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# In Search for Influence?

– A Neoclassical Realist Study of the  
Reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces in a  
New Security Environment.

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## **Abstract**

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Between 1999 and 2009 the Swedish Armed Forces underwent an immense reformation. This thesis aims to contribute to the discussion on small state foreign policy behaviour within the wider field of international relations by explaining why Sweden decided to reform their national defence from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence. Using a neoclassical realist approach and a process tracing methodology, two hypotheses are tested to analyze a predicted causal relationship between systemic imperatives, the search for influence, and the decision to reform the Armed Forces. The first hypothesis is that when a state's relative power rises it will initially seek, but ultimately attempt to gain, more influence abroad. The second hypothesis is that the search for influence is the driving force behind the reformation of the Armed Forces. The analysis corroborates both hypotheses, although the former with a relative amount of uncertainty, and argues that both system and intervening unit-level variables matter. The main conclusion is that the favourable situation in the international system has permitted an increased search for influence. This search for influence has in turn been the driving force behind the reformation. Since the first hypothesis has a relative amount of uncertainty connected to it, the certainty of the conclusions in this thesis can be discussed, and must therefore be subject to further empirical research.

**Keywords: disarmament, foreign policy, military reformation, perceptions, process tracing, realism, small states, Sweden**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background: A new security environment

When the Cold War ended the international security environment underwent a dramatic transformation: the tension between the world's two superpowers, The US and the Soviet Union, decreased and military budgets began to shrink worldwide; the fear that Europe could yet again be turned into the main stage of a possible theatre of war diminished. Disarmament and arms reduction became a defining feature on the agenda of international relations, perceived as more favourable in the early 1990s than at any previous time since the League of Nations disarmament efforts before World War II (Gleditsch *et al.* 1992:324). The general improvement of the international climate following the end of the Cold War raised the prospects of genuine disarmament associated with sizeable arms reductions – we witnessed a golden era, in which a disarmament race was considered as a possible replacement of the Cold War arms race (UNIDIR, 1993:3, 24, 39; see also Renner, 1994). From a security policy point of view, it was argued, Sweden neither could, nor should, miss this opportunity to decrease its military expenditure (bill. 1995/96:12, p.5), and thereby commence a reformation of the Armed Forces (bill. 1998/99:74, p.9). This international trend of decreased military expenditure was however short-lived, coming to an end in the mid 1990s (Thee, 1994:72). Since then, military expenditure, as of 2009, has risen nearly 50 per cent (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2010:10; see also Gillis, 2009:1f). In every region of the world military expenditure is increasing, and although the consequences are impossible to predict with absolute accuracy, if policy makers do not perceive threats from other states at a certain point in time there is nothing that guarantees that they will not be developed at a later point. Hence, states are bound by contingency planning because none can be sure that others' intentions are peaceful, or more importantly will remain so (Thee, 1994:76-78; Snyder, 1984:461; Müller, 2002:371). The lack of a sovereign in international politics permits war to occur and makes security an expensive business; the world is still dominated by uncertainty and situations of instability are usually identified with hindsight.

Having been spared from war for nearly 200 years Sweden has continuously been more armed than many other states of the same size, and in some categories even compared to major powers in Europe, mainly because Swedish neutrality policy was based on the

maintenance of a strong defence force (Åselius, 2005:26f).<sup>1</sup> Following the logic of *Si Vis pacem – Para Bellum* (If you want peace – prepare for war) (see Wallerfelt, 1999), this reciprocity between non-alignment and a significant military defence has been mirrored in the electorate and the legislative chambers. Since 2000, however, Sweden has decreased their military expenditures by 21 per cent<sup>2</sup> and downsized the armed forces to historically low levels. A quick glance at the Swedish Armed Forces' grants (including reconversion grants) between 1999 and 2009 indicate that they have remained relatively fixed (~ SEK 42 billion, see table 1) and that the share of the state budget has decreased with ~1.5 per cent. The downsized and reformed defence has become smaller but in return more expensive.

When the Berlin wall crumbled down and the Soviet Empire demised a new security environment emerged in which Swedish decision makers perceived the threat of a Russian invasion to have disappeared, which considerably reduced the need for a large Swedish territorial defence – a security-political paradigm shift occurred. During the 1990s the Swedish government therefore ceased to use the term “policy of neutrality” and instead replaced it with the expression “non-participation in military alliances”, which led Sweden to become involved in more far-reaching international defence and security policy cooperation than would have been possible during the policy of neutrality (Lassinantti, 2001:103). This terminological shift also enabled for Swedish membership in the EU, which marked the beginning of a Swedish defence and security policy increasingly shifted from national concern to international demands on participation in peace keeping and building missions.

What was perceived as a significant improvement of the security situation in post-Cold War Europe, particularly regarding the interests of small states across the continent (Sens, 1996:75), serious threats and instability nonetheless remained in the Baltic Sea region (Knudsen, 1993:1; 1998:vii, 2), where very little has been achieved in the realm of military security cooperation (Eriksson, 2002:41f; Knudsen, 1998:3, 37).<sup>3</sup> But Swedish decision makers had another perception, viewing the Baltic Sea region as one characterized by stability and peace, where military security is a common concern that is to be dealt with collectively.

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that the Swedish neutrality policy was unilateral, and not based on international agreements in the same way as the neutrality policies of Finland, Switzerland, and Austria, also called for the maintenance of a significant defence capability (Lassinantti, 2001:102; see also Wiberg, 1996:36, and Cox and Mac Ginty, 1996:125).

<sup>2</sup> Military expenditure in constant US \$ (2009). Numbers from SIPRI, available at <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>, see also SvD 2010-06-02 and DN 2011-01-16.

<sup>3</sup> Some improvements have however been made when it comes to Nordic cooperation (see Syrén, 2007:57f). Further, the Swedish parliamentary defence committee emphasizes that cooperation between the Nordic states is manifested in the realm of international crisis management (Ds 2004:30, p.38). How this is manifested in reality is however unclear.

In the light of this development it might therefore not seem that puzzling that Sweden's defence structure from the mid 1990s was dismantled within a few years, but the consensus within parliament and electorate to stand outside any military alliance remains relatively solid.<sup>4</sup>

This development may seem unproblematic, given the perceived ease in our region, but the only one who can feel safe and secure is the one who ignores recent development in our region; Russia has increased their military expenditure with 105 per cent,<sup>5</sup> since 2000 and the prognosis for 2013 indicates an increase in 260 per cent (DN, 2011-01-16). The Russian leadership continuously accentuate Russia's role as a major world power, which, in turn, requires a drastic increase in military expenditure in order to develop and maintain that role to gain influence (Leijonhielm *et al.*, 2009:25, 91). The strategic importance of the Arctic and Barents regions is increasing, most notably due to the increased demands for natural resources, the security-political implications following the Nordstream project is difficult to predict, and the Russian decision in July 2007 to suspend its obligations under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE-Treaty) is alarming. Sweden is at the same time still holding on to a security doctrine where international efforts are higher prioritized than national concerns. The Armed Forces have been changed from a domestic resource to an international tool; from one based on conscription with territorial (national) defence as priority to one based on voluntary efforts (as of 2010-07-01) and international missions as priority. One might be inclined to ask if it is logically sound from a geo-strategic standpoint to reform the national defence with an explicit focus on international missions? The reformation *per se* is however not a specific Swedish phenomenon, but rather one similar to many other European states (PerP, 2009:10). But why did Sweden decide to follow suit and reform the defence? Apart from the diminished invasion threat and the perceived ease in our region, one reason might be that practically all other states in the Baltic Sea region have increased their military expenditure,<sup>6</sup> and when the three Baltic states and Poland eventually became both NATO- and EU-members Sweden became embedded in dual security structures by 'friendly' states on all sides. A sort of zero-sum game was played in which Sweden stood as winner relative to the situation during the Cold War. As a full-fledged member of the international

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<sup>4</sup> Only the Liberal Party (*Folkpartiet*) argues for a membership in NATO.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers from SIPRI, available at <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>

<sup>6</sup> Since 2000 the three Baltic States together with Poland show the highest relative increase, with Latvia (+374%) and Estonia (+153%) showing the highest followed by Poland (+54%), Lithuania (+51%), Finland (+32%), and Norway (+15%). Denmark's spending remains unchanged, whereas Germany shows a relatively small decrease of 7%. Germany's overall military expenditures 2009 were however still 48 \$billion, nearly five times the Polish expenditures (numbers from SIPRI, available at <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>, see also DN 2011-01-16).

security community through the EU and NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), and being surrounded by 'allies', it is fair to say that Swedish share of relative power has risen to an extent incomparable to that of the period before EU-membership and the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, it has been argued that the "small states today enjoy more international prestige and visibility than at any other time in history...their physical security is ensured, while the rise of such transnational efforts as the EU...and NATO put them on a legal and diplomatic footing with larger countries", and therefore does not small size automatically translate into vulnerability in the international arena (Hey, 2003:1f). Weakness is therefore no longer "the most common, natural and pervasive view of self in the small state" (Vital, 1967: 33). Since the policy of neutrality no longer placed far-reaching constraints on the freedom of action, Sweden got a voice in the EU's security cooperation structures and was increasingly connected with NATO through the PfP. This increased share of relative power was and is therefore likely to have an impact on Swedish foreign policy, where Swedish decision makers are likely to strive for more rather than less influence on the international arena. In order to gain international influence, that is, the capacity to have an effect or the power to shape policy, the old Swedish Cold War invasion-based defence was simply perceived by Swedish decision makers as inadequate. This search for influence, I argue, is therefore the driving force behind the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces.

If threats are low, as Swedish decision makers seems to have it, then it is interesting that we witness such an overall increase in military expenditure in the region. If threats are *bona fide*, as other states in the region seems to have it, then why does Sweden deviate from this overall trend? The development in the Baltic Sea region points in a direction where purely structural theories are insufficient in providing a suitable explanation. To understand the way in which Swedish decision makers have interpreted and responded to its external environment, the analysis will therefore be steered towards an analysis of how these systemic incentives have been filtered through intervening variables at the unit-level. Put simply, the "black box" of the state needs to be opened.

## **1.2 Aims**

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive empirical analysis of the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces in a post Cold War setting. By addressing the question *what explains the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, the paper aims to shed a light on *why* Sweden chose to reform the Armed Forces from an

invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence. Within the realist research tradition, little attention has been paid to the smaller states of the international system, this study therefore aims to contribute to the study of small states in international relations by analyzing how a small state seeks influence and recognition on the international arena.

The theoretical aim of this study is to provide and offer a theoretically grounded explanation of the above-mentioned puzzle. I will therefore follow the central empirical prediction of neoclassical realism: when a state's relative power rises it will initially seek, but ultimately attempt to gain, more influence abroad, and as it falls their actions and ambitions will be scaled back accordingly. I will also add a second hypothesis; that the increased search for influence has been the driving force behind reformation of the Armed Forces. By "opening up the black box of the state", the aim is to investigate elite perceptions amongst national decision-makers, and domestic state structures to specify the ways in which intervening unit-level variables operate between the independent variable(s) and the dependent variable. The case can be seen as typical, given that Sweden follows an international trend of Armed Forces reformation, but the intent is not to argue for a general explanation based on one case, thereto these processes are too complex. Rather, the theory-building objective serves a heuristic purpose, with the aim of identifying the causal mechanism that links systemic imperatives to the outcome of interest in this particular case, and of providing an explanatory model to explain similar cases. The overall intention is to contribute theoretically and empirically to the discussions of small state foreign policy behaviour within the wider field of international relations.

### **1.3 Disposition**

After this introductory section, the outline of the thesis will proceed accordingly: In chapter 2 the theoretical considerations are presented; the dependent variable will be specified and previous research concerning security policies from an international as well as Swedish perspective is presented. After this an argumentation of why the systemic strands of defensive and offensive realism are discarded is presented, which then is followed by a presentation of neoclassical realism from which the theoretical framework and model is derived. In chapter 3, then, the methodological considerations are presented, where the case study approach as well as the methodological procedure is discussed. A discussion about the variables and the collection of data is also included. The empirical analysis then follows in chapter 4 and in



chapter 5 the results are presented and discussed. Finally, in chapter 6 some concluding remarks and avenues for further research are put forward.

## **2. Theoretical considerations**

### **2.1 The dependent variable – what is to be explained?**

After decades of discussing and suggesting a suitable definition of “smallness”, still no satisfactory definition has been found.<sup>7</sup> In a recent study of the foreign policy behaviour of small states, Hey (2003) therefore adopted Vital’s (1971) position that a concept is preferable to a rigid definition. For Hey the concept of a small state is based on the idea of perceptions – if a state’s people and institutions generally perceive themselves to be small, or if other states’ peoples and institutions perceive that state as small, it shall be so considered (Hey, 2003: 3). When defining smallness, then, the psychological dimension should complement the objective criterions; “states are deemed small not by any objective definition, but by their *perceived role* in the international hierarchy” (emphasis added). Thus, the small state research is best characterized by an “I know one when I see it” approach when choosing the subject of inquiry (Hey, 2003:3).

Before proceeding to the discussion about previous research and theoretical considerations, it is also necessary to specify the dependent variable; are we witnessing a disarmament process or is it rather a reformation process? Some clarification is at hand. In Swedish terminology the concept of disarmament has traditionally implied nuclear disarmament, but in the literature it is also used when discussing conventional disarmament. It is also often used synonymously with ‘arms control’, i.e. a limitation of military force and weapons that does not exclude a continued arms race, but rather determines its rules (see Elliot and Reginald, 1989:272). The way term disarmament is used is therefore incorrect and serves to maintain an international idea, or notion, of a prevalence of true disarmament (Agrell, 2002:84). But where disarmament seeks to eradicate arms, either in their entirety or by specific group, arms control refers to limitations in the quantity or quality of certain types of weapons. However, arms control, at its broadest, implies “different forms of cooperation

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<sup>7</sup> For an excellent overview of the area of small state research, see Neumann and Gstöhl (2004). For other research dealing with this issue, see Fox (1958), Rothstein (1968), Keohane (1969), Vital (1967, 1971), Mathisen (1972), East (1973), and Knudsen (1992, 2002).

among states in military matters” (Rotfeld, 2001:5). Thus, arms control, unlike disarmament, cannot be undertaken unilaterally.

