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DISCUSSION ON SECURITY POLICY – THE SPECIFIC APPROACH OF NORDEN

The years 1989–1991 brought political changes in Central Europe: the unification of Germany and the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). Thus an essential element of defence alliance's strategy that is an "enemy" simply disappeared. The bipolar and antagonistic configuration of Europe broke down.

In this much different and dynamically changing situation at the turn of the century, the context of political, financial and geopolitical determinants should be examined, together with the process of formulating and implementing defence policies by the three kingdoms: Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, and the two republics: Finland and Iceland. These defence policies have been similar in many ways but they also presuppose shared participation and functioning of defence system of all these countries.

The concept of security in the region

Russia's actions in the Nordic-Baltic Region² and then the shock of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war led to some sort of psychological breakthrough in the capitals of *Norden*. It triggered the next accelerated phase of defence policy reevaluation in the Nordic countries, reflected in attaching more significance to the outcomes of strategic transformations taking place in their immediate neighbourhood, primarily in the regions of the Baltic Sea and the High North, including the Barents Sea and the Arctic³.

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² The resumption of strategic bomber flights in the High North, cyber-attacks and violations of airspace of the Nordic and Baltic countries.

³ More on the subject in: Ryszard. M. Czarny, *The Imperative High North: Opportunities and challenges*, Trnava: Michal Vaško – Vydavateľ'stvo, 2013, 183-195.

The reform and modernization of the Russian Armed Forces, accompanied by the lowering of the threshold for the use of force in its neighbourhood, have created new parameters in the international environment. It almost signifies a return to the past scenarios where the use of force among states (including in the Baltic Sea Region) cannot be ruled out. In practice it also means that there is a heightened potential for crises and conflicts in Northern Europe. At present, the Nordic countries have been broadening their defence cooperation, if not an alliance then by adding new elements such as the procurement of military equipment and participation in peacekeeping operations. For example, Chiefs of Defence of Norway (a NATO member state) and Sweden (declaring itself a non-aligned state) jointly seek to expand existing cooperation. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, Norway remaining outside the EU is more closely tied to the EU mission group than the EU country Denmark, which has an opt-out on common defence policy⁴.

Currently, given the complexity and variety of approaches to the issue, it can be concluded that the Nordic defence cooperation has gained broad support from both the public and politicians. In 2008, the Conservative group in the Nordic Council presented a proposal on that issue. I. Lønning, politician of the Conservative Party of Norway and then President of the Nordic Council, stated as follows: “In recent years, all countries have cut down on their defence budgets, since we have not seen any serious threats in our part of the world. We are now in the midst of a much more uncertain era”⁵. This viewpoint of the influential faction of the NC makes the question of closer defence cooperation quite relevant and timely. Certainly, one of the arguments in favour would be a widely shared view that by working together the Nordic countries could achieve much better results than they ever could when acting alone.

“The Stoltenberg Report”

The Presidium of the Nordic Council expected much closer cooperation in defence than before. Former Norwegian Defence and Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg was asked to draw up proposals for a closer cooperation of the Nordic countries. Thorvald Stoltenberg presented his report “Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy”⁶ at an extraordinary meeting of the Nordic foreign ministers in Oslo on Monday 9 February. The report focuses on 13 areas of a potential closer cooperation in the Nordic region in the perspective of 10-15 years such as:

⁴ See: *New threats for the Nordic armed forces*, Norden 2008, retrieved 21.07.2016, <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/new-threats-for-the-nordic-armed-forces>.

⁵ Inge Lønning, *Tätare nordiskt försvarssamarbete*, Norden 2008, retrieved 05.11.2008 <http://www.norden.org/sv/aktuellt/nyheter/taetare-nordiskt-forsvarssamarbete>, see also: *Tätare nordiskt försvarssamarbete efter ”rysk aggression”*, Norden 10. 05. 2015, retrieved 12.02.2016, <http://www.europaportalen.se/2015/04/tatare-nordiskt-forsvarssamarbete-efter-rysk-aggression>.

