti-NATO atmosphere in Finland. To Rusi, the developments in the 1990s indicate

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<sup>108</sup> Göran Frisk, *The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences Proceedings and Journal* Vol. 203, no. 3, 1999, pp. 5-15.

<sup>109</sup> Ingemar Dörfer, *NATO's Northern Enlargement: The Nordic Nations in the New Western Security Regime* (SWP: Ebenhausen 1997), pp. 94-95.

<sup>110</sup> Olli Kivinen, "Suomen ja Ruotsin paikka on NATOssa" *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 May 1992.

<sup>111</sup> Forsberg, "Finland and the Kosovo Crisis"...; Svensk oenighet om Kosovo", *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 March 1999.

<sup>112</sup> "Väärän kuninkaan sota: Presidentti Koiviston mielestä Naton ilmasota oli virhe", Interview with Mauno Koivisto, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20 June 1999; "Presidentti Mauno Koivisto arvostelee ulkopuolisia Jugoslavian hajottamisesta". Interview with Mauno Koivisto, *Turun Sanomat*, 29 August 1999.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Mauno Koivisto, TV1, 19 September 1999. See e.g. *Ilta-Sanomat*, 20 September 1999.

<sup>114</sup> Pentti Sadeniemi, "Kaksi sotaa ja Suomi", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 October 1999.

that NATO is the last safe haven for small European nations.<sup>115</sup> In his memoirs Rusi also concluded that Finland should consider NATO membership positively, because it would strengthen Finland's security and widen its political latitude.<sup>116</sup>

In Sweden the lines in the debate over the Kosovo Crisis reflected the overall views of NATO. The most pointed standpoints came from the representatives of the small parties. Folkpartiet's view was most favorable to the strikes. Respectively, NATO's role in the Kosovo conflict was most strongly criticised by the Left Party and the Greens.<sup>117</sup> The former chairman of the Greens, Birger Schlaug, accused NATO of violating human rights and called NATO a "war machine" dominated by the big states. Schlaug also blamed Prime Minister Persson, for being a yes-man instead of giving NATO the criticism it deserved.<sup>118</sup> The chairman of the Left Party, Gudrun Schyman, launched similar criticism towards NATO, arguing that the conflict cannot be solved with bombs and that NATO should stop the air strikes.<sup>119</sup> The Moderates and the Social Democrats were split. The views of left wing social democrats were closer to those of the Left Party.<sup>120</sup> The Moderates cautiously supported the strikes. Carl Bildt, on the other hand, argued that NATO air strikes only worsened the situation and claimed that ground forces were necessary.<sup>121</sup>

### Public Opinion: The Line Supported

Military non-alignment is popular in both Finland and Sweden. Public opinion does not support NATO membership in either country. Even though the support for European defence is considerably stronger, Finns and Swedes are at the bottom of the list among the European nations when asked whether they support common European defence. In contrast, public opinion supports – along with the government's line in both countries – the participation in international crisis management operations.

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<sup>115</sup> "Alpo Rusia huolestuttaa Naton vastaisuus Suomessa", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9 January 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Alpo Rusi, *Mariankadun puolelta* (Otava: Helsinki 2000), p. 359.

<sup>117</sup> "Svensk oenighet om Kosovo"...

<sup>118</sup> Birger Schlaug, "Pinsamt Nato fjäsk Persson", *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 April 1999; "Stoppa Nato's Bomber", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 14 May 1999.

<sup>119</sup> "Schymans majtal blev kramkalas", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 May 1999.

<sup>120</sup> Carl Lidbom, "Göran Persson duckar för Nato", *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 May 1999.

<sup>121</sup> "Bildt kräver marktrupper", *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 April 1999; "Svensk oenighet om Kosovo"...