There is not much quarrel regarding the definition of disarmament. In the Oxford dictionary, disarmament means “[t]he reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons“. Economic factors can also be used as indicators of disarmament – a decrease in military budget and expenditure is often a precondition for the reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons. Agrell (2002:84) has a similar view, perceiving disarmament as a “decrease in military forces and military potential”. Potential, equatable with capabilities, refers to the state’s ability to perform military missions, not to the size of its forces or its total military assets (Glaser, 1997:175). More assets do not necessarily increase capabilities, and vice versa. This is particularly important, since the Swedish debate has not dealt with the issue of ‘disarmament’. Rather, the Swedish Armed Forces have been transformed from an old defence to a new, much smaller, but in return more technically qualified and operationally versatile defence. It is therefore important to note that a decrease in expenditure is not similar to disarmament when treated in terms of potential and/or capability. Furthermore, reduced quantity is not easily equated with reduced quality, and the preservation of a large organization does not necessarily increase the military capabilities. In the following, I will therefore refer to disarmament as the quantitative decrease in military expenditure and military forces such as personnel, regiments, and combat units. Notwithstanding that it can be difficult to determine whether a quantitative downsizing should be characterized as disarmament, given that the resources disengaged can be invested in qualitative rearmament (cf. Agrell, 2002:227f), the Swedish case is characterized by both a decrease in military defence expenditure and a quantitative reduction of its Armed Forces, which combined *might* decrease the overall military capabilities. But in terms of capability I hold disarmament to be misleading, because it is important to ask the question ‘capable of what’? Or, what capabilities are asked for? What at first glance can be seen as a process of disarmament, as critics have pointed out (cf. Agrell, 2010), can at a second glance instead be seen as a reformation (cf. Haldén, 2007), and since relevant decision makers and representatives from the Armed Forces do not speak of disarmament, rather of reformation, it is the latter term that will be used in the following when describing the process. Thus what is to be explained is a process of reformation that is characterized by quantitative disarmament that aims at qualitative rearmament in terms of capability.

## 2.2 Previous research

Foreign and defence policies are part of a state's overall security policy. Previously focused on "hard" issues such as military and defence, security studies include, *inter alia*, research on alliance formation (Walt, 1987), regional cooperation (Knudsen, 1993; 1996; 1998), security dilemmas (Jervis, 1976; 1978; Schweller, 1996; Glaser, 1997), and nuclear proliferation (Myrdal, 1975; Iklé, 2006). After the Cold War the concept has been widened and it no longer denotes a concept solely focused on military issues, rather, environmental and economical issues as well as migration and social stability are nowadays couched in terms of security (see Buzan, 1991; 1997; Buzan *et al.*, 1998; Krahnemann, 2003). However, identifying the state as a referent object of security is not an unproblematic task, Buzan argues (1991:57-59). What is of interest is how the state defines its problems of national security. Since the state ultimately rests on its physical base,<sup>8</sup> the protection of territory and population is regarded as fundamental national security concerns. This applies especially to strong states, where domestic issues play a minor role in national security concerns. For a strong state, "the concept of national security is primarily about protecting its independence, political identity, and way of life from external threats, rather than from threats arising within its own fabric" (Buzan, 1991:95-103).

Previous research in the subfield of security policies focusing on armament and disarmament is characterized by a wide variety of approaches, where some are theoretically driven (e.g. Singer, 1958; Burton, 1962; Jervis, 1976, 1978; Glaser, 1997), others mainly empirical (e.g. Renner, 1994, 1997; Chillaud, 2006), and others normative (e.g. Myrdal, 1975; 1977; Brandt, 1985; Thee, 1994; Gillis, 2009). The theoretically driven research is realist in essence and deals primarily with *why* states arm. Emphasizing mainly how states respond to systemic imperatives, it can be criticized for its pessimistic and dogmatic approach regarding the prospects of disarmament. The normative research, on the other hand, stresses the need and urgency for disarmament, augmenting why states *should* disarm. Emphasizing mainly how states respond to domestic imperatives, the normative camp can be criticized for its rather naïve expectations of future disarmament and the "peace dividend" likely to follow.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The physical base of the state comprises its population and territory, including all of the natural resources and man-made wealth contained within its borders (Buzan, 1991:90).

<sup>9</sup> The "peace dividend" carries the opportunity benefits from converting defence expenditures into other, civilian, uses (Hagelin and Wallenstein, 1992:418,435; Renner, 1994:6; Agrell, 2000:274), implying considerable gains in the event of disarmament on any scale. Interestingly enough, as Gleditsch *et al.* argue (1992:325), much of the writings on the positive gains to collect from disarmament adopt a defensive stand, emphasizing problems likely to be encountered (e.g. Thee, 1991; see also UNIDIR, 1993:67-72; and Renner, 1994:6). There are, at least, four myths that surround the peace dividend: (1) that it is supposed to be large and

## 2.3 Prospects of Disarmament

One often proposed solution to the problem of states disarming without undue risk to their security is to employ and develop ingenuity, trust, and institutions in order to expand common interests between states (Jervis, 1976:67; see also Renner, 1994:34, 44). However, history may work against attempts to stabilise a relationship of power disparity (Knudsen, 1996:13). A sovereignty transfer from the nation state to the UN has also been suggested, but as long as such a transfer is perceived as a greater threat than nuclear obliteration, disarmament negotiations will remain as before – on top dead centre (Singer, 1958:103-4). Others have argued that there is “no reason to believe that any disarmament is possible while tension exist”, because disarmament does not provide a solution to problems of conflict, rather, “the basic problems which were the cause of the armaments remain, even though arms, themselves one cause of war, are removed” (Burton, 1962:39, 198). Or, as Kennan puts it, “to attempt to remove the armaments before removing these substantive conflicts of interest is to put the cart before the horse” (1958:29).<sup>10</sup> Another suggested solution is increased transparency, which can help states revert from security dilemmas to continuous mutual security assurances (Karkozska, 2001:212; see also Thee, 1994:83-85).

For several reasons, these propositions are not uncontested: (1) there is the possibility that while the reduction of agreed weapons is taking place the adversary may develop a new device not covered by the agreement (Singer, 1962:190);<sup>11</sup> (2) a “game of hide and seek” might develop, in which a legalistic bargaining strategy can lead to rearmament instead of disarmament where new technology is developed in order to avoid being too transparent (Agrell, 2002:230); (3) excessive openness with military information can be regarded not only undesirable but also dangerous – why would states risk national security on behalf of transparency when they do not know for sure that others will oblige to the agreement? (Miller, 2001:174); and, (4) enhanced transparency may mean reduced changes of achieving surprise, a premium value in most strategic writings (Müller, 2002:370). Others have argued that democratic states must be allowed to defend themselves with all means available and not be constrained by international conventions that non-democratic states will violate anyway (Perle, 2001:51). According to Chillaud (2006:9), the concept of unilateral disarmament is

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available instantly; (2) that it will solve a state’s economic and social problems; (3) that disarmament would lead to an irreversible economic downturn – assuming that the economy is completely dependent on military spending; and (4) that adjustment problems will be relatively small and localized (UNIDIR, 1993:67f).

<sup>10</sup> Other scholars adopting the tension-first approach include Rotfeld (2001:14), Bjurner (2001:33), Jean (2001:126), and Taylor (2001:109). See Renner (1994:12) for the disarmament-first approach.

<sup>11</sup> This applies to both functional and geographical disarmament; see Knudsen (1998:9).

open to debate on two grounds: (1) Genuineness – the measures could be merely declaratory, and perhaps propagandistic, (2) purity of motive – a country may claim credit for reductions that it has had to make in its military budget and forces purely due to financial reasons or constraints.

Research dealing with why states is reluctant to disarm is often quite parsimonious; it often depart from the structure of the international system, and it argues *inter alia* that: (1) disarmament is a “utopian enthusiasm” (Kennan, 1952:143f); and therefore (2) irrational (Perle, 2001:51; Perry, 2001:23f);<sup>12</sup> (3) it is difficult to know the true intentions of one’s adversary and the unit-level knowledge it possesses as regards other states’ motives (Glaser, 1997:189-193); and (4) that the lack of an international sovereign within the international system automatically lead to security dilemmas (Jervis, 1976:63; 1978:167; see also Herz, 1951). How was it possible for Sweden to succeed in reforming and disarming large segments of the territorial national defence?

#### **2.4 Sweden: disarming, dismantling or restructuring?**

Since the end of the 1950s Sweden has been a keen supporter of global disarmament, partly due to its neutral/non-aligned position (Lassinantti, 2001:102, 107), partly due to its ambition to be a moral great power (Dahl, 2006; Nilsson, 1991). However, from a Swedish terminological perspective, disarmament has usually meant nuclear disarmament, not conventional disarmament (e.g. Myrdal, 1975), which the huge Swedish Cold War defence complex ought to indicate.

A previous study, focusing mainly on how regional and local economic aspects are related to and affected by processes of disarmament and the military industrial production in Sweden, shows that the economic effects, not security, of the closing of military bases were in the forefront since

...Swedish military expenditure is seldom regarded as a profitable economic investment. Rather, its heavy military-industrial complex is seen as a burden for the economy and as a price to be paid for the policy of neutrality. Disarmament would, it is generally agreed, serve as a stimulant for economic growth (Wallenstein, 1978:98).

Security policies and defence issues are after the Cold War no longer at the heart of Swedish public concern, only when they are linked to local and regional concern (Sundelius, 2001:235f). Hagelin and Wallenstein (1992:417, 437f) have argued that the support for

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<sup>12</sup> If it is couched in terms the prisoner’s dilemma (see Jervis, 1976: 67; 1978:172).

sustaining (at least parts of) the domestic arms industry and the ambition to have a technologically advanced defence force must be taken into consideration in any discussion about future Swedish defence. Notwithstanding that military research and development has been a most crucial indicator when discussing historical changes in Swedish defence expenditures, they found a close association during the 20<sup>th</sup> century between swings in military expenditures and fluctuations in international tensions, thereby indicating that defensive arguments nonetheless have had an impact on the Swedish debate (Hagelin and Wallensteen, 1992:423). This shows that both international and domestic aspects are important in explaining Swedish disarmament.

In the aftermath of the Cold War it was argued that more detailed information was needed in order to support the argument that the relative reductions in defence expenditures had, indeed, resulted in a long-term Swedish disarmament. What was actually taking place was not disarmament, but instead a reduction in the domestic military industrial complex as well as in the peacetime military organization in order to free resources with which to sustain the wartime military organization (Hagelin and Wallensteen 1992:435). In other words, a decrease in the military defence expenditures did not lead to a decrease in military capabilities.

It has subjectively been argued by Agrell (2000:7) that little attention has been paid to Swedish security policies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to a widespread consensus within academia regarding the dullness of the research area. Notwithstanding this perceived consensus, some effort has nonetheless been made, of which Agrell's contribution (2000) is an excellent example. Other contributions dealing with Swedish security policies include Swedish non-alignment, couched in terms of a security dilemma (Agrell, 1994); alliance formation from a small state perspective (Lassinantti, 2001); security policy in a Finnish-Swedish comparison (Huldt *et al.*, 2001), as well as economic aspects of disarmament from a Nordic perspective (Gleditsch *et al.*, 1992). Swedish foreign policy during the Cold War has also been covered (Kronvall and Peterson, 2005; Löden, 1999; Wallerfelt, 1999). Other contributions in this vein have dealt more explicitly with different aspects of Swedish defence policies, some dealing with the post war period (Cars *et al.* 1986; Gustafsson, 1997), the Swedish defence doctrine between 1945-1982 (Agrell, 1985), and how the Armed Forces are governed by analyzing the politico-military establishment's view on the Swedish defence doctrine (Edström, 2003). Attempts to vitalize the debate around defence issues have also been covered (Beijer and Björemman, 1991).

Hagelin and Wallensteen (1992:417) have argued that we would expect threatening development to increase (political support for) defence expenditures, while peaceful development would similarly reduce (political support for) defence expenditure. On the other hand, disarmament and reformation is likely to be opposed by those groups that believe they will lose from such a policy. These groups, including the Armed Forces, defence ministries, contractors, military research centres, and regions and towns which depend on military spending, will either stress the need to maintain a strong defence capability or the negative consequences related to the social and/or economic aspects related to disarmament (UNIDIR, 1993:68). In a comprehensive study on the evolution of the strategic culture in the Swedish defence from 1945 to the present, Åselius (2005:25) argues that it still is in transition; there is a wide “mental gap” between the military elite on the one hand and the public opinion and the officers’ corps on the other. The gap concerns the role of the Swedish defence, where the former sees international operations as the primary mission in the future, whereas the latter still holds that defending national territory is the military’s primary mission. Åselius also points to the rift that developed between the “Indians” and the “chiefs” in the Swedish armed forces in the wake of the 2000 Defence Decision; the many citizens who were dedicated members in the voluntary defence organizations perceived the closing down of the local garrison not only as a threat to local employment and business, but to national security as well. The politicians in the capital held a different opinion, viewing Sweden’s participation in international military cooperation as a kind of preventive defence measure (Åselius, 2005:40f).

The driving forces behind the reformation of the Swedish defence that came about around the new millennium, and the strategically motivated shift from a “people’s defence” to a “high-tech defence” that followed (Åselius, 2005:28,39), is only briefly discussed by Åselius: from earlier research he stresses (1) the role of “entrepreneurs in uniform”; (2) timely intervention by civilians (i.e. non-military personnel); and (3) the role of transnational norms. Not seeking to devalue the role of norms, I hold the perception that “ideas do not float freely” (see Risse-Kappen, 1994), they need to be embraced and firmly established by agents such as the two mentioned above. Two such agents are held to be particularly important when talking about policy entrepreneurs, namely the advisory defence committee (ADC) and the perspective-planning group (the PerP-group) in the Armed Forces, which are held to be the leading forces behind the reformation of the Armed Forces (see Haldén, 2007:61-72). Haldén, like Åselius, deals with a reformation process of the Armed Forces, and not a process of

disarmament, providing a thorough analysis of the art of reforming the defence from an invasion-based to a mission-based defence.

Åselius (2005:28) also highlights that due to the Swedish administrative-political culture and the corporatist traits of the national defence, there is little central political control over the national defence in comparison to other Western countries, which in turn paves the way for the influence of various interest or advocacy groups (see also Agrell, 1990:76-80). The administrative culture amongst the makers of Swedish security policy has been thoroughly analyzed by Sundelius (2001). Spanning from advocacy groups, defence industry, public servants, and various political instances such as the parliament, the cabinet, government offices, and individual leaders, Sundelius indicate that “analyses of public declarations and cabinet-level decisions only scratch the surface of the policy processes behind the formulation and execution of Swedish security policy” (2001:238). A number of different stakeholders are therefore relevant to include when analyzing a disarmament process, especially since decision making in security policies in Sweden tend to be embedded in domestic political bargaining (Malmborg and Tiilikainen, 2001:72). In formulating national security policies, concerns over anticipated domestic consequences have also been influential, Sundelius argue (2001:280), indicating that the electorate might be an important factor.

Regarding research covering the last decade, Haldén (2007) and Agrell’s (2010) contributions are to date the most covering and systematic projects dealing with the forces behind the reformation and the dismantling of the Swedish national defence respectively. Agrell’s research is however not carried out on the basis of an underlying thesis, its character being more of an historical overview of a chaotic process that no one seemed to be in control of. The conclusion is therefore quite fuzzy, in that he claims that the dismantling process itself became the most important structural force. Nonetheless, other factors are also highlighted, such as highly politicized analyses of the surrounding world, which became a key component in party-political consensus building efforts, military and civilian entrepreneurs with visions and ideas about a new modern defence, and the trend towards centralization and large government agencies instead of decentralized and local authorities in charge of crisis management (Agrell, 2010:236-44). Out of all these factors, contributing to the chaotic process Agrell so vividly portrays, none stands out as more important than the other, but rather, Agrell argues, “if we want to find the main explanation to why it came of the way it did ... it is in the imaginary world that gradually came to permeate the whole process” (p. 244, my translation). This imaginary world refers not only to the title of the book: “The illusions of peace” (*Fredens illusioner*), but also to the new security environment that



emanated from the idealistic post-Cold War perception that military conflict was unthinkable, at least in a European geostrategic context.