⁶ See: Thorvald Stoltenberg, *Nordisk Samarbeid om Utenriks- og Sikkerhetspolitikk*. Forslag overlevert de nordiske utenriksministere på ekstraordinært nordisk utenriksministermøte, (Oslo 9. februar 2009), retrieved 16.06.2013, <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/nordiskrapport.pdf>.

peacebuilding, air surveillance, maritime monitoring and Arctic issues, societal security, cooperation between foreign services – including “good services,” and military cooperation.

The report brings into focus recent developments in the Arctic Region. The melting of Arctic sea ice brings significant geopolitical changes to the region: oil and gas reserves are becoming more accessible for exploration. In the same way shipping routes are opening up which makes the Arctic seas an extremely interesting area both economically and in terms of security policy⁷.

Although the Nordic countries do not foresee a potential military conflict over the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources in the Arctic, they are strongly committed to safeguarding their interests in the region⁸. T. Stoltenberg argues that it will not be easy for a single Nordic country to guarantee a presence and carry out surveillance and it therefore requires them to work together and combine their resources. Military chiefs from the Nordic countries are also pushing for such a move in defence cooperation⁹.

Stoltenberg's 13-point plan includes also a proposal for establishing a Nordic Stabilization Task Force. NSTF would participate in the UN-led missions as well as operations conducted by the EU, NATO, the African Union (AU) or the OSCE under the UN mandate or authorization. The goal of NSTF would be “to stabilize the situation and then to enable local political processes and the state apparatus to function”¹⁰. The task force would have four components: a military component, a humanitarian component, a state-building component (including police officers, judges, prison officers, election observers), and a development assistance component. The military component would draw from the resources earmarked for the Nordic Battle Group of the European Rapid Reaction Force and the NATO Response Force – NRF¹¹. The consulted United Nations representatives have deemed the establishing of the Nordic force much well-grounded. They also noted that the Nordic states, better than most countries, have demonstrated the ability to manage a collaboration between civilian and military components.

⁷ See also: *Common Concern for the Arctic Conference arranged by the Nordic Council of Ministers*, (9–10 September 2008, Ilulissat, Greenland), retrieved: 23.11.2014, <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/887>.

⁸ More on the subject in: Ryszard M. Czarny, *The High North. Between Geography and Politics*, Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015), 113-157.

⁹ Stoltenberg, *Nordisk Samarbeid*,

¹⁰YLE Internet, 2009, retrieved: 03.09.2010, <http://yle.fi/vintti/yle.fi/opettajatv/opettajatv.yle.fi/tvohjelmat-ffSet=30&show=3&sort=2&kriteeri=3 &a akkonen=E.htm>.

¹¹ The NATO Response Force (NRF). The NRF is a high readiness, technologically advanced and a dedicated branch of the NATO armed forces whose task is a rapid response in the event of a threat to the security of its member states, particularly within the framework of civilian crisis management. NATO Response Force (NRF) was launched at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002.

In addition, the Stoltenberg Report called for the Nordic countries to assume the responsibility for air surveillance and air patrolling over Iceland¹². In the initial phase, *Norden* would deploy personnel to the Keflavik base and take part in the regular Northern Viking exercises. In the next phase, the Nordic countries would take responsibility for some of the NATO air patrols. Thus, Nordic cooperation on air patrolling could become an example of cooperation between NATO member states and partner countries of Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreements. The report also proposes establishing a Nordic maritime monitoring and early warning system. The system would be in principle civilian and would carry out such tasks as monitoring marine pollution and civilian traffic system. The Nordic Maritime Monitoring System (NMMS) would be built on two following pillars: “Baltic Watch” for the Baltic Sea and “Barents Watch” for the North Atlantic, parts of the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea. Both would function under a common command system. According to the report, after launching the NMMS, the Nordic Maritime Response Force (NMRF) would be created, comprised of national coast guards and rescue services. The NMRF would carry out joint search and rescue missions. Moreover, as a part of the Nordic maritime monitoring system, the Nordic Polar Orbit Satellite System would be established by 2020, monitoring the areas around the North Pole. In order to prevent cyber attacks, the report proposes establishing the Nordic Resource Network. In addition, the Stoltenberg's paper recommends setting up a Nordic disaster response unit to coordinate search-and-rescue operations, called the Nordic Amphibious Unit. The project also calls for a formation of a unit for investigation of genocide and crimes against humanity. The report authors emphasize the need to strengthen Nordic cooperation on procurement and maintenance of military equipment as well as military exercises and training. They caution that in the absence of such cooperation, the Nordic countries' defence capability might be reduced. The project also includes a proposal for adoption by the Nordic governments of a Nordic Declaration of Solidarity, spelling out mutual obligations in the event of an armed attack from the outside or undue pressure on one of the countries in Northern Europe¹³.