In Finland, the share of support for membership in NATO has varied between 20 and 30 percent whereas the number of opponents has been between 50 and 70 percent. The support for NATO membership declined slightly between 1995-1997 and rose again by a few percent points between 1997-1998. The most remarkable change took place in the spring of 1999 when the Kosovo crisis led to a 10 percent drop in support for Finland's membership of NATO. In the polls conducted in the spring and summer of 1999, only 20 percent of Finns wanted Finland to join NATO.<sup>122</sup>

The attitude of Finns towards NATO enlargement and its crisis management has been mixed. Finns had a neutral view of NATO enlargement when they were asked whether it increases or decreases their security.<sup>123</sup> A slight majority of Finns supported the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia.<sup>124</sup> Yet, the low figures in favour of Finland's membership in NATO indicated that Finns themselves do not wish to be involved in such operations. Cooperation with NATO in other issues is however not seen as a problem. A majority of Finns support Finland's participation in the KFOR peace-keeping operation under NATO command.<sup>125</sup>

The EU is clearly more popular than NATO even as a military actor. Not only did the majority of Finns support the idea that Finland should participate in the crisis management activities of the European Union, but roughly twice as many are in favour of EU developing a common defence and Finland being part of it than in favour of Finland joining NATO.<sup>126</sup> However, the support for the common defence has not become a majority view and the support in Finland is lower than any other EU country. Moreover, the Kosovo crisis affected the public attitude making it somewhat less favourable toward the European common defence as well.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> In Finland the attitude towards NATO membership has varied as follows (in favor – against): 17-72 (1993), 23-59 (1994), 21-61 (1997), 27-56 (1997), 27-57 (1998), 28-52 (1998), 20-70 (1999), 25-63 (1999), 21-62 (2000). See Unto Hämäläinen, “Nato-jäsenyyden suosio on pysynyt alhaalla”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18 May 2000.

<sup>123</sup> “NATOn laajentuminen ei huolestuta suomalaisia” *Helsingin Sanomat*, March 8 1996.

<sup>124</sup> “NATOn iskujen oikeutus jakaa mielipiteet kahtia”, *Turun Sanomat* 3 April 1999; “Pommituksilla yhä vankka kannatus”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1 May 1999.

<sup>125</sup> “NATOn iskujen oikeutus jakaa mielipiteet kahtia”...

<sup>126</sup> “Itsenäinen puolustus yhä ykkönen”, *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 24 June 1999; Pauliina Pulkkinen, “Suomalaiset myötämielisiä EU:n kriisinhallinnalle”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 November 1999.

<sup>127</sup> Eurobarometer. Public Opinion in the European Union. Report Number 51. European Commission, July 1999.

Public opinion in Sweden, too, has been reluctant to join NATO although it has a positive view of Sweden's cooperation with the Alliance. The opposition to Sweden's membership declined at the latter part of the 1990s.<sup>128</sup> In November 1998, NATO membership was supported by 25 percent of Swedes, whereas 60 percent of Swedes wanted to maintain non-alignment. During the Kosovo crisis only 22 percent of Swedes were in favor of NATO membership.<sup>129</sup> At the same time, however, a slight majority (52 percent) supported the sending of NATO ground troops to Kosovo.<sup>130</sup> Later in the same year, polls indicated that the support for Sweden's membership in NATO had significantly increased. Also, a clear majority of Swedes thought that the NATO strikes in Yugoslavia were justified and also supported the participation in the KFOR operation.<sup>131</sup> By November 1999, 35 percent of Swedes were in favour of Sweden joining the alliance.<sup>132</sup>

In both countries, people who vote for right wing parties are more likely to support joining NATO, whereas supporters of Center Party and left wing parties are against. The attitudes towards NATO strikes in the Kosovo crisis reflected this pattern. Yet, even more influential is the gender factor. Men tended to be much more willing to join the Alliance and abolish military non-alignment than women.<sup>133</sup> The gender difference was even more evident with regard to the acceptance of NATO strikes in Kosovo. In Finland, a clear majority of men supported the strikes, whereas an equally clear majority of women opposed them. The trend was similar in Sweden. Younger generations also supported the strikes more often than the older ones, but there were no remarkable differences between age cohorts as far as the question of NATO-membership is concerned. According to an elite survey, a slight majority of business managers supported Finland's membership in NATO.<sup>134</sup>

A common view is that the public opinion has less impact on security policy decision-making in Finland than it does in Sweden since all the major foreign policy decisions

<sup>128</sup> Ulf Bjereld "Nu minskar Natomotståndet", *Dagens Nyheter*, 14 May 1998.