Haldén's contribution deals with the question of *how* the Swedish Armed Forces transformed from an invasion-based to a mission-based, focusing on *how* the reform was implemented. Thus, Haldén puts her emphasis on organizational and institutional theory. Important to note is that Haldén, like Agrell, stresses that the reformation originally stemmed from the ranks of the Armed Forces, not from the politicians. Since the question *how* has already been posed, the following analysis will therefore be steered towards the question *why* the Armed Forces were reformed. In providing an answer to this question a neoclassical realist approach is chosen. But before turning to the theoretical model, the development of realist theorizing is presented.

## **2.5 Realism and foreign policy analysis**

All realist theorizing departs from the notion of anarchy at the international level, and types of motivation (status quo or revisionist) at the state level. All states play power politics, realists claim, but some states play the game differently. For realism to have analytical relevance in the field of foreign policy analysis (FPA) it must demonstrate that power *decisively* shapes policy. Because if foreign policy making is wholly unconstrained by the international environment then policy making will be rooted in theories of *Innenpolitik*, which is antithetical to realism (Rynning and Guzzini, 2002:7). Realists have responded to this in two ways: defensive realists argue that states are motivated primarily by security and survival (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Glaser, 1996); whereas offensive realists argue that states mainly seek influence (i.e. "conquest and expansion") (Schweller, 1998:21; 1996) or hegemony (Mearsheimer, 1990; 2001).

Defensive realists argue that states are impelled, above all, to worry about their survival. This will cause states to worry about what they have and thereby turn states into "defensive positionalists" or status quo states. However, since anarchy makes it impossible for states to fully trust one another, even if all states have modest intentions, every state must therefore be "on guard". Thus begins the security dilemma (Rynning and Guzzini, 2002:7-8). The heart of the security dilemma stems from the anarchic context of international relations, and escape, Jervis argues, is impossible – the security dilemma cannot be abolished it can only be ameliorated (1976: 76, 82). The logic of the security dilemma is that "the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others" (Jervis, 1978: 169). Seeking military advantages and adhering to worst-case analyses can be self-defeating – due to

misperception or uncertainty of the adversaries intent – leaving the state worse off than before its initial action. Most means of self-protection simultaneously menace other states; what one state regards as insurance for security, an adversary will perceive as a threat or encirclement and thus something to be counteracted (Jervis, 1976:62-64; see also Buzan, 1991:192).<sup>13</sup>

In a revised version of the security dilemma, Glaser (1997:190, 192), by adding two non-structural variables, argues that the security dilemma is of less significance when (1) the state's adversary is greedier, and (2) if the adversary is certain that it faces a pure security seeker. From a Swedish perspective, given that Russia remains at the heart of Swedish security policy (PerP, 2009:7; see also Berner, 2001:125; Lassinantti, 2001:109), the security dilemma ought to be greatly reduced. Firstly, because Russia (the adversary) in the aftermath of the war in Georgia 2008 can be pictured as a greedy state; secondly, Russia can be quite certain of the Swedish intentions to seek only security since Sweden no longer is perceived to possess a national defence capability (see Agrell, 2010:243). Because, without military capability, how can a state be anything else than a pure security seeker? I, among others (Huldt *et al.* 2001:286f), therefore disagree with the argument that Sweden's defence and security policy planning is still "rooted in the existence of the security dilemma, implying the worst case scenarios" (Berner and Pursiainen, 2001:175). On the contrary, dismantling national defence units while remaining outside any military alliance, I argue, does neither indicate that the Swedish means of self-protection simultaneously threaten other states, nor indicates policy making from a worst-case scenario. When, and if, decision makers consider the security dilemma, the assessment of potential threats is a logical ingredient in rationally preparing for action (Knudsen, 1996:10). However, "[P]olitical rationality is only one of the factors shaping a country's military strategy" (Åselius, 2005:39).

Offensive realists have criticized defensive realists for putting too much emphasis on the security dilemma (i.e. the role of anarchy) and too little on clashing state motivations (e.g. Schweller, 1996). Instead of just searching for security and survival, offensive realists assume that states are driven by revisionism and incited by power politics to search for influence, because the system provides strong incentives for all states to maximize their relative share of material power as the best route to security (Taliaferro *et al.* 2009:2).

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<sup>13</sup> Jervis has termed this the spiral model, which explains how states ultimately end up in the security dilemma. The other model, the deterrence model, where status quo states must display the ability and willingness to wage war in order to avoid being bullied by more powerful aggressor states, however rejects the security dilemma (Jervis, 1976:58; 1978:177-178).

It can be argued that Sweden during the Cold War resembled both of these models, making it unclear whether it was trapped in a security dilemma or not. For the "spiral model", see Berner and Pursiainen (2001:174), for the "deterrence model", see Åselius (2005:33) and Hagelin and Wallenstein, 1992:416).

Defensive realism is often equated with neo-realism, or structural realism, whereas offensive realists are perceived as neoclassical realists (Rynning and Guzzini (2002:14). However, it is important to separate offensive, structural, realists like Mearsheimer, who views the units of analysis in an undifferentiated fashion, from those who view them differentiated. Instead of perceiving the state as an autonomous actor constrained only by the anarchical international system, neoclassical realists examine the role of the state as an intervening variable between systemic imperatives and foreign policy making (Taliaferro *et al.* 2009:4). Neoclassical realists argue, in contrast to the purely systemic theories noted above, that the notion of a smoothly functioning transmission belt between systemic incentives and constraints and the actual diplomatic, military, and foreign policies states select, is inaccurate and misleading (Rose, 1998:158; Taliaferro *et al.* 2009:4). Since this transmission belt must by definition be situated somewhere between capabilities and behaviour, Kunz argues (2010:36), neoclassical realists open up the black box of the state.

All states do not always react accordingly after the anarchic nature of the international system, because they might be constrained by different domestic forces (Taliaferro, 2009:210f). Purely systemic reasoning is therefore insufficient in providing an adequate explanation to the phenomenon at hand, because possible explanatory factors residing on other levels of analysis than the systemic one are disregarded. It is exactly these factors that need to be identified in order to provide for a plausible explanation of the case.

By incorporating these factors, or intervening variables, “neoclassical realism defines its mission largely in terms of building theories of foreign policy, rather than theories of the system within which states interact” (Taliaferro *et al.* 2009:19). “In contrast to the systemic perspectives typical of International Relations”, Gustavsson argues (1998:16), “FPA seeks to explain actions taken by states as individual units located in the international system”. As a theory of foreign policy analysis, neoclassical realism assumes that the international system plays the dominant role in shaping national security decisions, but analysts wanting to understand any particular case need to do justice to the full complexity of the causal chain, which implies adding unit level variables to the analysis, because “people who cannot move beyond the system will have difficulty explaining most of what happens in international relations” (Rose, 1998:165).<sup>14</sup> When the security environment is more stable states have a greater degree of freedom in choosing policies, and domestic actors have a greater role in directing the national foreign policy choices without serious consequences (see Ripsman,

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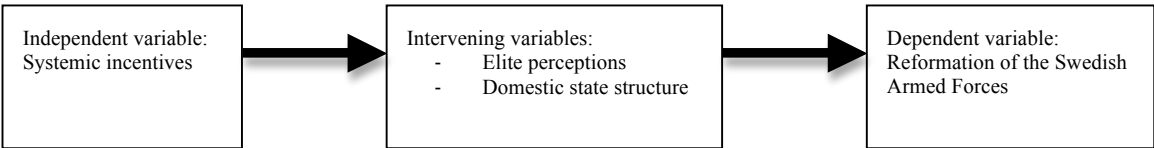
<sup>14</sup> Even Kenneth Waltz, perhaps the most prominent scholar of the structural neorealist approach, recognized the importance of domestic politics (see Waltz, ([1959] 2001:232, 238).

2009:193). Given Sweden’s peculiar bureaucracy, leaving room for the influence of various actors in the policy process, it therefore seems utterly important to add unit level variables – the missing link – into the theoretical model.

**2.6 Theoretical model**

The central hypothesis underlying this study is divided into two steps. The first is that when a state’s relative power rises it will seek more influence abroad. More specifically, the international system provides incentives, which permit an increased search for influence and power. This step in the presumed causal chain resembles the relationship between the dependent and intervening variables. The second hypothesis is that the search for influence has been the driving force in the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces. This step, in turn, is the one that links the first step in the causal chain with the outcome to be explained – the reform. The hypothesis thus stipulates that systemic imperatives are filtered through decision makers’ perceptions and the state structure in which they operate, which in turn has led to an increased search for influence and recognition. This motivational force, then, is the causal mechanism that links the cause (favourable international system) with the outcome (reformation of the Armed Forces).

In building theories of foreign policy, then, the first intervening variable neoclassical realists introduce is decision-makers’, or elite perceptions, through which systemic pressures must be filtered. The second intervening variable emphasized is domestic state structure – the strength of a country’s state apparatus and its relation to the surrounding society. Gross assessments of the international distribution of power are inadequate because national leaders may not have easy access to a country’s total material power resources. This represents an important and powerful development in realist theorizing, because it “brings analysis significantly closer to the real world without abandoning the paradigm’s core concepts and assumptions” (Rose, 1998:157, 161f). The causal logic in neoclassical realism theorizing is presented in figure 1.



*Figure 1* Causal logic of neoclassical realism (see Rose, 1998:154).

The independent variable, systemic imperatives, is the developments, shifts, and changes that occur on the international arena; other states might grow stronger, new coalitions might be built, alliances be formed, new trends may be developed, and the share of relative power might rise, and so forth. The independent variable, in short, resembles how the present situation on the international arena is conditioned.

The first intervening variable, perceptions among decision makers, is important in understanding how decision makers interpret these systemic imperatives, because, as Jervis puts it, “it is often impossible to explain crucial decisions and policies without reference to the decision-makers’ beliefs about the world and their image of others” (Jervis, 1976:28). State leaders are, however, not always unified in their assessment of threat (Lobell, 2009:62), and therefore, when individual members of a policymaking group operate with different assumptions about the character of the opponent, “[T]he importance of the image of the adversary in policymaking is strikingly evident” (George, 1993:127). A perception, in short, is thus a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something – of interest here on the international arena. Of further interest is to see where decision makers lay their focus, how reality is perceived and reacted to, what beliefs they have; are there differences between decision makers’ perceptions and reality? Do they overemphasize some particular information, and ignore or underestimate others? Are they driven by a motivational bias, such as denial, wishful thinking, or overconfidence in current policies (Parker and Stein, 2005:305; Jervis, 1976:28f)? In short, perceptions and threat assessment are relevant because they are assessments of probabilities and not absolute facts, which in turn will have consequences for the size of the grant and the necessary dimension of the Armed Forces (see Haldén, 2007:39).

However, this treatment of perceptions lends oneself to a rational argumentation where decision makers formulate policies in direct conformity with their perceptions, which is often excessively simplified. It is therefore useful to pay attention to what Allison and Zelikow (1999:5f) refer to as ‘the governmental machine’ – the organizations and political actors involved in the process – by focusing on the organizational context, pressures, and procedures from which the decision emerged, and the bargaining games among the important players in the government in order to see what kinds of bargaining among which players yielded the critical decisions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Noting that this is an extreme simplification of Allison’s intricate three-step explanatory model, the purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive view, but rather to illustrate the link between the two intervening variables. For an overview of the model, see Allison and Zelikow (1999:385-392).

The second intervening variable, domestic state structure, therefore includes aspects that constrain or permit policy making, or policy change,<sup>16</sup> after perceptions have been assessed, such as consensus building efforts, the ease with which broad agreements can be reached, legislative bargaining, government compositions, the degree of autonomy and cohesiveness for decision makers,<sup>17</sup> and the public opinion's support for new policies. By studying how domestic political factors affect foreign security policies some have argued that policy is conducted by a foreign policy executive (FPE), which is 'Janus-faced', existing and operating in the intersection of the international and domestic level (Ripsman, 2009; Lobell, 2009:43). The FPE has privileged access to information about international threats, opportunities, and national capabilities and is therefore best positioned to respond to international imperatives. However, depending on domestic political arrangements, such as decision-making environment, and prevailing procedural norms, society can affect the ease with which state leaders are able to enact foreign policy, or extract or mobilize societal resources to implement it. Consequently, the foreign policy executive must often bargain with legislatures, societal actors, and interest groups. According to neoclassical realists policy is expected to deviate from the requirements of systemic imperatives when (1) the state/government has limited authority to conduct foreign policy, (2) there are many domestic veto players in the policy process, (3) domestic opposition to the government's policy is high, or (4) under other domestic political circumstances that impede policy flexibility (see Ripsman *et al.* 2009:281).

Based on the above-presented hypothesis, that when a state's relative power rises it will seek more influence abroad, the empirical analysis will be guided by the following theoretical assumption: Systemic incentives and international trends have inclined Swedish decision makers to search for influence and power, which in turn explains the decision to reform the Armed Forces.

### **3. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study will take its departure at the turn of the century when, after nearly ten years, large segments of military structure and the territorial defence from the Cold War were reformed.

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<sup>16</sup> It has been argued that decision makers might perceive the need for a change of policy but somehow be constrained by domestic interest, and therefore might suboptimal policies be followed even though decision makers avoid misperceptions (see Christensen, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> See for example Zakaria (1998), who links the mobilization of resources and support for new policies to the degree to which the state is autonomous from societal interests and whether the state has a cohesive central decision making organization.

The process will be followed up to 2009, when the latest defence resolution was presented to the parliament. In the following subsections I will elaborate more on these methodological and analytical choices. Starting with the case study approach, I will then discuss the suitability of process tracing to the theory and the case at hand. This is then followed by a discussion about the variables and the collection and the analysis of the empirical material.

### **3.1 The case study approach**

It has been argued that a neoclassical realist research design relies heavily on in-depth case studies (Kunz, 2010:77; cf. Rose, 1998:154). This study is no exception.

This study aims at generating insights and explanations of a typical case of a peculiar interest. In order to “serve the heuristic purpose of identifying the potential causal paths and variables leading to the dependent variable of interest” (George and Bennett, 2005:23), studying only a single case is therefore a suitable approach in as much as it makes it possible to conduct an in-depth study of the observed empirical phenomena (cf. Lees, 2006:1096). It allows for a deep understanding of an often complex, spatially restricted social phenomenon, which can make results hard to generalize, especially due to the potential problem of conceptual stretching.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of the approach is described as “the detailed examination of an aspect of an historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George and Bennett, 2005:5), and “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring, 2004:342). To conduct a case study therefore implies that the wider population of cases of which the chosen case is one of many has been taken into consideration, in order to answer the defining question of all case study research: what the case is a case of (cf. Gerring, 2007:13; Collier and Mahoney, 1996:58). The phenomenon under investigation is foreign and security policy, of which foreign policy change is identified as a subclass. The case is therefore one of foreign policy change, where the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces will serve as the empirical object. The case is identified as typical;<sup>19</sup> because the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces can be seen as representative of a wider population of cases (reformations of other Armed Forces). The scope of proposition is depth at the expense of

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<sup>18</sup> Often it is not desirable to generalize case studies, argues its proponents, rather, “good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety” (Flybjerg, 2006:241). This perception stands in vast contradiction to the position held by King *et al.* (1994) and Lees (2006), that a defining feature of good science is the attempt to move from the particular to the general.