In the debate on the Stoltenberg report in Reykjavík in June 2009, the Nordic foreign ministers stated as follows: “On the basis of common interests and geographical proximity it is natural for the Nordic countries to cooperate in meeting the challenges in the area of foreign and security policy in the spirit of solidarity”. The Nordic ministers also added that “Increased Nordic co-operation is in line with

¹² It has been prompted by the shutdown of the American military base at Keflavik in 2006. Since then Iceland's air space has been periodically patrolled by NATO allies.

¹³ Mutual political declarations of the Nordic states, according to T. Stoltenberg, suggest that the Nordic countries commit themselves to clarifying how they would respond if a Nordic country were subject to external attack or undue pressure.

every Nordic country's security and defence policy and complements existing European and Euro-Atlantic co-operation"¹⁴.

Commenting on the report, the Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb said that Finland welcomes the proposals contained in the report and finds them interesting. However, according to Stubb, some of the proposals have little chance of being implemented. Despite strong suggestions to strengthen the Nordic cooperation in the areas of security and defence, there is no intention to form a defence alliance. He also emphasized that Finland will remain outside military alliances (YLE Internet, 2009). The chair of the Finnish Parliament's Defence Committee, Juha Korkeaoja, stressed that the report is a collection of ideas that require consideration and thought, and it should not serve as a basis for decision-making. Korkeaoja is particularly concerned about the report's proposal for a pan-Nordic monitoring of Icelandic airspace and the statement that "Given Iceland's far geographical distance, taking on such airspace responsibility is not a simple act. The problems is that Iceland is a NATO member while Finland is not, which would suggest that Finland would be moving toward NATO membership by accepting these proposals"¹⁵. The Nordic declaration of solidarity, included in the Stoltenberg report, was regarded by J. Korkeaoja as "a political declaration" rather than an agreement on defence cooperation¹⁶. He also added that the Nordic Declaration is not a mutual defence guarantee for the Nordic countries. The Chair of the Finnish Defence Committee expressed reservations about the establishment of a Nordic stabilization task force. In his opinion, it would be difficult to pull together the necessary resources because both Finland and other Nordic countries are already involved in such efforts led by the EU.

Addressing the Stoltenberg's report on Nordic foreign and security cooperation, the then Finnish Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies stated that the report "is a positive proposal, but one that requires consideration and thought"¹⁷. In his opinion, cooperation can be implemented in such a way that each country agrees to take responsibility for some specific task, in which it could specialize, which would result in significant cost savings. On the subject of the Nordic declaration of solidarity, J. Häkämies stated that adoption of the declaration "would not automatically mean that if someone attacks e.g. Norway, Finland would have to go to war on its behalf"¹⁸. He also noted that the Solidarity Declaration should be clarified in terms of what it would actually mean for the individual Nordic countries. In the opinion of the then Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg¹⁹, the proposed

¹⁴ Helena Spongenberg, *Nordic countries get an international voice in the Arctic*, (norden 2011, June 23), retrieved: 22.01.2012, <http://www.norden.org/en/analys-norden/tema/the-fight-for-the-arctic/nordic-countries-get-an-international-voice-in-the-arctic>.

¹⁵ YLE Internet, 2009.