<sup>129</sup> Ulf Bjereld "Minskat stöd för NATO-inträde", *Dagens Nyheter* 19 April 1999; Ulf Bjereld, "Trendbrott i svensk NATO-opinion", in Sören Holmberg – Lisa Weibull, "Ljusnande framtid", *SOM-rapport 22* (University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg 1999).

<sup>130</sup> "Svenskarna positiva till marktrupper", *Dagens Nyheter*, 29 April 1999.

<sup>131</sup> Göran Stütz, *Opinion 99. Svenskarnas syn på samhället, säkerhetspolitiken och försvaret hösten 1999*, Meddelande 152. (Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar: Stockholm 1999).

<sup>132</sup> "För Sverige i Nato", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28 November 1999.

<sup>133</sup> "Naiset ja miehet kulkevat eri teitä turvallisuuspolitiikassa", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 27 November 1997.

in the past were made without much public debate. Hence, it may be that the public opinion does not explain Finland's policy toward NATO. Instead, the adopted policy may explain the results of opinion polls.<sup>135</sup> Accordingly, despite the reluctance of the Finnish public towards military alignment, there has been no difficulty in getting the public acceptance of participation in the common defence policy of the EU.<sup>136</sup> It is telling, moreover, that the majority of Finns believed that the decision-makers are secretly preparing Finnish membership in NATO and that Finland will eventually join the Alliance.<sup>137</sup>

### The Future Line

It was claimed at the beginning of this report that despite having many shared characteristics as small Nordic welfare states, Finland and Sweden differ in their security political background factors in two respects. First, their geopolitical locations are still different since the end of the Cold War did not totally change the geopolitics in Northern Europe. During the Cold War, Finland was bordering on the Soviet Union, and today its neighbour is Russia. Sweden is separated from the eastern great power by Finland and now also by the independent Baltic States. Second, partially due to the geopolitical difference, Finland and Sweden's historical experiences are different. Finland had to fight the Soviet Union in the Second World War, while Sweden has experienced a long period of peace.

Although both countries called themselves "neutral," Finland and Sweden pursued different security policies during the Cold War. Sweden had secret military cooperation with the United States and NATO, while Finland, which was in the Soviet sphere of influence, was forced into a special relationship with Moscow. In Sweden, the alternative to neutrality was the alignment with the West. In Finland, the alternative was alignment with the East.

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<sup>134</sup> "Kysely: NATO-jäsenyys jakaa yritysjohtajat", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18 April 1997.

<sup>135</sup> Tapani Vaahtoranta, "Finland's non-alignment in post-Cold War Europe", *Northern Dimensions. Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy* 1998, pp. 11-13.

<sup>136</sup> "Esko Antola EU:n puolustuksesta: Emuakin kovempi asia", *Kansan Uutiset*, 7 September 1999.

<sup>137</sup> "Enemmistö uskoo suomalaisten valmistautuvan NATO-jäsenyyteen", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 6 March 1997.

Since Finland shares a long common border with Russia and the memory of the Second World War is being kept alive by new movies and books, one might expect that the Finnish and Swedish policy towards the European Union and NATO as security organisations are different still today. However, this does not seem to be the case. If, during the Cold War, the countries looked like distant cousins, they are today more like close sisters. Since the end of the Cold War Finland and Sweden have taken strikingly similar steps toward the European Union and NATO. Also, the official rhetoric used in Helsinki and Stockholm to explain and justify the policy sounds very similar. The debate on the national security choice and the public opinion in both countries reflect the similarity. Finns and Swedes tend to share today the same views of the major security issues facing the countries.