<sup>19</sup> By using existing theories to explain the case, the study also resembles what George and Bennett (2005:75) calls a configurative case study.

breadth; the case is likely to be representative of a European context but not a global one, why the case suffers from some contextual sensitivity. The purpose of the study is however not to derive general explanations based on this particular case, but rather to produce contingent generalizations of a case of peculiar interest. Generalizing the results to small states in a Western context is likely to be valid, since many other states have undergone a similar reformation, where the search for influence is likely to be an important driving force behind any military reform. Important to bear in mind is also that the case study approach only allows for tentative conclusions “on *how much* gradations of a particular variable affect the outcome in a particular case or how much they generally contribute to the outcomes in a class or type of cases” (George and Bennett, 2005:25, emphasis in original). Due to the deductive approach the conclusion will be probabilistic – more cases are needed for a deterministic argument. The aim is therefore to develop a contingent generalization of a limited scope.

As regards the critique, or problem, of generalizing the results derived from a qualitative case study, it does not necessarily have to be that acute if the research objective is clearly stated.<sup>20</sup> The point is that after seeing the data, the theory may be modified in a way that makes it applicable to a wider range of the phenomena under investigation.<sup>21</sup> Thus, by gaining context-dependent knowledge and by paying specific attention to the “travelling problem” of conceptual stretching external validity might be enhanced, and generalization to new cases might become possible (Caramani, 2009:32, 34; Collier and Mahoney, 1996:69).

### **3.2 Research design**

The analysis will proceed as a within-case analysis, which focuses on “internal evidence about patterns of causation connected with an overall outcome distinctively associated with the particular case” (Brady and Collier, 2004:312f). In order to allow a more detailed examination of the process within the case, a process tracing methodology is followed, where multiple types of evidence are employed for the verification of a single inference (George and Bennett, 2005:215; Gerring, 2007:173). It is a suitable approach to the case at hand because it corresponds well with the logic of the theoretical model – an emphasis on theoretically informed narratives tracing the ways different factors combine to yield particular foreign

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<sup>20</sup> For a different opinion on this matter, see King *et al.* (1994:21,35).

<sup>21</sup> The danger, however, “is that the resulting generalizations become so heavily qualified that they offer little guidance beyond the original cases from which they were derived” (Walt, 2005:36), and therefore some argue that context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals (Flyvberg, 2006:224).



policies.<sup>22</sup> Process tracing is also relevant for generating and analyzing data on intervening variables that link assumed causes to observed effects (George and Bennett, 2005:214), which corresponds well with the theoretical aim of the paper: to do justice to the causal chain between the independent variable and the outcome on the dependent variable, by focusing on the intervening variables standing casually between a given explanatory variable and the outcome to be explained (see Brady and Collier, 2004:292). Furthermore, process tracing can play an important role in the development and testing of theories,<sup>23</sup> where the focus of this thesis primarily will be on the latter role.

The main challenge in using process tracing is “to choose a variant of it that fits the nature of the causal process embedded in the phenomenon being investigated” (George and Bennett, 2005:213). In this case the process takes on a more complex form where the outcome flows from the convergence of independent and intervening variables, which together with the policy outcome resembles the causal chain. The thesis will therefore follow a variety of process tracing that converts a historical narrative into an analytical causal explanation couched in explicit theoretical forms.<sup>24</sup> The process to be analyzed in this thesis is the political processes and decision-making procedures that form the basis of major defence decisions. A ‘process’, then, is defined as a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end. Given that defence decisions usually are characterized by long-sightedness and that they are taken on the assessment of prior as well as future development, the process of interest is not demarcated by one decision alone, but its focus will rather be on the years in which the defence resolutions are decided upon, as well as the years between them in order to follow the process more closely.

The intervening steps in the case will be predicted by two hypotheses, (1) that when a state’s relative power rises it will seek more influence abroad, and (2) that the search for influence has been an important driving force behind the reformation. In order to avoid a confirmation bias attention will be given to predictions that are consistent with these

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<sup>22</sup> Important to note, though, is that it ideally should be supplemented by explicit counterfactual analysis (Rose, 1998:153, 168). In this paper, however, the theoretically informed narrative is held to be of more interest than what has *not* happened or is *not* the case.

<sup>23</sup> Where George and Bennett (2005: 209) stresses that process-tracing is suitable for both theory development and theory testing, Hall puts more emphasis on its theory testing abilities; “the causal theories to be tested”, he argues, “are interrogated for the predictions they contain about how events will unfold” (2003:393f). The usefulness of the case study method in developing and testing theories is a contested one, though; on the one hand you find those that defend it (see for example Flyvberg, 2006; Gerring, 2004, 2007; and Savolainen, 1994), on the other hand those that criticize it (see Lees, 2006; King *et al.*, 1994; and Liebersohn, 1991, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> Understanding the logic and nature of historical explanations is essential for making effective use of the process tracing method. However, converting a rich explanation from historical to analytical might lead to a loss of important characteristics or “uniqueness” of the case. Acknowledging this fact, it is nonetheless the price to be paid when the research design is deliberately selective, focusing on certain variables relevant to the argument.

hypotheses but inconsistent with its principal rivals so as to discern which is more likely to be valid (Hall, 2003:391f; see also George and Bennett, 2005:137, 206-7, 217-18).<sup>25</sup> In order to do justice to the full complexity of the causal chain embedded in the case, it is therefore necessary to show that both system-level and unit-level variables matter, instead of holding them separately responsible for the outcome. This leads to the caveat that process tracing requires a considerable amount of data in order to reach a convincing conclusion about the causal process at hand; if data are not accessible on key steps in a hypothesised process the causal argument is weakened (see George and Bennett, 2005:222-23; and McKeown, 2004:156f).

Process tracing is convincing insofar as the multiple links in a causal chain can be formalized, and insofar as each micro-mechanism can be proven. So, if a causal relationship can be described in prose, then it ought to be described in a diagram as well. The formal diagram is a useful heuristic device to make a precise and explicit statement of the argument. The aim is therefore to clarify the argument in a formal model and verify each stage of the model with an estimate of relative uncertainty (Gerring, 2007:181ff). In process tracing it is therefore utterly important to address the possible criticism of subjectivity, given the fact that complex processes with many rival explanations being discussed and rejected lie at the heart of the method. The discussion presented in this thesis of the link between the research question, theoretical considerations, and methodology, is an attempt to address this issue.

### **3.3 Addressing the sources**

#### *3.1.1 What actors, what perceptions?*

In the following, perceptions will be analyzed with a qualitative text analysis. Following the decision-making procedure, perceptions will be collected from reports preceding government bills, the bills as such, and the following parliamentary memoranda. Combined they are considered to mirror the held perceptions of the relevant actors, which will be comprised of

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<sup>25</sup> The principal rival to neoclassical realism is *Innenpolitik* theories, which stress the influence of domestic factors on foreign policy (Rose, 1998:146). If foreign policy making is wholly unconstrained by the international environment, then it will be a result of the free will of domestic politics (Rynning and Guzzini, 2002:7). Thus, *innepolitik* theories privilege domestic independent variables, arguing that foreign policy is best understood as the product of a state's internal dynamics (Rose, 1998:148). Another rival theory, as suggested by Berner and Pursiainen (2001:175), would be that Swedish foreign and security policy still is rooted in the security dilemma, implying worst-case scenarios.

the advisory defence committee (ADC) (*Försvarsberedningen*),<sup>26</sup> the perspective planning group (PerP-group) in the Armed Forces, high-ranking military personnel, most notably the Supreme Commander (SC), the government, represented by the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister, and finally the parliamentary defence committee (*Försvarsutskottet*).

In order to make the interpretation of the material more concise, most of the empirical material shares the commonality that it is (1) based on analyses of the surrounding world, and (2) that it involves discussions about future development for the Swedish Armed Forces. Apart from threat assessment, of particular importance will also be how the new security environment and how the security-political development in Baltic Sea region is perceived, and what possibilities and constrains this might lead to in terms of policy making. The perceptiveness of trends in military development will also be considered. In short, by looking at threat assessments and expressions about beliefs and views of the world, it will be interesting to see if decision makers picture it they way it actually is (realist), or the way they rather want it to be (idealistic) and what actions that are taken on its behalf. Of outmost importance here will be reflections and reports from the ADC and the PerP-group, which are held to be relevant and valid sources in analyzing these perceptions. However, what is explicitly outspoken in political documents are usually those perceptions and arguments that support or correspond with the proposed policies. Those that run counter to them are commonly left out or, at best, included implicitly. What is not written is just as important as what is written. Other sources emanating from a non-political origin are for that reason also important to address and compare with the political ones. Editorials and newspaper articles will therefore also be used as sources in order to see if perceptions of decision makers are realist or idealistic, do they correspond with perceptions held by others outside the decision making arena? The use of this triangulation of sources is an attempt to increase the reliability of the interpretation of the material, where political and journalistic apprehensions of the same circumstances are used to show if perceptions differ. The internal validity has not been hampered due to problems with classified documents (most notably from the Armed Forces). The documents used are therefore held to be sufficient in providing a valid documentation of the perceptions of interest.

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<sup>26</sup> The ADC is a political consultative committee comprised of representatives from the political parties in the parliament. Its purpose is to function as a link between the government and the parliament by analyzing developments on the international arena and, on the basis of those assessments, provide suggestions to the government for the future direction, or focus, for Swedish defence and security policies. Since the government usually follow the ADC's suggestions it therefore play a central role in creation of those policies.

### 3.1.2 Domestic state structure

Domestic state structure, a vague but yet an all-encompassing term, is perhaps a more difficult variable to capture than perceptions, given its wider applicability, and the fact that it is not only structures *per se* that are important, but also the domestic political actors constituting them. To make the variable more graspable it will be reasonable to refer to it as *bureaucratic politics*, which relates to decision-making procedures and procedural norms that govern the conduct of policy-making. As in any culture, certain aspects and procedures characterize the Swedish one, such as legislative bargaining following minority government rule, consensus-building efforts, and a non-autonomous FPE. As regards the consensus building efforts it has been shown that appearances are deceptive; Swedish foreign and security policies are often described as a policy area in which there is a widespread consensus, but it is not always the case (see Bjereld and Demker, 1995), why dissenting opinions will be important to consider. The public administration in Sweden is however rather unique in that the agencies have a somewhat wide mandate and autonomy *vis-à-vis* the government and that ministerial rule is forbidden, thereby resembling a judicial construction (Bäck and Larsson, 2007:173ff, 221f).

It might however be difficult to refer to a Swedish FPE, since this field of policy strives after consensus, and hence includes more actors than the government. In neoclassical realism, the FPE is almost described in mythological terms, being a small group of decision makers with ultimate authority. In Sweden, the government acts as one unit since ministerial rule is forbidden, and even though the government formulates the final policy, the bills are presented first after a considerable amount of preparatory work. And, finally, since the bills usually follow the ADC's reports, it is fair to say that the parliament (hereafter *Riksdagen*) is as important as the government in terms of policy making,<sup>27</sup> making any reference to a Swedish FPE a complicated business. The legislature, political parties, and the electorate, are therefore also relevant to consider in assessing their potential impact on policy suggestions. This is analyzed by looking at dissenting opinions and statistics on how the parties vote in the chamber, whereas the electorate is held to have an indirect impact, perceiving the defence as important or unimportant as a policy issue.

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<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the chairman who leads the ADC is not only responsible for the final version of the report, he/she is also appointed by the government, and a member of the ruling party.

### 3.1.3 Text analysis

When evaluating text documents certain questions must be addressed: (1) who produced it, (2) why was it produced, (3) are there different interpretations than given in this text, and (4) what proof is there that the text expresses the “true” or “real” beliefs of the sender (Bryman and Bell, 2007:575f). As regards the second question, the reports from the ADC are produced mainly to provide decision makers with relevant information before presenting bills to the legislature. Even though all parties are represented in the ADC an ideological tendency might be at hand given that the chairman is appointed by the ruling party and responsible for the final version of the report. Other documents, most notably newspaper editorials and articles, are used to spark a debate about the particular decision(s) and are therefore tendentious. Regarding the third question it is safe to say that all types of text analysis share the commonality of interpretation (Bergström and Boréus, 2005:23). And, as indicated by Sundelius (2001:238), “analyses of public declarations and cabinet-level decisions only scratch the surface of the policy processes behind the formulation and execution of Swedish security policy”, why a more exhaustive analysis from a different perspective might lead to different interpretations than the one offered in this thesis. The reader should therefore be noted that the empirical material in this thesis is interpreted from a realist perspective, where issues of influence are the focal point. With interpretation comes also the possible problem of subjectivity, which awareness about pre-conditioned knowledge and an interpretation based on thorough argumentation can serve to downplay. The triangulation of the sources is an attempt to lower the impact of subjectivity and it might also respond to the transparency problem embedded in qualitative research, and with it the difficulty of replicating a qualitative study.<sup>28</sup>

Process tracing evidence is, almost by definition, difficult to verify since it rests upon contextual assumptions and assumptions about how the world works. Much of the burden to “judge the veracity” of the conclusions therefore resides with the reader, who preferably has thorough knowledge of the policy area and familiarity with the particular context (Gerring, 2007:184f). The challenge is therefore to provide a thorough empirical account and a clear presentation of the argument, which is realist in essence.

Regarding sources for statistical purposes, the sources from SIPRI are preferably used in order to facilitate for future comparisons. Important to note is that the SIPRI definition of

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<sup>28</sup> Since there are hardly any standard procedures to be followed it is almost impossible to conduct a true replication (Bryman and Bell, 2007:423f.) It might therefore be debatable whether replication should be considered an end itself or just something to strive for.

military expenditure<sup>29</sup> does *not* include expenditure on civil defence, and current expenditure for previous military activities such as veterans benefits, demobilization, conversion of arms production facilities, and the destruction of weapons (for a thorough description of what is included see appendix 1). Other statistical data are based on documents from the Armed Forces and from the government. Even though these are most likely to be valid in providing accurate numbers, they differ from the numbers presented by SIPRI why both are included in the following analysis.

Finally the reader should be noted that the empirical material is translated from Swedish to English by the author. Certain quotes might therefore not be verbatim, but providing the essence of the quote they may be considered to justify possible linguistic shortcomings.

### **3.4 Analytical procedure**

The purpose of the analytical procedure is to follow the causal logic identified in the theoretical framework, in which systemic incentives are filtered through intervening domestic variables. Given the assumption that the international system plays the dominant role in shaping national security decisions, the analysis will therefore first turn to the independent variable, described here initially as a paradigm shift and henceforth as a new, ensuing, international security environment. The intervening variables are thereafter introduced; beginning with how political decision makers and representatives from the Armed Forces have perceived international development, assessed threats and tidings in the surrounding world, and what policy suggestion these perceptions and assessments have resulted in. This will then be followed by an analysis if and how bureaucratic politics constrains or permits policy making after perceptions have been assessed. But firstly, after a short introduction, the reform process is presented in numbers.