¹⁶ Juha Korkeaoja, YLE Internet, 2009.

¹⁷ See: „Helsingin Sanomat”, 11.02.2009, retrieved: 21.03.2011, <http://www.resiinalehti.fi/artikkeli/26>.

¹⁸ Helsingin Sanomat, 2009.

¹⁹ In 2014, J. Stoltenberg became Secretary General of NATO.

solidarity clause must not weaken the NATO members' ties with the Alliance. "Naturally, this cannot weaken the mutual solidarity of NATO countries, and, of course, we do not need to go as far as has been gone among the NATO countries"²⁰. J. Stoltenberg mentioned material acquisitions, training and service work as possible examples of a broadened Nordic cooperation.

An agreement reached by the Nordic foreign ministers at the Helsinki meeting in 2011 concluded the debates. On the 5th of April 2011, the Nordic Foreign Ministers signed the declaration of solidarity in the area of foreign and security policy²¹. In the declaration, the five countries stated that if a Nordic country is affected by a crisis or attacked, the others will, upon request from that country, assist with relevant means.

Nordic cooperation in defence

In view of the dynamically changing situation in the strategically important areas for *Norden*, including destabilization of the previous international order (the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine), Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden have intensified their efforts on the possibilities of enlarging the scope of integration of their foreign and defence policies, which, until recently, used to be a taboo in the Nordic cooperation. Increased expenditure on defence equipment, combined on the other hand with the need for cuts in national budgets, reflects regional assessments on international issues as well as military resources.

The history of the Nordic cooperation suggests that further collaboration in new areas in some instances could become problematic and/or be a source of potential divergences of opinion. Although initially it could be limited in scope, in the long term it invariably aims at tangible benefits. This is precisely how the current Nordic defence cooperation has been shaping. The so-called Stoltenberg report commissioned by the Nordic foreign ministers provided the framework for signing the *Memorandum of Understanding* on the basis of which in 2009 NORDEFECO²² was called to life. NORDEFECO exemplifies voluntary cooperation, equally involving all five states. Nordic defence cooperation is primarily managed by military professionals (not politicians), allowing for the type of concrete steps to be taken which are important when building the foundation for a more significant cooperation in the future. For larger efforts, within the scope of NORDEFECO,

²⁰ Helsingin Sanomat, 2009.

²¹ See: *Enige om nordisk solidaritetserklæring*, Retrived: 17.11.2012, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/pressemeldinger/2011/norden_enige.html?id

²² *The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) constitutes a formal framework for political and military cooperation in the region*. In December 2013, the Nordic countries initiated work on the NORDEFECO vision for 2020, retrieved: 21.07.2016, <http://www.nordefco.org/the-basics-about-nordefco>.

parliamentary support is essential, because without it significant changes are unlikely.

The main purpose of this exceptional cooperation for Nordic countries is to strengthen the defence capabilities of its participants, enhance interoperability and facilitate efficient common solutions in all domains: logistics, training and exercises, maritime and air operations, and international operations.

In other words, the Nordic defence cooperation aims to support a variety of activities in defence related areas in an efficient and cost-effective manner. NORDEFECO should promote a common understanding of defence related to the Nordic strategic and policy issues.

For Denmark, regional co-operation is essential, according to the government. In November 2010, Foreign Minister Lene Espersen presented a strategy for Danish foreign and security policy for the next ten years. Among others, L. Espersen pointed out that it will become harder to fight for Danish interests in a world with the current shifts in power politics and added that “the fight for international influence is becoming harder, also internally in an EU with ever more members. The problems become more complex and unpredictable. We are entering a decade where Denmark is becoming a smaller fish in a bigger sea”²³. In this context, according to Espersen, a matter of particular importance becomes “holding on to the country’s natural alliances, such as Denmark’s partners in the Nordic community. The Nordic alliance is in the government’s strategy seen as a real and very useful instrument for managing Danish foreign and security interests”²⁴.