If the background factors – geopolitics and history – are still different, why are the policy outcomes similar? Why do Finland and Sweden pursue similar security policies towards the EU and NATO? One answer is that the meaning of geopolitics and historical experiences has changed due to the end of the Cold War. To understand the significance of this change, it is useful to draw a distinction between two ways of pursuing national security policy. In the anarchic international system, each state is seeking to increase its own security, but it can be done in different ways. A state may focus on measures that directly increase its security. One way of doing so is to seek protection from other countries. Another approach is to contribute to common security and in this way to try to increase national security indirectly. The more threatened a state feels, the more likely it is to rely on the policy of protection. The policy of common security is likely to be used by a state that has a more relaxed perception of its security environment. The interpretation here is that, due to the geopolitical difference, Sweden has tended to put emphasis on common security, while Finland has been seeking protection. During the Cold War, a credible policy of common security was not possible, Sweden chose neutrality together with the secret element of the policy of protection. As a result of the end of the Cold War, working through common security became feasible and neutrality was replaced by membership of the EU and cooperation with NATO.<sup>138</sup> The Finnish policy of neutrality during the Cold War was different from the Swedish one, since for Finland, neutrality was a means of

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<sup>138</sup> For this interpretation, see Ojanen, Herolf and Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy ...* pp. 155-237.

protection, a way to decrease the dependence on the Soviet Union and to avoid military cooperation with Moscow. When the Cold War ended, joining the EU and cooperating with NATO were perceived as the most effective ways of directly increasing Finland's security. Thus, the policy of neutrality was replaced by a policy that aimed at enhancing Finland's international position through belonging to the core of the Union and seeking ways of receiving outside military assistance in case it was needed. To a certain extent, Finland and Sweden seemed to be moving with different speeds. However, it now seems that a new change may be taking place in the Finnish thinking of security policy. Protection as the motivation for the policy toward the EU and NATO may be becoming weaker, while the motivation of common security seems to be growing stronger. In other words, Finland and Sweden may be becoming even more alike.

The growing similarity between Finnish and Swedish policy is made possible by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the northern enlargement of the European Union. First of all, Russia is not the Soviet Union. Due to the lack of antagonism in Russian-European security relations and to the current weakness of Russia, Moscow is not seen to pose any security threat to Finland, and even less so to Sweden. This is a major change that has taken place in Finland's security environment, in particular. The second change is the membership of Finland and Sweden in the European Union, which is bolstering its security policy. Even though the EU does not provide any hard military security guarantees, it strengthens the security of its members through the mutual solidarity based on the economic and political integration. Thus, both Finland and Sweden share the common interest in making the EU a stronger security actor aiming in this way at contributing to the development of the common European security order and this way increasing, indirectly, their own security.

As a result of the changes in the European security order and in Finland's international position, Finland does no longer regard itself as a threatened country, but it increasingly feels that it is, as Sweden, a protected country. Thus, there may be a reason for feeling that Finland does not need to seek protection from NATO or from the EU and that the main objective in its relationship and participation in these organisations is improving the positive tendencies in the development of European security. In fact, common security as the main motivation of the policy toward the EU



and NATO seems to be growing more influential in the official rhetoric at the cost of the motivation of seeking protection. As a result of the geopolitical shift after the end of the Cold War, Finnish and Swedish policies have been converging even though the historical experiences of the countries are different.