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<sup>29</sup> Available at [http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/sources\\_methods/definitions](http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/sources_methods/definitions)

## 4. From national borders to international frontiers

*”As regards the total defence the reduced risks of war and the altered threat perception have led to a situation where activities concentrated towards preparing the nation to resist an invasion and occupation of Sweden, can be down prioritized and/or totally dismantled” (SOU 2001:41, p.54)*

### *Initiation of the reformation*

The end of the Cold War finally resulted in a vast restructuring of the Swedish defence forces. Nonetheless, it took nearly ten years for the restructuring process to begin. What was particularly interesting was that the reform process was initiated by the Armed Forces; two policy suggestions from the Supreme Commander (SC) (1998, 1999) and a report from the PerP-group (2000) called for a new direction for the Armed Forces, in which a quantitative downsizing of the forces was held necessary in order to develop versatile capabilities to cope with more complex threats. The political reform process was, in turn, initiated by three government bills (bill. 1998/99:74; bill. 1999/2000:30; bill.2001/02:10), and a number of preceding reports presented by the ADC, in which the invasion-based defence was held to be unsuitable in dealing with the challenges that lay ahead. As early as in 1995 the ADC stressed the need for Sweden to participate more in common security efforts by participating in international peace keeping and humanitarian missions, because the threat of an invasion was decreasing (Ds 1995:51, p.13). But it was not until 1999 (bill.1999/2000:30) that the conceptual shift from an invasion-based defence (*Invasionsförsvar*) to a mission-based defence (*Insatsförsvar*) occurred. Thus, as Haldén (2007:72) points out, Sweden had already left a security-political reasoning based on the traditional threat of an invasion (from the Soviet Union), but the instrument to cope with the new circumstances was however still determined by the old type of threat (i.e. Soviet/Russian invasion).

Since the end of the Cold War the Swedish security conditions had been held to have improved significantly. It was even stated that “the development is now so thoroughly established and entrenched that there is every reason to take advantage of the situation and decrease the defence expenditure and commence a restructuring [of the defence forces]” (bill. 1998/99:74, p.9). The invasion-based defence was no longer needed, it was argued, and the defence forces could therefore be restructured towards a more complex threat perception (Ds 1999:2, p.111). The new security-political paradigm shift that swept across Europe after the

end of the Cold War reached Sweden at a late stage, but when it finally arrived it brought with it a new international security agenda that finally became as entrenched, in the eyes of the Swedish decision makers, as the deterrence doctrine during the Cold War. The Russian military collapse and the abolishment of the invasion threat that followed can be seen as the spark that ignited the restructuring process of the Swedish Armed Forces. However, somewhere along the line somebody must also have provided the gunpowder.

## **4.1 The reform process in numbers**

### *4.1.1 Financial reductions*

The first step of the reformation process was initiated in spring 1999 and dealt with the financial guidelines where it was decided that the financial frame for every year during the period 2002-2004 shall be SEK 4 billion less than the frame for 2001 (bill. 1998/99:74, p.1; bet. 1998/99:FöU5). In fixed prices, the expenditure decreased with SEK 5.8 billion between 2001 and 2004, and further reductions of some SEK 3 billion were proposed for the period 2004 – 2007, even if it was stressed that the ability to operate internationally ought to increase no matter what (Ds 2004:30, p.28, 72, 151). The government not only accompanied the ADC's proposal, but also believed that further reductions were necessary in order to free resources for international operations and to finance the costs of further restructuring (bill. 2004/05:05, p.1, 228). Depending on international development and political ambitions, it was argued, further reductions and rationalizations were possible to make as the reformation of the Armed Forces from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence continued (Ds 2004:30, pp.157-8).

However, the increased international engagement led to a considerable increase in expenditure. Another aspect was that the Armed Forces had difficulties in prioritizing, maintaining focus on too many areas, which made the ADC argue that “original plans for the size and capability of the mission-based organization have not been revised to a sufficient extent” (Ds 2004:30, p.65, 152). Most notably, the ADC stressed that the materiel plan needed to be revised, in order to free resources for the investment plans for the *Network Based Defence* (NBD) and for international campaigns (Ds 2004:30, p.123). However, the ADC stressed, vulnerability can increase if certain areas of competence are disclaimed, and for military non-aligned states it can be a distinguished problem (Ds 2003:8, p.54).



*Table 1* Financial development

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Expenditure (SEK)	42541	44542	42639	42401	42903	40527	41240	41150	43163	39710	38751
Expenditure (\$)	6452	6686	6250	6084	6040	5684	5758	5668	5817	5174	5063
Share of GDP (&)	2	2	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2
Armed Forces' share of state budget (%)	6.88	6.61	6.27	6.11	6.37	5.73	6.01	5.72	6.05	5.45	5.39
Budget (SEK)	44108	46648	46530	45810	44704	44331	44055	43433	44164	43881	44707
<i>Grant</i> (SEK)	40250	42697	43378	44057	43309	42089	42525	41820	41788	38929	41865
Expenditure on peacekeeping missions (SEK)	n/a	n/a	1.07	1.05	1.18	1.12	1.32	1.70	1.87	1.66	1.66

Note: expenditure in SEK m is at current prices and are for financial years. Expenditure in \$ is in US \$ m, at constant prices and exchange rates (numbers from SIPRI, available at <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>).

The Armed Forces' share of the state budget relate to the Ministry of Defence's grants in expenditure area 6, which as of 2009 is labelled 'Defence and societal crisis management'. Budget and grant are in SEK million at non-fixed prices (numbers from the Swedish government, available at <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/3782/a/53569>). The expenditure on peacekeeping missions is in SEK billion (source: the Armed Forces annual reports 2001-2009).

In 1999 Swedish defence expenditure was 2 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). In 2009 it had decreased to 1.2 per cent. The Armed Forces' share of the Swedish government total expenditure decreased with roughly 1/4 between 1999 and 2009, from 6.88 per cent to 5.39 per cent. Measured in these terms, the government has been able to ripe the benefits of the "peace dividend". However, as indicated in table 1, the total budget and the grant for the Armed Forces have not decreased, rather increased. Table 1 also shows that the expenditure for international peacekeeping missions increased during the last decade. The relatively small increase is however quite misleading, since practically all activities in the Armed Forces are connected to the final product, the mission itself (see Syrén, 2007:25), why the increased international engagement is not only shown under grant, section 6.1.2 – peacekeeping missions. The Nordic Battle Group (NBG) also became more expensive than it was thought. In the light of this financial development, it should not be very controversial to say that the reduction of combat units and regiments did not result in a corresponding decrease of expenditure. Put in another way, it has been expensive to reform the defence.

#### 4.1.2 Tangible reductions

After the financial guidelines had been settled in 1999, the next step was to initiate the reduction and reformation of the military defence, which occurred in March 2000. The number of units for territorial defence and maintenance of territorial integrity could be reduced in comparison to the defence resolution of 1996 it was argued (bill. 1999/2000:30, p.22; Ds 1999:55, p.11), and large quantitative reductions of regiments, units, and brigades were therefore proposed (bill. 1999/2000:30, pp.5-7; bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.3), which, *inter alia*, led to the total dismantling of the coastal defence and a reduction of the naval forces. What is important to note is that the government did *not only* argue for a reduction of the Armed Forces' organization, but also, due to the favourable security-political situation, that the Armed Forces' needed a new orientation and a new objective (bill.1998/99:74, p.94).

Between 1996 and 2004 the organization available for mobilization decreased with approx. 80-90 per cent (Ds 2004:30, p.64, 99). The new, restructured, defence that was created was thus quantitatively reduced in relation to the defence of the mid 90s, but in return it was held more technically qualified. This shift that was perceived as ultimately unavoidable (FOA, 1999a), and Sweden therefore joined the European trend of reforming an old invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence, where quality and international interoperability was more important than quantity and territorial defence (SC, 1999:26).

Table 2 Closure of regiments with combat units

1996	I 3, I 4, I 11, I 14, I 15, I 17, I 20, A 1, A 4, P 6, Lv 4, S 2, Ing 1, T 1, KA 5, F 5, F 6, F 13, F 15
2000	I 2, I 12, I 13, I 16, I 21, I 22, P 2, A 3, A 7, Lv 2, Lv 3, T 3, KA 2, KA 3, F 10, F 16
2004	Lv 7, Ing 3, S 3, I 5, A 8, P 10, P 18, Amf 4, 2 ysflj, K 4, F 4,
2009	None closed. 35 remaining.

Note: The table refers to combat units; schools and district headquarters are therefore not included. Lv 7, Ing 3, and S 3 were formally closed in 2000 and finally closed in 2004.

Sources: bill.1996/97:4, p.10f, bill.1999/2000:30, p.5f, bill 2004/05:5, p.136, bill.2008/09:140, p.12, Armed Forces, 2009:42; Hedin, 2011:208f.

*Table 3 Dismantling of combat units*

<b>Year</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>
Brigades and brigade commands	13	6	3	2
Combat battalions	52	16+1	8+1	7
Number of territorial defence units	90	12+6	0	0
Number of home guard units	125	70	30	22
Number of warships	24	12	7	7
Number of submarines	7(+2)	5(+2)	4(+1)	4(+1)
Coastal artillery/amphibious battalion	12	3	1	1
Air Force (combat) divisions	13	8	4	4
Number of combat aircraft	204	200	100	100
Air force command battalions	6	3	3	1
Air base battalions	16	8	2	2

Note: Territorial defence units and home guard units are accounted for with the equivalence of a battalion size of 1000 men. The number of submarines in () implies submarine that is non-operative/in state of readiness.

Sources: bill.1996/1997:4, p.78ff; bill. 1999/2000:30, p.53; bill.2004/2005:5, p.38; bill.2008/2009:140, p.45f. Headquarters 2004, appendix 1:39ff; Hedin, 2011:139-146.

## **4.2 New security environment and international trends**

### *4.2.1 A new security environment*

In 1998 it was held that the international development was difficult to predict, and therefore that it was necessary to stand prepared if the security political situation should deteriorate (Ds 1998:9, p.80). The government therefore concluded that limited armed assaults could be mounted against Swedish territory (bill. 1998/99:74, p.102). Russia was still considered to be the largest threat against stability in the region, but due to the previous years of military reduction, their military capacity was held to be severely limited, both in quantity and quality. Russian foreign policy was also held as more predictable and consistent than previously (Ds 2003:8, p.160). In 1999 the Swedish government finally felt emancipated from the Cold War (bill. 1999/2000:30, p.10). It took, for different reasons, nearly ten years before Swedish decision makers dared draw any far-reaching security-political conclusions about the changes in the international system. When they did, the Swedish security conditions were held to have improved significantly, and the security-political development was now held so thoroughly established and entrenched that there was every enough reason to take advantage of the situation and decrease the defence expenditure and commence a restructuring of the defence forces (bill. 1998/99:74, p.9; bill.2001/2002:10, p.131). In short, Sweden followed the tension-first approach, reforming its national defence after nearly a decade in the then, at least in the eyes of Swedish decision makers, entrenched new security environment. But it is first after important ‘policy entrepreneurs’ from the Armed Forces begin to argue for a new type of

defence that the process is initiated. It was perceived as necessary to abandon the old Cold War view of reality and adjust the defence to a new reality and a new security environment in order to deal with the challenges that lay ahead.

The entrenchment of the new security-political environment was above all determined by the decrease of Russian military capability, quantitatively and qualitatively. Assessing the Russian security doctrine from 2000, the PerP-group pointed at its defensive nature, but also that the reformation of the Russian Armed Forces that was decided upon in 1998 was progressing very slowly and was likely to take 20 years or more to fulfil (PerP, 2000:30). In the late 90s the OSCE<sup>30</sup> also developed a verification regime that enhanced transparency, making large mobilization efforts increasingly difficult (Ds 1999:2, p.84), which can be seen as an important development in leading to a less significant security dilemma. In 2003 the ADC concluded: "a new security-political order has been established in Europe without new dividing lines being created" (Ds 2003:8, p.16).

In 2002 seven new states were invited to commence membership discussion with NATO, and in 2004 Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became official members of the alliance. In the same year they also, together with Poland, became members of the EU, making the Baltic Sea "for the first time in many years a sea of unity rather than separation" (Syrén, 2004:15). The inclusion of these states in the EU and NATO had a tremendous positive impact on the security situation for the region as a whole, but it was particularly advantageous for Sweden that was now surrounded by friendly states; firmly embedded in dual security structures and a manifested solidarity clause (Ds 2004:30, p.12f, 37). However, it was held most likely that the enlargement process would increase the political importance of the region, making Russia turn more towards West than previously (Ds 2003:8, p.164). That Russia was seeking to reclaim its major power status is an ambition held most likely, which increased military investment and expenditure indicate (see Leijonhielm *et al.* 2009). All states sharing borders with Russia responded to this and increased their expenditure, but the Swedish response did not follow this trend, most likely due to the perceived stable security political situation in the Baltic Sea region after the EU and NATO enlargements (Ds 2007:46, p.41). A trend that Sweden did follow, however, was the reformation of the Armed Forces from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence.

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<sup>30</sup> The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

#### 4.2.2 *International trends*

During the 1990s the total defence and wartime organizations decreased with approximately 50 per cent in the Western world,<sup>31</sup> mainly due to the reduced tensions following the end of the Cold War. Most European states therefore decided to reform their defence organizations from one based on territorial defence to one based on international peace and crisis management, a trend that was held likely to increase in during the 21<sup>st</sup> century (PerP, 2000:37,43). The new security environment demanded a national defence that could be used actively as a security-political instrument for intervention and participation, rather than for deterring purposes solely (PerP, 2000:12). The Armed Forces therefore needed to be more adequately equipped and more prepared to contribute to European crisis management because

the security-political development demands and permits a transformation from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence. We are dealing with a complete transformation of size as well as structure, where the benchmark is limited demands of facing military assaults against Sweden, but increased demands in participating in international peace promotion and humanitarian interventions (Ds 2001:44, p. 55).

Another international trend was the concept of the ‘Network Based Defence’ (NBD), stemming from the *Revolution in Military Affairs* (RMA). It was based on the ever-expanding possibilities of information technology, which made the units more versatile, flexible, and, above all, more technologically advanced. The United States went in the forefront in this ‘revolution’ and soon other states followed suit. One of them was Russia, which made representatives from the Swedish Armed Forces to argue in terms of a security dilemma: since Russia is likely to develop high-tech capabilities in the future, rather than an invasion army, then “we must also have a high-tech capability” (FOA, 1997:5-6).

Demands for Sweden to participate more fully in international missions and crisis management also implied *interoperability* with foreign states’ military systems – something that the NBD was considered to provide. The government therefore stressed that it was necessary that Sweden followed and adapted to the international development within the area in order to “avoid and create unnecessary Swedish special solutions” (bill.2001/02:10, p.129). This was especially accentuated during and after the Balkan wars, where Sweden reacted slowly in comparison to other states as regards mobilization and preparation for peacekeeping missions. It was therefore concluded that this particular aspect was utterly important to

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<sup>31</sup> North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand

improve, in order to fulfil these obligations (bill.1999/2000:30, p.22, 46f). In other words, there was a need for the Swedish Armed Forces to be better equipped and prepared to contribute to European crisis management (Ds 1999:55, p.10).