Since the release of the Stoltenberg report, Finland is more positively disposed towards the cooperation developments in the Nordic Region. Changes taking place in the High North led to Finland’s renewed interest in the Arctic issues. Today, Finland pursues to host the EU Arctic Information Centre. Finnish government views its relations with the Nordic partners as equally important to those with the eastern neighbour. Russia is now already Finland’s very important trading partner; therefore, Finland’s is committed to building proper relations with Moscow and is willing and interested in promoting enhanced cooperation between Russia and international organizations such as the EU and NATO. According to some Finnish political commentators²⁵, good relations with Russia will only benefit Finland.

In its security policy, Norway explores spheres beyond the Nordic countries. According to a recent evaluation of the Stoltenberg report²⁶, Norway seems much less enthusiastic about the report than the other Nordic countries. Norway, a NATO

²³ Spongenberg, *Nordic countries*,

²⁴ Thomas Larsen, *Samarbejde styrker Norden i verden*, retrieved: 05.05.2012, <http://www.norden.org/da/analys-norden/tema/udenrigspolitik-i-forandring/samarbejde-styrker-norden-i-verden>.

²⁵ Markku Heikkilä, *Finland vänder blicken mot norr*, retrieved: 13.06.2016, <http://www.norden.org/no/analys-norden/tema/utenrikspolitik-i-endring/finland-vaender-blicken-mot-norr>.

²⁶ Aslak Bonde, *Norge er og blir atlantisk*, retrieved: 21.11.2014, <http://www.norden.org/no/analys-norden/tema/utenrikspolitik-i-endring/norge-er-og-blir-atlantisk>.

member, has enjoyed good relations with the US on defence related issues ever since the Second World War and there are no indications that they should change. This is why the then Foreign Minister of Norway J. Gahr Støre²⁷ was calling for exercising caution when considering a Nordic defence pact as, particularly in view of the Declaration of Solidarity, it could collide with Norway's strong Atlantic orientation. It has not, however, dissuaded Norway from pursuing greater Nordic cooperation in other areas (e.g. in 2009, J. G. Støre advocated for a formal seat for the Nordic countries at the G20 table).

Directions and spheres of cooperation – current and planned

The reflections on Nordic cooperation in defence mention a number of important phrases or concepts like interoperability, joint actions, resources pooling and sharing, a spirit of solidarity, shared vision which somewhat obscure security – an absolutely key word which makes defence policy a reality.

In 2013, parliamentary support for achieving greater security in the Nordic region was very strong. In 2013, during the Finnish chairmanship of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) a significant progress was made. The Nordic countries signed a cooperation agreement on tactical air transport and defence procurement was “brought under a joint umbrella”²⁸. Nordic special forces started to coordinate medical training (the first one took place in Sweden in October, 2013) and NORDEFECO formulated a vision based on the long-term political priorities for defence cooperation. According to the former Finnish Defence Minister Carl Haglund, “The NORDEFECO vision underlines our willingness to work more closely together and sets clear targets for 2020. It is a tangible and much needed tool for longer-term planning; one that provides the defence forces with real, long-term political guidelines”²⁹. In Haglund's opinion, the Nordic Council and parliamentary support for NORDEFECO brought a new dimension to these political guidelines and “reminded us that greater openness should always be a natural part of any Nordic project. These developments helped me, as chairperson, to ensure that MPs in my home country were kept abreast of the programme for the NORDEFECO Presidency throughout the year. Similar developments in the other Nordic countries have given a positive boost to the whole of NORDEFECO”³⁰. For C. Haglund, constructive discussion during the Nordic Council session on foreign affairs, security and defence policy in Stockholm was one of the most important events of 2013. As stated by him:

²⁷ Jonas Gahr Støre, *Towards closer co-operation on foreign and defense affairs*, in: *10 Nordic Politicians, interviews with 10 politicians about the issues and challenges faced by nordic co-operation in 2010*, (Nordic Council, Copenhagen 2011), 8- 9.