If the significance of geopolitics can change, the lessons that are drawn from the past are also ambiguous. They are increasingly disputed and thereby potentially changing. In Sweden, the orthodox lesson has been that non-alignment and neutrality have saved Sweden from waging wars. In recent years, however, the lesson has been questioned because it has become evident that Sweden had secret plans with NATO and was in practice protected by NATO during the Cold War. In Finland, the orthodox lesson of the Winter War that formed the core doctrine of the so-called Paasikivi - Kekkonen line during the Cold War was that Finland should not let the Soviet Union suspect that foreign troops could launch an attack on Moscow from the Finnish soil. Therefore Finland should avoid all security cooperation with the West. Even in the case of a war against the Soviet Union, military alignment was perceived as having only little value. The allies wouldn't be willing to help Finland either, nor were they necessarily needed as Finland could survive on its own. Yet, during the last few years, these lessons have been challenged in various ways. It has been pointed out that the Soviet Union started the Winter War without any justified reason to fear that foreign troops could use the Finnish territory for an attack. Also the point that "nobody would help us" has become weaker, because one can argue that it was not reasonable to expect that the Western powers would have helped Finland in the Winter War (1939-40) because there was no alliance in the first place. Furthermore, when Finland made a deal with Germany during the Continuation War (1941-44), it received important military assistance. By the same token, the heroic story of surviving both the Winter War and the Continuation War alone has been questioned because in the first case, the Western powers put pressure on the Soviet Union to stop fighting and in the latter case Germany helped Finland to defend itself against the Red Army.

Hence, while neutrality is seen to have protected Sweden, the failure of the policy of neutrality at the end of the 1930s can be used in Finland as an argument for seeking protection from the EU and NATO now. Indeed, the change initiated by the end of the Cold War in Finnish and Swedish policy first seemed to result in a new type of a

difference between the countries. While both Finland and Sweden joined the EU and increasingly cooperated NATO, the weight of the protection motivation based on geopolitics and the view that in the past Finland had been left alone by the West made Finland emphasise the need to belong to the core of the EU and to create interoperability with NATO to receive outside military help. In other words, Finland seemed to be moving deeper into the Western security integration than Sweden. The most visible example of this difference is the fact that Finland joined the EMU, which was partly motivated by security needs, while Sweden decided to stay outside. However, Finland did not want to join NATO, because it wanted to be regarded as a stable Nordic country, not belonging to the group of former Soviet satellites who suffered from security deficit. The shared concern about Russia has also produced similarities. To maintain “stability” in Northern Europe, both Finland and Sweden have refrained from applying for membership in NATO or promoting common defence in the EU.

The meaning and importance of geopolitics and historical lessons are therefore contested within the foreign policy elite in both countries. While during the Cold War consensus prevailed over foreign policy, it now seems that, particularly in Finland, the key foreign policy-makers have different assessments of European security and history and, consequently, draw different conclusions for Finnish policy. Prime Minister Lipponen’s view is based more on the continuing relevance of geopolitics and historical experiences. He reminds Finland’s position as a neighbour of Russia and how Finland was left alone by the West to deal with the Soviet Union.<sup>139</sup> Thus, according to him, when the EU and Europe change, Finland is still in danger of remaining the object of bilateralism, in the position where Finland would be the object of Moscow’s and Berlin’s policy. Lipponen, thus, concludes that Finland has to get as far as possible into to the inner circle of the Union where the future of the EU is decided. This was Lipponen’s argument for joining the EMU.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> See, e.g., Lipponen, “Jatkuvuus ja muutos Suomen ulkopolitiikassa”...; Paavo Lipponen, “EMU ja Euroopan integraation kehittäminen”, speech at the seminar of Helsingin Sanomat, 7 October 1996; Paavo Lipponen, “Turvallisuus Pohjois-Euroopassa ja Itämeren alueella: suomalainen näkemys”, speech in Washington, 23 July 1996.

<sup>140</sup> “Lipponen: EU:n rahaliitto syntyy, Suomen on syytä sopeutua. Suomea tulee pysyä siinä EU:n piirissä, jossa päätetään unionin tulevaisuudesta”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8 October 1996.