Changes in the surrounding world led to new demands, which in turn implied a change of assignment. As regards the Armed Forces this meant that they had to be able to function in the different roles required in order for the political will to be put into action (Perp, 2005:14). It was therefore of utmost importance to create mission-based units that could be used both for national and international purposes, instead of having two separate organizations (PerP, 2005:3f), a solution which the government later adopted (bill.2004/05:5), and which was fully implemented with the 2009 bill.

## **4.3 Perceptions**

### *4.3.1 Perceptions of systemic imperatives: The politicians*

When Swedish decision makers interpret information and systemic imperatives, or when they assess development on the international arena, it seems clear that they more often than not perceive it in realist terms. Throughout the time frame of interest Swedish policy makers have perceived the international system as stable, peaceful, and positive, and the likelihood of an invader occupying Sweden has been perceived as more and more distant. Nonetheless, the necessity of not locking the defence of the state towards one single vision of the future was emphasised; the Armed Forces were to be built in relation to the changeable international system (bill.1999/2000:30, p.34).

An invasion was not held to be possible within the nearest ten years, given that the Swedish defence forces could maintain basic defence capabilities. However, even though the likelihood of an armed assault had decreased, it was argued that capabilities in certain parts of the total defence needed to be improved, because, in the long term it could not be excluded that a new invasion threat could rise again (Ds 1999:2, p.14ff, 93), which called for the maintenance of sufficient defensive capabilities (Ds 2001:14, p.97; Ds 2001:44, p.55; see also bet.2001/02:FöU2, p.2). The lack of defence resources, it was argued, would make us severely vulnerable against threats and demands if the political development in “the east” were to go in a negative direction, which “by no means can be excluded” (Ds 1999:2, p.92). Even though, the government argued that it also was “of utmost importance” that the development on the international level led to the entrenchment of democracy, openness, and welfare, which in turn would increase stability and safety (bill. 2001/02:10, p.37). The

government can here be seen to argue in more idealistic and/or normative terms, stipulating how the development *should* be in order to guarantee security increase. The security-political situation was however perceived so auspicious that it *permitted* a reform of the Armed Forces (bill.2001/2002:10, p.131, my emphasis), and it is clear that the perception and assessment of systemic incentives is an important factor because "...the security-political development *demands and permits* a transformation from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence" (Ds 2001:44, p.55; bill.2001/02:10, p.38, my emphasis). This is a good example of how systemic pressures are filtered through decision maker's perceptions.

The political argument for the reformation process was that a reformation and a renewal was necessary in order to make the Swedish Armed Forces follow the military technological development and create a *carte blanche* for the future, which in turn would enhance the capacity to operate internationally (bill. 1998/99:74, p.94, 104f). The Minister of Defence, von Sydow, on the other hand made no secret of why the defence needed to be reformed: "one of the reasons why we dismantle the old defence quickly is to free resources" (FOA, 1999b). These resources were then to be invested in the new mission-based defence, but, as noted above, the increasing demands on interoperability and network solutions made the new defence expensive. Given that the threat of an invasion diminished for each government bill being presented to the *Riksdag*, the focus increasingly shifted away from strictly national needs towards more international needs and demands. Instability in Russia was perceived as the largest threat against the security in Northern Europe, but instability was (and is) something else than an invasion threat:

Even though there is a considerable amount of conventional and non-conventional weapons in Sweden's surroundings, no direct threats against Sweden are at hand. The military arsenals in our region are to a large extent in a decay and are operational only to a limited extent. The international system of today ... puts political restrictions on the propensity of the use of military means (Ds 1999:2, p.141).

Swedish decision makers thus put much faith in the new international security environment, where the use of military force was restricted. This correspond with the proposed solution to the problem of states disarming/reforming without undue risk to their security, to employ and develop ingenuity, trust, and institutions in order to expand common interests between states (Jervis, 1976:67). But they still perceived an armed assault as possible and could therefore not exclude it from the policy planning (see bill. 1999/2000:30, p.12). What they did exclude from the policy planning was however the threat of a coastal invasion, which was perceived

as utterly remote. The coastal defence was therefore almost entirely dismantled, as shown in table 3 (see also bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.3).

After the enlargement of the EU and NATO in 2004 the government concluded that the international security-political situation had further improved, and that tension had “decreased dramatically”. Even so, the government still perceived a need for more units than the threat assessment called for, this in order to maintain competence within the ranks, and to uphold a foundational defence capability (bill. 2004/05:5, p.18ff, 31). The Armed Forces should therefore not only be dimensioned after international demands for peacekeeping missions but also on the needs for territorial national defence. That the government argued for such a dimensioning of the Armed Forces indicate slight realist perceptions and that worst-case scenarios still had some impact on policy planning, but worst-case scenarios was in this case not the scenario of an invasion, rather incidents connected to territorial integrity. And since the “positive security-political situation for Sweden *will be further entrenched and developed*” (Ds 2004:30, p.41, my emphasis), it was no longer possible, nor, for military operative reasons, necessary with a territorial coverage as previously. The ADC thus maintained their perception from the previous report where they argued that even though our region was characterized by stability and security, it could in the long run not be excluded that a more extensive military threat against Sweden could emerge, but that

[t]he combination of political intent, the operative capacity of armed forces in our region, and the perceived development of them, as well as the deepened security cooperation in our region, altogether implicate that the previous demands on the military defence’s ability to face armed assaults ought to be changed (Ds 2003:34, p.47).

This perception corresponds well with the previous report presented by the ADC where they perceived the vicinity to be safe but the wider world as unsafe (Ds 2003:8). This also meant that the previous suggestions from the government that the Armed Forces should be reduced when the security-political situation called for it could be realized (see bill.1998/99:74, p.103), both materially and economically (bill.1999/2000:30, p.17). Continuous assessments of the international developments, both globally and regionally, indicate that Swedish decision makers did not perceive Russia as a major threat, and that this window of opportunity permitted and called for a reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces. Both the ADC and the government held the old invasion-based defence as inadequate in coping with the new security challenges that lay ahead, and therefore was the continued positive



developments of international security cooperation as well as the increased demands for adaptability for an unpredictable future important driving forces behind the reform. The ADC therefore emphasized that it was important for Sweden to develop in line with the RMA and to avoid strictly Swedish solutions. The development towards a NBD was called for not only due to the security-political situation, but also due to the technology development in society as a whole (Ds 2001:44, p. 129ff; bill. 2001/02:10, p.129).

Another important driving force behind the reform was the increased will and ambition to participate more fully in the European defence and security structures. With a diminished threat of an invasion Sweden could now fully take the step towards a more internationalized defence force, which had been the political aim all along. This aim was particularly manifested after the war in Kosovo in 1999, which accentuated the need for more preventive measures and an enhanced ability for cooperative crisis management (bill.1999/2000:30, p.23). In the eyes of the decision makers this further entrenched the notion that the Armed Forces needed to be reformed. According to the ADC, the stable situation in our region called for a redirection of attention where

[t]he continued deployment of the Armed Forces *must* give Sweden a wider possibility to actively contribute to the development of the EU's capability of crisis management and the common security ... [the Armed Forces] shall therefore be able to carry out peace promoting missions and contribute to the EU's rapid response capabilities (Ds 2004:30, p.70, my emphasis).

National needs were thus starting to be replaced by international demands of participation, which can be seen in the light of the ADC's assessment in 2007, where "the Baltic sea region is characterized by stability, dialogue, and cooperation to an extent never seen before" (Ds 2007:46:41). But what can be seen as an altruistic effort of participating in peace-building and peace keeping missions can also be seen from the perspective of national interest:

An active engagement in international missions often enhances the impact of a states values and standpoints in different international security-political forums. The credibility of a state's security policy is entrenched if this engagement is realized in a wider perspective than the more narrow territorial one (Ds 2003:8, p.38).

Not only were Sweden's international efforts thought to contribute to international as well as national security and peace, why Swedish capabilities to participate should be enhanced both quantitatively and qualitatively, but also because

...while we at the same time through our contribution enhance international peace and security, we also increase our possibilities to *influence the international politics* and *enhance our own credibility* (Ds 2004:30, p.45, my emphasis).

With a region perceived as secure, stable, and peaceful, the Swedish Armed Forces could therefore be used elsewhere, not only to promote security and peace, but also to further Swedish interests and to gain influence within the wider European security structures. A strong EU that can act globally, the ADC argued, "is needed to create a more equal trans-Atlantic partnership" (Ds 2004:30, p.40). This led to an increased prioritizing of the mission-based units and a down-prioritizing of other units; "it is a new Swedish defence that is to be created" (Ds 2004:30, p.64), and hence the means had to be suitable for that end.

When Swedish decision makers had downgraded the threat of an invasion, perceiving it as unlikely within the next decade or two, they thereby signalled a belief of the European security structures as a promoter of peace and security. Nonetheless, decision makers continued to stress that Sweden neither gives nor takes mutual security guarantees. However, the ADC argued, "it *must be held unlikely* that Sweden would be left alone were our security interests threatened", and further that "a negative development in our region would *in all likelihood* be handled collectively" (Ds 2004:30, p.76, my emphasis). The ADC later modified this rather normative, or idealistic, statement when they presented a new solidarity declaration, in which it was stated that Sweden would not remain passive if another Nordic or EU-member state would be attacked, and that "we *expect* that other states act in the same way if Sweden were to be attacked" (Ds 2007:46, p.11, my emphasis). In the same report, the ADC held the CFE-treaty<sup>32</sup> as one of central importance to European security, and that "it is important that the treaty is not put out of play by unilateral action" (p.14). Russia did however withdraw from the treaty six months before the report was presented, why the solidarity declaration can be seen as a possible answer to their withdrawal. It is however interesting that the Russian decision to withdraw did not receive more attention than it did. In the following bill the government settled with the formulation "Russian suspension of disarmament agreements affects our security" (bill.2008/09:140, p.28). The government did thus neither ignore this development, nor give it that much attention, which critics and debaters had already emphasized (cf. SvD, 2007-07-18; SvD, 2009-01-16, SvD, 2009-03-14).

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<sup>32</sup> The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, "which sets ceilings ... on key armaments essential for conducting surprise attack and initiating large-scale offensives operations", for further information, see [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1584/is\\_n28\\_v3/ai\\_12553015/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1584/is_n28_v3/ai_12553015/)

To the ADC the trend in the Western world was clear: to create accessible and mobile capabilities that can solve complicated tasks in remote areas (Ds 2008:48, p.33). Military capabilities designed for within-state missions will therefore be inadequate for missions outside the state. The process will therefore continue with “the transformation from a defence guided by threat to a mission-based one guided by will and international demands” (Ds 2007:46, p.49f). Thus “the international challenges of today and tomorrow will place high demands on accessibility and flexibility, as well as interoperability with international cooperation partners” (Ds 2008:48, p.38). It was therefore utterly important for Swedish decision makers that the Armed Forces were developed in this direction, because engagement on the international arena considered to give Sweden an increased respect and credibility and therefore closer relations with relevant and important actors and organizations such as the UN, the EU, NATO, Nordac,<sup>33</sup> Nordcaps,<sup>34</sup> and LOI/FA<sup>35</sup> (Ds 2008:48, p.53ff). Participation in the latter was in this context held to be particularly important because “it gives an increased influence in the EU’s advancing defence and security policies, direct and indirect” (bill.2008/09:140, p.18). Increased cooperation, the government further argued, provides security and an increased influence as regards the future development on the international arena (bill.2008/2009:140, p.15, 36).

Swedish decision makers did not decide to reform the defence based solely on an appreciation of Russian military capabilities, although it was an important part of the process. If we recapitulate a previous quote that “the security-political development demands and permits a transformation from an invasion-based defence to a mission-based defence”, two words stand out as particularly important to consider: *demands* and *permits*. Not only did the new international security environment permit a reform, but it also demanded a reform. But a reform is not initiated by its own efforts – ‘ideas do not float freely’ – and the systemic incentives as perceived by the decision makers created a motivation, will, and ambition to participate to a wider extent on the international arena. However, by providing more contributions to crisis management the new, reformed, and modernized Armed Force were also thought to work as a security-political tool to further Swedish interest, thereby giving Sweden influence in the wider European security structures and their executives (bill.2008/09:140, p.43).

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<sup>33</sup> Nordic Armament Cooperation – A Nordic security cooperation between Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland.

<sup>34</sup> Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support – see above, fn. 32.

<sup>35</sup> Letter of Intent/Framework Agreement – A six-nation cooperation between the largest defence materiel producing states: Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, and Germany.

The invasion-based defence was passé, it was inadequate in furthering the political will of gaining more influence within the security structures in which Sweden operates and it could therefore be dismantled in order to free resources for the new mission-based defence. The international dimension was prioritized on behalf of the national; having one national and one international organization was therefore not an option (bill.208/2009:140, p.8). How, then, did the Armed Forces react to these political ambitions, and how did they perceive the development on the international arena?

#### *4.3.2 Perceptions of systemic imperatives: The Armed Forces*

In an interview in 1999, one of the chief entrepreneurs behind the reformation of the Armed Forces, lieutenant general Michael Moore, argued that because of the favourable international system, “we now have a unique opportunity to initiate a necessary reform of the Armed Forces” (FOA, 1999a; see also FOA, 2002). The reason for this necessity was, firstly, that Sweden needed to abandon the old Cold War view of reality and adjust the defence to a reality and a new security environment, in which the trend was quality before quantity and participation before isolation. Secondly, the Russian Armed Forces were in a similar position as the Swedish, but with the exception that it would take longer for them to reform and modernize; in short, the fear of ‘the Russian’ (*Rysssen*) needed to be, if not abandoned, then at least rethought. Another important policy entrepreneur was Johan Kihl, then brigadier-general and chief of the headquarters’ strategy department, who stressed that a security political time-out created by the decline of the Russian armed forces enabled an “operative time-out” for the Swedish armed forces, in which it could be restructured and reformed into a new, more modern and flexible, “high-tech” defence. In short, a ‘window of opportunity’ was opened, in which Russian military capacity was held to be severely limited, and in which a new security environment was beginning to settle. But since Russia was likely to follow suit in the RMA, developing towards a NBD, Kihl argued in terms of the security dilemma, that since Russia is likely to develop high-tech capabilities in the future, then “we must also have a high-tech capability” (FOA, 1997:5-6).

A third important policy entrepreneur was the then SC Owe Wiktorin, who notified the politicians that they had to choose between an Armed Force with adjustment capability backwards (to recreate the invasion-based defence), or forwards (to create a flexible and more versatile defence). The choice of path, it was stressed, “will determine our security and defence policies for a long time to come” (SC, 1998:3). But there seemed to be no doubt

about the SC's opinion: "development in the international environment ought to imply increased expectations and demands on Swedish participation in international missions" (1998:26). The development the SC referred to was not only the recent development in the Balkans – which distorted the view of the post Cold War perception of an everlasting European peace – but also the consolidated role of NATO, the reduced Russian invasion threat, and the European trend of developing the Armed Forces towards international crisis management rather than territorial protection. He also perceived influence seeking through collective security as a clear trend to face new threats, why the SC was in favour of an Armed Force with adjustment capabilities for the future. To this suggestion had been attached one differing view.<sup>36</sup> The differing views then significantly increased when the next suggestion was proposed six months later (SC, 1999); this time six differing views were attached,<sup>37</sup> where all of the views stemmed from outside the headquarters in Stockholm, indicating a rift between the capital *vis-à-vis* the rest of the country. However, all of the views shared the commonality that the Armed Forces were in need of a reformation (see SC, 1999: appendix 1).