²⁸ Heidi Orava, *Together for security*, w: *7 Nordic Stories*. The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers annual report 2013, (Copenhagen 2013), 24-27, retrieved: 16.03.2016, <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:708565/FULLTEXT01.pdf> .

²⁹ Orava, *Together for security*, 25.

³⁰ Orava, *Together for security*, 26.

“My clearest memory remains the series of meetings of Nordic, Nordic-Baltic and Northern Group ministers that we hosted in Helsinki in December, and which culminated in the defence ministers signing the vision for NORDEFECO. As far as the parliamentary debates are concerned, the roundtable conference on defence and security in Helsinki in September was a high point. It was a positive initiative with many interesting discussions”³¹.

According to Ari Puheloinen, a Finnish General who was Chief of Defence of the Finnish Defence Forces, the political targets of NORDEFECO have been set at a sufficiently high level. He claimed, however, that the future monitoring of what the Nordic countries make of the balance between cooperation and national differences might be a challenge³². Individual countries have their own procedures for decision-making and planning, and have different relations with defence industries. This policy, according to General Puheloinen, will assist *Norden* with development and creation of preconditions for military cooperation in the future. Nevertheless, General Puheloinen expects a cooperation addressing the big military and political questions. “Plenty of people are aware of the synergies that joint procurement brings. But it is the most complicated form of co-operation – sharing capacity – that offers the biggest savings”³³.

Equally enthusiastic on the constructive spirit surrounding cooperation on defence was Höskuldur Þórhallsson, a member of the Nordic Council. According to him, “The Nordic countries are more willing than ever to work together on defence. Sweden and Finland may not be in NATO but that doesn’t detract from their willingness to collaborate more closely on defence. From my perspective, that’s extremely positive”³⁴. He also emphasized that “Icelanders in general are very peace-oriented and don’t want the country to join in military operations at all. But when it comes to working together on defence policy, patrolling air space or the war on terror, the attitude is quite different”.

On the other hand, according to Marit Nybakk, President of the Nordic Council in 2013, flexibility, realism, tolerance and a long-term perspective were to be the cornerstones for a close cooperation on defence policy and security. “The specialization and sharing of responsibilities that characterizes Nordic co-operation – and which is also the aim of it – are based on the assumption that we can rely on each other, that declarations of solidarity will actually mean something in a crisis. We will continue to work on these issues at the next roundtable talks”³⁵.

³¹ Orava, *Together for security*, 27.

³² It should be added that due to those differences, the *Minister’s Vision 2020* talks rather in generalities.

³³ Orava, *Together for security*, 27.

³⁴ Orava, *Together for security*, 27. Iceland has no standing military force. In February 2014, air force units from Sweden and Finland for the first time took part in joint air-defense training exercises over Iceland.

³⁵ Orava, *Together for security*, 27.

Thorvald Stoltenberg, in his speech to the Nordic Council MPs at the Nordic Council session in Stockholm on 30 October 2014³⁶, stated the following: “For me one thing seems obvious: We have a security situation crying out for closer Nordic co-operation on defence and security” (norden.org/sv/aktuellt). Given the current security situation, in Stoltenberg’s opinion, “A Nordic defence and security commission should be established which can sit down and identify when and how concrete proposals should be followed up. I imagine that every government would appoint a commission member. The commission should work fast and place particular emphasis on concrete Nordic cooperation plans for defence. It must also incorporate the important digital side of Nordic security” (norden.org/sv/aktuellt). He also noted with satisfaction that many of the 13 proposals contained in the Report have been implemented, while others are currently under preparation. “I consider it to be extremely important that the recommendation for a Nordic declaration of solidarity was adopted in 2011. This laid a political foundation for further work” (norden.org/sv/aktuellt), commented Stoltenberg.