Current Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, disputed the usefulness of Lipponen's historical analogy of Finland being left alone in an article that he wrote three years ago. Tuomioja finds the likelihood of the renewal of the Tilsit (1809) or Ribbentrop Treaty (1939)-type situations so small that the historical experience of being left alone can not be used "in the current world" as a reason for neglecting important economic and social interests. Thus, Tuomioja does not believe that these kind of historical experiences should lead Finland to seek any particular relationship of protection with the hard core of the EU today. Instead he accepts the aim of strengthening European cooperation and mutual interdependence.<sup>141</sup> Tuomioja said that he was in favour of Finland joining the European Union, in particular, because he saw the EU as a means to manage globalisation democratically.<sup>142</sup> In other words, security in the traditional sense of the word was not Tuomioja's main motivation.

President Tarja Halonen also seems to be ready to reassess some of the traditional assumptions of Finnish security policy. Instead of aiming at more protection, trying to increase security indirectly clearly influences her thinking. An indication of this approach is the fact that Halonen talks about the new, wider concept of security, which, according to her, makes the current situation different from the Cold War world. She emphasises that security through military means alone is not possible, but that it is important to strengthen democracy, respect human rights and realise the principles of the rule of law. Halonen also includes economic well being, social justice and the protection of the environment in security.<sup>143</sup> Besides the emphasis on the Council of Europe, it remains to be seen what concrete conclusions she will draw from the wide concept of security as far as Finnish security policy is concerned.

In brief, the governments and public opinion in both countries seem to be rather firmly behind the current policy of supporting the development of the civilian and military crisis management of the EU but not that of the EU's common defence, as well as supporting intensive cooperation with NATO but not membership of NATO. Yet, this line has also been criticised. Some argue that even the current level of militarisation of the EU and the co-operation with NATO are detrimental. Somewhat more pressure

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<sup>141</sup> Erkki Tuomioja, "Suomi matkalla Euroopan ytimeen", *Ulkopolitiikka*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1997, p. 40.

<sup>142</sup> Erkki Tuomioja, "Globalisaation hallinta ja demokratian legitimizeetti Euroopan haasteina", speech at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Berlin, 10 May 2000.

<sup>143</sup> Tarja Halonen, speech at the Paasikivi Society in Helsinki, 31 August 2000.

has come, however, from those who claim that Sweden and Finland, respectively, should also support common defence for the European Union and join NATO.

When assessing the future, it is not likely that domestic political changes would alter significantly the policies of the countries. Two parties in Sweden have supported the idea of joining NATO, but even if they were in government, it is not likely that they would be able to take Sweden into NATO. In Finland, the change of the government coalition is not likely to bring any major changes in the policy on non-alignment as well. The main divergent lines are within the parties, not between them. Moreover, the change of presidents, apart from the fact that the next elections will be held in 2006, will not be as crucial as it used to be. The power of president has been scaled down and it is no longer possible that the president could make a decision about Finland's military alignment against the will of the government. The president can, however, slow down the process. Finally, there is no significant pressure from below that would demand changes. In both countries, public opinion seems to support the present line and oppose changes.

If there used to be a simple way of trying to predict Finland and Sweden's security policy it was the idea that Finland's policy was caused by Russia whereas Sweden's policy depended more on domestic debate. This explanation seemed to work in the first half on the 1990s when the "Zhirinovsky factor" intensified the debate on NATO membership in Finland. A major change for the worse in Russia can still affect Finland and cause a new difference between Finnish and Swedish policy but it depends on the worldview of the leading decision-makers. What happens in the world is one thing and what one makes out of the events is another. Therefore, the fact that the foreign policy elite in Finland does not seem to share the same assumptions of international security is potentially significant. Even if things went wrong in Russia, it may not be self-evident what conclusions Finland would draw from it. As for the factors affecting Swedish and Finnish policy, it is, however, the development of the EU's defence dimension that is most likely to change both Finland and Sweden's security policy including their policy towards NATO. If non-alignment turns out to be uncomfortable or irrelevant in the Union, the countries need to reassess their non-alignment policy or their relationship with the Union.