Nonetheless, all of these three policy entrepreneurs and the PerP-group held similar assumptions about the character of the opponent (i.e. Russia), as the politicians did, namely that "the possibility of a negative security-political development in Russia cannot be excluded" (PerP, 2000:21). This supports the claim that it is important for policy makers to operate with a similar image of the adversary when foreign policy is conducted.

The Armed Forces however had differing views about the positive characteristics of the international system, which they claimed was optimistic to an extent uncalled for because "the world after the Cold War is characterized by quick changes and high unpredictability" (SC, 1999:2). A couple of years later the new SC argued that more attention had to be paid to the national dimension of the defence. Reasons for this were that the continued development in Russia, as well as the increased energy-strategically importance of the Barents region, were important factors that needed to be considered (Syrén, 2007:64), it would therefore "be unwise to build our security policy on a one-sided positive assumption about the international development" (Syrén, 2009:52).

The Armed Forces thus shared the government's opinion that it was time to reform the defence towards a more modern and flexible organization, but the process also included risk-

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<sup>36</sup> Chief of the northern military district, Mertil Melin.

<sup>37</sup> From the inspector general of the Army, Paul Degerlund; the general inspector of the Air Force, Jan Jonsson; the general inspector of the Naval Forces, Torsten Lindh; from the military chiefs of the northern, central, and southern military districts, Mertil Melin, Percurt Green, and Kent Harrskog (see SC 1999, appendix 1).

taking, acceptable in near-time but not in the long term, especially not on the basis of the security-political assessments made by the government:

According to an evaluation of the Armed Forces the given financial frame and the defence capability which will be the result of it, will imply a security-political risk-taking that is too high. The doctrine of adjustment and the favourable international development has, according to the Armed Forces' perception, been over-emphasized (SC, 1999:24).

This perception contradicts the one held by the politicians: if the politicians perceived the international system as stable, although in a realist way, representatives from the Armed Forces were more cautious. They did however perceive it as favourable, but in a shorter perspective than the politicians. It was therefore argued that the reformation process was acceptable, in terms of risk taking, in the shorter term, but that the pace of the reformation had to be enhanced (SC, 1999:13; Headquarters, 2004:1). In other words, the reformation process had to be implemented swiftly as long as 'the window was opened'. Nonetheless, the legislation on compulsory military service was considered a necessary precaution were the international situation to deteriorate (Syrén, 2006:35)

In the new security environment, where the majority of the Western states had reformed their national defence from an invasion-based to a mission-based defence, *interoperability* was hailed as a key component in the restructuring process. The PerP-group therefore stressed that any future development of the Armed Forces had to take into consideration "the ability to be interoperable with other European Armed Forces" (PerP, 2000:77). This international trend had a considerable impact as regards the future development of the Armed Forces together with the increased political demand to participate in international missions. It was therefore argued that the Armed Forces should be reformed into a versatile NBD, framed towards more asymmetrical threats (PerP, 2002:1ff).

In June 2004, Sweden took as a 'Framework nation' the responsibility to develop and lead a EU multinational task force/battle group – The Nordic Battle Group (NBG). The NBG was created as a task force that was to be operative for international missions at the beginning of 2008. The NBG got top priority and thus became a driving force behind the ongoing reformation (see Syrén, 2006:29f; 2007: 31f). For the SC the aim was clear: "we shall be able to contribute in a way that gives respect and influence in the international cooperative work" (Syrén, 2007:48). The increased priority given to the NBG also meant an increased political pressure on the Armed Forces to deliver military capability and to be present. This increased

pressure on international engagement, the PerP-group argued, also led to an increased demand for Swedish representation on different levels in international staffs, and it was therefore needed to take advantage of the increased possibilities that the international cooperation brought about (2005:14).

In a globalized world, national borders lose more and more of their significance, according to some to the benefit of small states” (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2004: 11). Swedish security and national interest is no longer possible to uphold or protect on national soil solely; for the SC the challenge is therefore “to form an Armed Force that effectively can support and assert Swedish security interests in an increasingly globalized world”, and hence, “we must be able to exercise influence in the common structures we participate” (Syrén, 2006:24). The SC further was of the opinion that the cooperation needed to be developed in a way that not only enhanced security *per se*, but also Swedish influence on the development in our region, because

[r]eality puts more and more narrow limits on the ability for what small states can handle unilaterally ... the challenges imply increased demands on cooperative action (Syrén, 2007:56)

and, therefore

[t]o assert national interest in an increasingly borderless and globalized world means, in particular, that the smaller states’ possibilities of assertion are intrinsically connected to competence and *ability to exercise influence* in the cooperative continuous work. We have to be involved and be at the forefront in order to be able to identify our own interests. This applies both generally and military (Syrén, 2007:45, my emphasis).

In order to respond to the more complex threats, not only was cooperation considered necessary, but the Armed Forces also needed to be developed into a flexible and usable security-political instrument with operational capabilities both nationally and internationally (PerP, 2007a:5). This was of course an order that stemmed from the politicians, but it is very important to note that the reform itself stemmed from the ranks of the Armed Forces, as indicated above. The politicians chose from the options presented by the Armed Forces, not the other way around.

The responsibility to commence structural changes is a matter for the Armed Forces’ internal reform process. This is an aspect that connects to the Swedish bureaucratic political culture where the Armed Forces, as a government agency, are relatively autonomous *vis-à-vis*

the government. But the government has an important tool: the grants. It is clear that there has been a disagreement between the Armed Forces and the government about how large the grant needs to be in order to fulfil the will of the government: “without continuous substantial increases of the grants we face further quantitative reductions or qualitative hollowness”, because “the number of units is ... now so low that there is no more margin for further reductions if we want to be able to maintain a long-term capability” SC, 2007:36, 48; see also PerP, 2007b:3f). In order to work as the security-political tool the politicians has asked for, the Armed Forces have concluded that their units shall “be able to develop a high accessibility and adaption in a wide spectrum of missions, independently or jointly with other states or agencies, on or in connection to our territory, within Europe and globally. Units shall be available for missions in all operative dimensions. The Armed Forces shall be able to increase their ability to perform international missions” (PerP, 2007a:32).

Thus, it might be argued that the search for influence had been (more?) fruitful had the grant been higher – notwithstanding that it is difficult to equate higher grants with higher capabilities – so what were the reasons why the demands from the Armed Forces were neglected by the government? The answer to this is likely to be found within the bureaucracy.

#### **4.4 Bureaucratic politics**

When the decision to reform the Swedish Armed Forces was initiated it was based on a wide, albeit thin political, consensus that spanned from the military “entrepreneurs in uniform” to politicians across the political landscape. This wide consensus permitted a smooth initiation of the process, avoiding a long-drawn bargaining between the government and the opposition on the one hand and the government and its agencies on the other. For the latter part, this process had been simplified after the decision in 1994 to centralize the different agencies of the Armed Forces into one agency with one executive chief – the Supreme Commander. Previously, the Air Force had been one agency and the Army one agency, and so forth. Within this new single agency the SC got a wider mandate to steer, which also implied increased efforts to get everybody onboard the ship of reformation. This was a challenge and within the ranks there was doubt about the reform. The pamphlets (2004, 2006, 2007) written by SC Syrén can therefore be seen as a response to this. In fact, it was representatives from the armed forces that initiated the reform, and the ADC was in favour of the idea:



The ADC considers the development towards a mission-based organisation of the kind *suggested by the Armed Forces* as an important part of the structural renewal of the military defence (Ds 1999:55, p.13, my emphasis).

When the following bill (1999/2000:30) – based on the ADC’s two previous reports (Ds 1999:2, and Ds 1999:55) – was approved by the *Riksdag* it was an agreement between the Social democrats and the Centre party only. This unity over the political blocs was however sufficient, and the Prime Minister considered that this “unity over the political blocs gave legitimacy to the whole process” (Persson, 2007:238). Since the Social democrats governed in minority and had excluded the Left and Green partners from issues that concerned foreign and defence policies, they needed the Centre party’s support. The remaining parties in opposition – the Conservatives, the Christian democrats, and the Liberal party all called for the bill to be turned down, just because of the lack of a broad parliamentary consensus (bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.223). Nonetheless, the *Riksdag* approved the bill even though the agreement rested on a parliamentary minority, being the result of a Social democratic and Centre party consensus. Domestic opposition was thus high, but not enough to turn the bill down.

The parliamentary consensus stretched to the reform itself; the consensus was based on the need for *a reformation*, but for the right-wing opposition not on the need for *further* reductions and steps: the Conservatives declared that “the hasty and drastic cutbacks proposed by the government *cannot be motivated* from the current security-political situation in Europe” (bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.228, my emphasis), and further that “the government’s disarmament proposal is totally unrelated to the international development” (bet.1999/2000:FöU, p.254).<sup>38</sup> In short, the Conservatives argued that it was a mistake to take the positive security-political international development for granted (bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.311, appendix 2; see also bet.2000/2001:FöU1, p.144f). As regards the supporting parties, the Green party claimed that threats were too often pictured in military attacks, which lead to the perceived level of threat being a result of the current size of the defence organization rather than the other way around, and hence the bill was fallacious (bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.233). The Left party – as well as the Conservatives and Liberals – on the other hand,

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<sup>38</sup> This is one of very few passages where the term disarmament is used. Another passage is when the Conservatives presented a diverging view to the budget bill of 2000, where they argued against further financial cut-backs: “the defence should not just be able to handle the threats of today, but also be built to be able to face the insecurity of tomorrow. The expectancy that the defence shall be able to quickly and easily be ‘adjusted’, i.e. rearm or create new capabilities to face transformed threats, is unrealistic and cannot be a motive for a massive and unilateral disarmament. The presumption ‘no war during the coming ten years’ is not tenable” (bet.2000/2001:FöU1, p.124).

stressed that it was a mistake to withdraw the military resources from the island of Gotland, not only because Gotland is a matter of national concern, but also because the ability to uphold territorial integrity was deprived (bet.1999/2000:FöU2, p.241, 244). Underneath the quarrel there was however a widespread agreement between government and opposition regarding the future direction of the Armed Forces – a reformation was needed.

The next major defence bill (bill.2004/05:5) was based on three ADC reports (Ds 2003:8, Ds 2003:34, and Ds 2004:30) where the latter in particular, according to Prime Minister Persson, was a manifestation of unity amongst the centre parties<sup>39</sup> (Persson, 2007:400). However, when the bill was presented for the *Riksdag* for approval, the Christian democrats and the Centre party had withdrawn from the deal. That the right-wing opposition was disappointed with the bill (2004/2005:5) is something of an understatement; they urged for the bill to be turned down completely by the *Riksdag* (bet.2004/05:FöU4, p.1, 4). The period was thus not characterized by a broad parliamentary consensus spanning over the blocs, and the Social democratic government therefore needed support elsewhere, which they got from the Green party. This support was however contingent on the Green party's wish to further reduce the defence budget, why Prime Minister Persson accepted an additional remark of an expenditure cut of SEK 6 billions after some legislative bargaining. Initially, however, Person was reluctant to give access to the defence issue to his partners, but the additional reduction remark, he concluded, made it possible for the issue to be dealt with within the ADC (Persson, 2007:399ff).

After the 2006 parliamentary elections the governmental composition changed from a socialist minority government to a right-wing majority government. But when the government presented their first major defence bill (bill.2008/2009:140) the pattern from the preceding resolutions re-emerged, and a consensus deficit yet again characterized the process; the opposition made a reservation against the bill but lost with 150 votes against the government's 153. The reason for the opposition's objection was, above all, that the government's proposal for an "extremely high preparedness" was not only costly, but also "uncalled for given the security-political situation" (bet.2008/2009:FöU10, p.13f). It might therefore be argued that the defence resolutions of 2000 and 2004 were more idealistic than the resolution of 2009, at least in the eyes of the opposition; the right-wing opposition criticized the resolutions of 2000 and 2004 for being idealistic and unrelated to international development, whereas the socialist opposition criticized the resolution of 2009 for being

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<sup>39</sup> The Social democrats, the Christian democrats, and the Centre party

realist to an extent uncalled for. Nonetheless, there was not enough domestic opposition to turn none of the bills down, and there were no domestic veto players, military and politicians alike, strong enough to hinder the direction of the ongoing reform.

Apart from their employees, the Armed Forces as a government agency do not have a direct impact on the average citizen's daily life, compared to other government responsibilities such as health, education, and welfare. Defence and security politics is usually characterized by secrecy and low transparency, and it is too important for the 'national interest' to use as a bat in political campaigns; the defence as a political issue is simply not a vote-winning issue for the politicians.<sup>40</sup> But according to a recent survey 45 per cent of the electorate held the defence as a 'somewhat' or 'very' interesting issue (Stütz, 2010). Nonetheless, defence and security issues are more often than not excluded from polls investigating which political issues that are important – they are simply not an option (Sifo, 1999a, 2002, 2010). In another poll from 1999, however, 54 per cent of the respondents were against a 50 per cent reduction of the Armed Forces, whereas 36 per cent were in favour (Sifo, 1999b:4), which might be seen as a peculiar contradiction from a poll in 1998 where 'defence' and 'NATO' were considered to be the least important political issues in the following parliamentary elections (Sifo, 1998). The Swedish electorate thus seem to have a somewhat large interest in defence and security policies, but other issues are more important when they stand before the ballot. Swedish decision makers are thus, to a certain extent, "spared" from the public opinion in this issue, and are therefore unconstrained in formulating policies regarding defence and security.<sup>41</sup> It has also been shown that the two largest Swedish daily newspapers (DN and Aftonbladet) do not perceive the national dimension (i.e. the territorial defence of Sweden) of the Swedish defence as that important in comparison with the defence and security policy on the whole (Arvidsson, 2010:21ff). The lack of a wider public debate on the issue might therefore also have an impact when decision makers formulate policies.

This might explain why the Armed Forces have been an agency from which it has been relatively easy to relocate financial resources without causing too much wrath from the electorate. But after the defence resolution of 2004, the SC stressed that:

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<sup>40</sup> On a regional or local level this might however be the case, if for instance a garrison or regiment is to be closed down in a region or town where it is an important employer, but not on the national level.

<sup>41</sup> An important exception is of course the issue of NATO-membership, which is a perfect example of how domestic opposition can constrain decision makers in questions regarding security and defence policies.

It does not take a deep analysis to realize that we cannot further reduce the mission-based units. Further reductions are not possible without the dismantling of entire functions or capabilities. The level is already so low that serious questions arise regarding sustainability in the long run. The method used until now to adjust the Armed Forces to the current budget, to reduce the mission-based organization, is [therefore] no longer useful. A choice of option could indeed be to increase the grant (Syrén, 2006:48f).