Six years after the presentation of the report known to all as the “Stoltenberg Report”, its author expresses a clear concern over the current anti-Russian rhetoric, although he noted Russia’s “offensive demonstration policy”, not only in the Nordic airspace. Stoltenberg contends with concern that this difficult situation is being exploited to revive the Cold War rhetoric. He does not accept a Russian hostile image of an enemy especially since there exists a long tradition of *Norden’s* very own tradition of dialogue with Russia. He argues that at a time when the EU imposes necessary sanctions, it is very important to watch closely the bi-lateral cooperation in the North. According to Thorvald Stoltenberg, the situation in Europe is quite different than at the time of the Cold War and there cannot be any European security without Russia.

The Nordic countries continue to be an important element in the European security system. It is not merely about some of the Nordic being members of the North Atlantic Alliance and others joining the EU structures (Denmark, Sweden and Finland). The point is that after the end of the Cold War, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway have been building their own “Nordic” security system³⁷, including military security, which is complimentary to the structures of NATO and the EU. Also, from the beginning of the 1990s, a unique regional system of the Baltic Sea security can be observed, due to the development of various forms of political and military cooperation. As writes G. Rdzanek (2004), “It may be considered unique because of the high dynamics of processes taking place within it (the successful efforts of the Baltic Republics – Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to be admitted to the structures of

³⁶ The full statement by Thorvald. Stoltenberg (2014-10-30) retrieved 12.10.2015, <http://www.Norden.org/sv/nordiska-raadet/sessioner-och-moeten/nordiska-raadets-sessioner/66-e-sessionen-2014/protokoll-nordiska-raadets-66-e-session-2014/12.-aktualitetsdebat/thorvald-stoltenberg-hovedindlaeg>

³⁷ For more on energy security, see: Ryszard M. Czarny, *Dylematy energetyczne państw regionu nordyckiego*, Scandinavium, (Compus Kielce 2009).

NATO and the EU), employing both bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation, involvement of states with fundamentally different doctrinal assumptions of security and defence policies (Russian Federation, neutral states – Finland and Sweden, NATO members – Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia)”.

Faced with budgetary constraints and limited resources, all Nordic countries had to adopt a well thought-out, efficient and effective defence policy. Their approach may serve as a model for developing defence policies in other European countries, especially against a backdrop of increasing security tensions and threats sparked by Russia’s actions in Ukraine. Given an unprecedented increase in the number of provocative flights by the Russian military aircraft which in 2014 and 2015 conducted training exercises simulating nuclear attacks on Sweden and the Danish island of Bornholm, a powerful air defence system became the keystone in the Nordic defence capabilities.

Sweden, which assumed the chairmanship of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO)³⁸ after Norway in 2015, has won universal backing for its Nordic plan to elevate cross-border defence cooperation to respond to the actual long-term threats in the region. The need for rising the level of practical interstate collaboration was recognized a key driving force of their military cooperation in order to strengthen air and sea cooperation and improve early warning systems. Russia’s growing threat to Norway has prompted the Norwegian Ministry of Defence to boost its defence budget for 2016 by another 12%, to EUR 5.3 billion³⁹. Norway already picked up from the US its first high-tech F-35 fighter jets. Norway has committed to purchase 52 planes. Additional funds will be allocated for military intelligence and for the purchase of submarines and anti-submarine surface vessels. The Swedish government has increased its 2016 defence budget by 8.5% to EUR 5.5 billion. Just like Norway, Sweden plans to purchase modern submarines, jet fighters and instant response combat weapons to deter possible Russia’s aggression. Finland also plans to boost its 2016 military expenditure by 9% to EUR 2.5 billion. This is two times less than its Western neighbours but still a lot for a country which traditionally attempts to maintain proper relations with Russia.

Special attention should also be given to the approach by the Nordic countries to the factors institutionalizing international military relations in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. The case in point is the impact of global processes of defence integration, security systems, and the forming of transnational political-

³⁸ For more on NORDEFCO, see: retrieved 01.11.2014, <http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/nordiskt-forsv-arssamarbete/det-svenska-ordforandeskapet-i-nordefco/> and http://www.nordefco.org/Files/NORDEFCO_arssrapport_2014.pdf

³⁹ Jędrzej Bielecki, (2015, October 12). *Putin zmusza Skandynawów do porzucenia neutralności*, retrieved 10.05.2016, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1041267,title,Putin-zmusza-Skandynawow-do-porzucenia-neutralnosci,wid,17905377,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=115c0b> .

military structures on the framework of national defence doctrines and the relations with other actors in the global security system and the military security in particular.