This connects to a procedural norm that has been consistent over the entire period, namely that the economy has determined the needs, rather than the economy being a result of them. In other words, instead of ‘this is what we need’ it has been ‘this is what you get’, and this applies to left-wing as well as right-wing governments (SvD, 2009-06-12, 2008-04-24). In 2007 this procedural norm led to a governmental turmoil, which resulted in the resignation of the Minister of Defence, Michael Odenberg. The reason was disagreement about further expenditure cuts. For that matter, Odenberg has stood out as an exception in disagreeing with his cabinet colleagues regarding the Armed Forces’ grant.

In conclusion then, the whole reformation process has been characterized by unity and consensus to the extent that a reform was necessary. Initiated and upheld by representatives from the Armed Forces, the main political quarrel has concerned the size of the grant, where the opposition first accused the socialist government for being too idealistic and then accusing the right-wing government for being excessively realist, and not the direction of the reform. As former SC Syrén pointed out, “each era has its prerequisites”, and the prerequisites necessary for the new security environment was a reformed national defence system that could cope with them. Luckily enough the political and military perceptions coincided.

## **5. Results and discussion**

This thesis set out to answer the question what it is that explains the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two hypotheses were formulated for this end and the empirical analysis of the reformation process provides some justification for the hypotheses to be corroborated. The analysis shows that the Swedish search for influence on the international arena is an important driving force behind the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces, a search for influence that has been permitted by the rise of relative power as a result of a favourable international system in which military threats have diminished and security structures have been entrenched.

What is it that the analysis has shown more specifically then? Firstly, the systemic incentives *permitted*, the reform, and secondly, the international trends and the continued development on the international arena *demand*ed the reform. This shows that the international system has played a dominant role in shaping the Swedish policy of reformation. Swedish decision makers have thus continuously perceived and assessed the systemic incentives and then formulated policies on perceptions that more often than not have been of the realist rather than the idealist kind. Although perceptions are realist I find it uncalled for to talk about a Swedish defence and security policy that is rooted in a security dilemma, because there is simply no support in the analysis for policy planning on worst-case scenarios (i.e. invasions). The only empirical support found for this is Kihl's argumentation on the basis of a probable Russian development. However, the military has a slightly more realist perception of the international system than the politicians.

The analysis also shows that representatives from the Armed Forces and not politicians initiated the reform. Even though the ADC is an utterly important actor in the enforcement of the reformation process, the 'policy entrepreneurs' in the Armed Forces made the politicians aware of the need for a reform in the first place, and, luckily enough, their perceptions coincided. But their purposes differed: where the Armed Forces saw a *structural* reform towards a versatile NBD as necessary given the international military development, the politicians saw a *functional* reform necessary given the international development and demands in security cooperation and peace-keeping missions. Thus, the perceived need for a reform coincided, but for different reasons.

The analysis further indicates that bureaucratic politics have an explanatory value in that it has permitted the reform, rather than constrained it. The reform was permitted on the domestic bureaucratic level because (1) the state/government has not had limited authority, even when ruling in minority, (2) there have been no veto players strong enough in the process, and (3) opposition towards the reform has been low. As the theory stipulates, the chosen policy does not deviate from the systemic imperatives. It is clear that Swedish decision making on foreign and defence policies does not occur in a "domestic vacuum" separated from the international arena. Rather, systemic incentives and international development are constantly being weighted against domestic considerations. The chosen policies are therefore, to a wide extent, a result of the development on the international arena, however, it is also clear that the transmission belt linking systemic imperatives to the chosen policy is not clear-cut, which indicates that both system-level and unit-level variables

matter.<sup>42</sup> Notwithstanding that the international system plays the dominant role in shaping national security decisions, the inclusion of unit-level variables has allowed for a deeper understanding of the case and the complexity of the causal chain residing within it. It has also shown that *Innenpolitik* theories are inadequate in providing a suitable explanation for the outcome of the analysis.

The analysis also shows that power shapes policy. The reformation of the Armed Forces is not just a policy reform that was implemented and conducted in order to provide for more security against new and complex threats, but rather, it was a reform that was conducted because the international situation permitted it and because Sweden's share of relative power rose. This viewpoint can be clarified by saying that research carried out under neoclassical realist premises are characterized by the assumption that states respond to the uncertainties of international anarchy by seeking to control and shape their external environment instead of assuming that states seek security. Regardless of the numerous ways that states may define their interest, "they are likely to want more rather than less external influence, and pursue such influence to the extent that they are able to do so" (Rose, 1998:152). The analysis of the empirical material points in a direction that supports this premise; since the threat of a large scale military invasion has continuously been perceived as unthinkable within the foreseeable future and since the security situation in the Baltic Sea region constantly has improved, with the NATO and EU-enlargements as the focal points where Sweden was encapsulated by 'friends' with increasing military expenditure, the national defence has been reformed from a domestic resource to an international tool in order to ripe the benefits of this favourable situation. The increased military expenditure characterizing the region is not perceived as a threat, rather a way for Sweden to reform the defence to free resources for international operations to participate internationally and thereby increase influence abroad. It is not about perceived threats; it is about what decision makers perceive as a rise of relative power – Sweden being firmly embedded in, and surrounded by, the security structures provided by the EU and NATO. Allowing for Sweden to seek influence abroad with military presence, the mission of the Swedish Armed Forces has therefore changed from national borders to international frontiers in order to exert influence in cooperative security structures and enhance influence and recognition in international politics.

The international system was perceived as favourable and the international security situation continued to improve, for the Baltic Sea region as a whole and for Sweden as a state;

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<sup>42</sup> As pointed out already in 1992 when explaining changes in Swedish military expenditure (Hagelin and Wallensteen, 1992).

firmly embedded in dual security structures in a tranquil regional environment the threat of a full-scale military invasion diminished, and with low Russian military capabilities in the region the focus shifted towards new and more complex threats that the invasion-based defence was unable to cope with. It was therefore perceived as necessary to follow and comply with international trends, such as the increased political demands for participation in international peace-related missions, and the military trend of the Network Based Defence and interoperability with other states' armed forces. The mission-based defence is however not synonymous with missions abroad; the concept also includes missions on and defence of Swedish soil. But given the ability to perform in international missions this has steadily increased in importance as the Armed Forces' main task, and thus the need for versatility to cope with new complex threats, this can be seen as an important explanation for the reformation and dismantling of units and equipment unsuitable for this end. Sweden's interests are best accommodated abroad, and participation in international peacekeeping operations, it is argued, gives influence and recognition in international institutions and security structures.

The first hypothesis, representing the first step in the process of the causal chain, that the rise of relative power will lead to an increased search for influence abroad, can on the basis of the empirical analysis therefore be corroborated. The rise of relative power is shown in the continuous assessments of the international system and the lack of a clear threat from another state therein. The enlarged and entrenched European and trans-Atlantic security structures and the positive security-political effects this has had for Sweden can also be seen as a sign of this. This first step must however be estimated with a relative amount of uncertainty because the data do not support the hypothesis explicitly. More data are therefore necessary in order for the hypothesis to be more explicitly corroborated. But nonetheless this hypothesis must be perceived to be plausible from the interpretation of the empirical material, because what is not stated is just as important as what is stated, and it is not likely that policy makers will refer to an increase in the relative share of power when proposing or conducting foreign policy. Thus, despite this relative amount of uncertainty I still hold the overall argument as valid, but since this step in the process might serve to downplay the strength of the argument there is good enough reason for further research to focus on this particular issue.

The second hypothesis, indicating the next step in the causal chain, that the increased search for influence on the international arena has been the driving force behind the reformation, is also corroborated. Firstly because of the explicit political search for influence within security forums and structures in the international system, secondly because of the

political and military need for an appropriate security political tool, or means, for that end: a mission-based and network-based defence with operational capabilities both nationally and internationally. Thus, both perceptions and bureaucratic politics has an explanatory value, the latter with some reservations though, since, as noted above, “analyses of public declarations and cabinet-level decisions only scratch the surface of the policy processes behind the formulation and execution of Swedish security policy” (Sundelius, 2001:238). It is therefore a good suggestion that further research on this topic goes deeper into state bureaucracy to enhance the validity of the hypothesis.

The following figure is an attempt to illustrate the causal relationship of the reformation process by linking the two hypotheses together, thereby resembling the hypothesized causal chain.

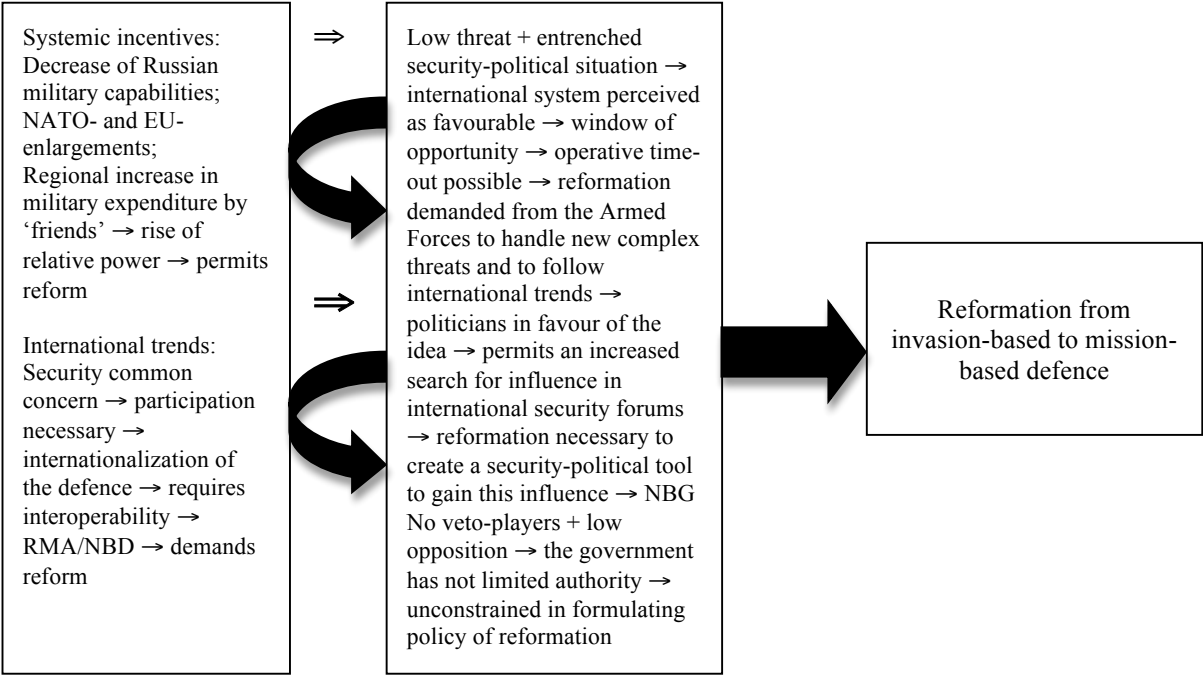


Figure 2 Explanatory model of the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces.

### 6. Concluding remarks

This thesis set out to seek an understanding of, and an explanation to, the question why Sweden has decided to transform its Armed Forces from an invasion-based to a mission-based organization. As the conclusion indicates, the search for influence has been the driving force behind the reformation. The conclusion supports the proposed causal process that systemic imperatives and the reformation is linked with an increased will and ambition to seek and gain



influence, but couching the argument in a deterministic conclusion on the basis of this one single case is simply to claim too much. Even though qualitative studies are usually characterized by deterministic conclusions, further investigations of similar cases are needed in order to permit such an argument, why the conclusion will remain probabilistic until the theoretical model is tested on other similar cases. As the case study approach only allows for tentative conclusions on how much gradations of a particular variable affect the outcome in a particular case, or how much they generally contribute to the outcomes in a class or type of cases, a preferable way to proceed with the result would be to apply the theoretical approach or model on a different case(s), suggestively some other Nordic state or smaller Western state, in order to move from corroboration to verification. Choosing other cases on the dependent variable can however be fallacious (see Geddes, 1990), why the argument must be couched in terms of necessity. This in turn will allow for a more deterministic argumentation of the relationship identified in this thesis.

The theoretical approach utilized in this case is of course one of many that might be appropriate. The use of a liberal approach could have led to the conclusion that the reformation was a result of increased trade and cooperation between Sweden and Russia, or that the search for the 'peace dividend' is the explanatory factor. However, the empirical material in this thesis does not support conclusion of the latter kind; even though it might be argued that Sweden has been able to ripe the benefits of the peace dividend (as noted above), it has not been an explicit aim of the policy makers; resources have rather been relocated during the reformation in order to sustain a smaller but yet more expensive defence. A liberal-institutional approach would on the other hand probably argue for the importance of relevant international institutions, such as the EU and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in contributing to the favourable security-political situation and the reformation.

Seen from a constructivist perspective a probable explanation for the reformation would likely be found in the construction of identity, where policies reflect prevailing norms and ideas of the Western world, in which large territorial defence forces are seen as utterly old-fashioned and unnecessary to maintain. Constructivism also emphasizes interest when explaining how states behave, but since the main problem with constructivism is its unwillingness to set forth and test mid-range hypotheses that can be tested empirically, social constructivism has the problem of invalidating their theories empirically (c.f. Moravcsik, 2001:185; Checkel 1998). How then do we know that a policy change is due to a shift in the deep structure of values and preferences, which constructivists emphasize, rather than mere strategic adaption to new circumstances? Regardless of opinion in this issue, neoclassical

realism would profit from further discussions about the role and impact of unit-level intervening variables.

Just as it was pointed out as early as 1992 that any discussion about the future Swedish defence should take into consideration the ambition to have a technological advanced defence (Hagelin and Wallensteen, 1992), any future discussion about the defence of today should take into consideration the increased focus on the national dimension of the defence, because as the case ‘ends’ the pendulum has slowly started to swing towards a national focus on behalf of the international (see Arvidsson, 2010). What effects will this have on an Armed Force that for the latest ten years have been reformed in order to be more internationally adjusted and interoperable and where international missions has been the main assignment? Time will tell, but as Russia continues to accentuate its role as a major power and increase their military capabilities, this will surely have an impact on Swedish national defence and security policies.

This thesis set out to contribute theoretically and empirically to the discussion of small state foreign policy behaviour within the wider field of international relations by analyzing the driving forces behind the reformation of the Swedish Armed Forces. With a heuristic purpose and with an aim of providing an explanatory model to explain similar cases, the most likely assumption must be that all states are likely to want more rather than less influence and power, and they are therefore likely to strive for it when the international system permits it.

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## Appendix 1

### The SIPRI definition of military expenditure<sup>43</sup>

**SIPRI military expenditure include all current and capital expenditure on:**

- the armed forces, including peace keeping forces
- defence ministries and other government agencies engaged in defence projects
- paramilitary forces when judged to be trained, equipped and available for military operations
- military space activities

**Such expenditures should include:**

- personnel
  - all expenditures on current personnel, military and civil
  - retirement pensions of military personnel
  - social services for personnel and their families
- operations and maintenance
- procurement
- military research and development
- military construction
- military aid (in the military expenditures of the donor country)

**Excluded military related expenditures:**

- civil defence
- current expenditure for previous military activities
  - veterans benefits
  - demobilization
  - conversion of arms production facilities
  - destruction of weapons

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<sup>43</sup> Available at [http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/sources\\_methods/definitions](http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/sources_methods/definitions)