It can be said that though members of the Nordic Council continue to debate the future security and defence policy, at the same time they seek to explore common synergies and to facilitate efficient common solutions. The current global but especially regional shifts in the balance of power have led the Nordic countries to a conclusion that increased regional collaboration might be a necessary step for further development in today's world.

Many factors point out that currently the traditional Nordic cooperation is losing ground to European partnerships but still new opportunities for partnerships are opening up in the Nordic Region such as cooperation on security and foreign policy. Given that defence and security policies are some of the pillars of national policies, the Nordic governments' interest in cooperation within this area clearly shows that the matter is extremely serious.

The Nordic governments have in general a positive attitude towards additional cooperation in defence and security policy in the region. They all agree that an integrated Nordic alliance must be within the framework of the European Union and NATO. On the other hand, Nordic mutual solidarity seems to transcend the boundaries of the Alliance and since the Nordics have been known for their pragmatic approach to solving critical problems, it remains to be seen what the future will bring.

Conclusions

Over the past two decades, defence policy of nearly all Nordic countries has undergone a significant transformation. Years-long traditional security threats have become obsolete. They have been replaced by terrorism or crises in failed states – that is challenges resulting from the global phenomena. In this context, the process of restructuring defence forces in individual countries is nothing more than an attempt at adapting to the active participation in an international crisis management policy.

It generally appears that the transformation of the Nordic countries' defence policies in the last two decades stemmed, among others, from self-appeasement approach arising from Russia's internal problems. These changes in combination with the integration of the region, the accession of two countries to the EU and after 1999 Central European countries' membership in NATO brought forth defence forces reform, which in practice means the reduction of the armed forces in size as well as of the defence budgets⁴⁰. The reduction in defence capabilities of individual states prompted the Nordic countries to pursue a new path in order to ensure theirs and regional military security.

⁴⁰ For example, Sweden declared a strategic timeout.

Here again it is worth recalling the saying *Tillsammans är vi starkare* (“together we are stronger”) as the motto which describes the overall direction and the way of doing business of the states of *Norden*. Admittedly, one may notice temporary problems questioning the implementation of this approach, but in the long run there is no doubt that *Norden* will stay affluent, competent and knowledgeable as well as visible in the international arena. It is the multi-faceted cooperation of *Norden* that will prepare the Nordic states and their inhabitants to the challenges of the future, both in the regional and global dimension.

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, defence policy of nearly all Nordic countries has undergone a significant transformation. Years-long traditional security threats have become obsolete. They have been replaced by terrorism or crises in failed states – that is challenges resulting from the global phenomena. In this context, the process of restructuring defence forces in individual countries is nothing more than an attempt at adapting to the active participation in an international crisis management policy.

Dyskusja na temat polityki bezpieczeństwa - specyfika podejścia *norden*

Nie ulega wątpliwości, że w ostatnich dwóch dekadach polityka obronna właściwie wszystkich państw nordyckich przeszła ogromne przeobrażenia. Z ich perspektywy straciły na aktualności trwające przez całe lata, już niejako tradycyjne zagrożenia dla bezpieczeństwa. Natomiast w ich miejsce weszły np. terroryzm czy kryzysy w państwach upadłych, a więc wyzwania stanowiące konsekwencje zjawisk o charakterze globalnym.

W tym kontekście reformy sił zbrojnych w poszczególnych krajach to nic innego jak próba adaptacji do nowych wyzwań, przystosowania się do aktywnej polityki międzynarodowego zaangażowania kryzysowego.

Key words

Norden, security policy, defense, political changes, nordic cooperation

Słowa kluczowe

Norden (państwa nordyckie), polityka bezpieczeństwa, obrona, zmiany polityczne, współpraca nordycka,

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