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Parliaments and National Strategy Documents:

A comparative case-study from the Nordic region

Alyson JK Bailes

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Abstract

The main ways in which European parliaments engage with the executive over national security concern 'hard' issues of the funding, structure and deployment of armed forces. In today's national and institutional practice, however, 'security' is commonly defined in broader terms that blur the external/internal distinction, including (among others) anti-terrorism and anti-crime policies, cyber-security, environmental and health security, and responses to civil emergencies. Many democratic states have published comprehensive 'security strategies' covering this full range, in the interests of consistency, coordination, and transparency. As many of the policy areas involved are ones of strong legislative competence, in principle such strategies should demand close executive-legislative interaction. To explore the reality, the five Nordic states are investigated here as test-cases, revealing that only one state has adopted a comprehensive strategy paper and two others are in the process of producing one. Methods for handling such documents also vary from an explicit parliamentary lead (Iceland) to low-key consultation or para-parliamentary processes. It appears that styles of strategy writing in older democracies reflect the general features of political and security culture; use varied methods of consultation and control; and thus may not exactly match the norms these states recommend to others.

The findings also underline the general need for parliamentary powers to be reviewed and updated as national and international security sector practices evolve. The need to expand the scope, and/or update the modalities, of parliament's overview of security policy could arise (for instance) from new technological developments such as the use of drones and robotics, social media and genetic manipulation, or from unfamiliar risks arising in non-defence fields of governance. It is also, however, triggered by changes in the place and level at which relevant decision-taking occurs: whether as a result of sub-national devolution, privatization, or transfers of sovereignty to more-than-national entities. The shift in 'ownership' of overseas defence missions already provides a case where many national parliaments have lost elements of control that have not (yet) been fully re-provided at other levels.

PARLIAMENTS AND NATIONAL STRATEGY DOCUMENTS
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1. Introduction

In the history of executive-legislative relations, the most-debated and most-studied roles of parliamentary institutions have been those relating to traditional 'hard' defence functions: notably decisions on war and peace,[1] conflict interventions, peace-building efforts, controls on the arms trade, and civil-military relations. Other important transactions include voting defence budgets, approving relevant treaties, and the higher politics of war crimes. In countries carrying out programmes of Security Sector Reform (SSR),[2] parliament may be both a co-agent – through debate and legislation – in introducing legitimate, democratic practices in all these fields, and an object of the reforms inasmuch as it gains new and better powers.

It is not hard to see why executive-legislative relations in these fields are both important and sensitive. They belong to the very core of national sovereignty, and the very concept of 'war powers' signals a link with the prerogatives of leadership. At the same time, any resort to armed violence has implications for citizens' lives, national wealth, and compliance with national and international values, making it proper that checks and balances should be applied *inter alia* through the parliamentary process. Decisions involving the arms trade and defence industry collaboration can also have high importance both for national interests and national image.[3] The demand has recently grown for scrutiny of intelligence services, and this is typically supplied by a special parliamentary mechanism with higher levels of confidentiality.[4]

[*] The author wishes to thank Pauli Järvenpää and Tómas Joensen for invaluable research contributions to this study.

[1] For studies on 'war powers' that include the Nordic states (the case-studies in the present text), see i.a. Wolfgang Wagner, Dirk Peters and Cosima Glahn, *Parliamentary War Powers Around the World* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010), available at http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Parliamentary-War-Powers-Around-the-World; Sandra Dieterich, Hart Hummel and Stefan Marschall, *Parliamentary War Powers: A survey of 25 European Parliaments* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010) at http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Parliamentary-War-Powers; Hans Born et al, *Parliamentary oversight of civilian and military ESDP missions: The European and national levels* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2007), available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/pe348610_/PE348610_en.pdf .

[2] The aim of SSR is to make the public functions of defence and security more effective and better governed, in terms of legality, democracy and transparency. SSR programmes are typically introduced in post-conflict countries or after regime change and transition, with support from institutions such as the United Nations, European Union and NATO. Adequate parliamentary oversight is always an objective. For further information see the publications of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, http://www.dcaf.ch./Publications .

[3] Sensitive aspects include arms exports but also major procurement decisions. In a British case, Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine resigned in 1986 over whether the helicopter firm Westland should merge with a US or European partner.

[4] Hans Born, Loch K. Johnson and Ian Leigh, *Who's Watching the Spies?* (Washington: Potomac Books 2005).

Since the later twentieth century, however, understandings of national 'security' have shifted and broadened out. As the Cold War's end dampened concerns about state-to-state war for many Europeans, attention shifted to other physical threats: internal conflict, terrorism or violent crime. Non-military risks such as major accidents, natural disasters, supply breakdowns and pandemics are also increasingly referred to in terms of 'security', acknowledging their ability to inflict political and societal as well as physical damage. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report of 1994[5] laid out a multi-faceted concept of 'human security' to capture the range, and also the inter-relationship, of these challenges. One consequence is that old distinctions of internal and external policy become blurred, since many threats involve an 'enemy within' and others develop transnationally, ignoring state borders.

Multi-functional security definitions are not just an analytical device, but extend the notion of the state's fundamental, life-and-death responsibilities. As 'new' threats are recognized, the responsible authorities must explain how they will respond. One consequence is the growing practice, since the mid-1990s, for nations and institutions to publish *security strategies* (or *concepts*, or *policies*) that survey the whole range of challenges and propose a framework for managing them. These are not legislative instruments, and while they may cover the division of responsibilities they stop short of discussing finance or other resource implications. They do, however, pose new questions about parliamentary involvement. If these documents mean anything, they should provide the highest statement of executive intent and of the nation's first-order norms, for instance on use of force. They include non-military topics on which parliaments normally have greater powers than vis-à-vis defence, and they frequently have implications for civil liberties and human rights. Should we not, therefore, expect national (or institutional) parliaments to play a strong role in preparing or, at least, scrutinizing these documents? Conversely, might some governments take advantage of the new mode of 'strategy'-writing to establish – or at least, experiment with - important new policy lines, while side-stepping the parliamentary procedures that more precise legislative proposals would face?

In the realm of Security Sector Reform, there are no doubts or disagreements about what should happen. Drawing up a new, or first-ever, national security policy (or strategy, or concept) is one of the earliest steps recommended in building an appropriate, efficient and democratic structure of security governance.[6] As to parliament's role, an authoritative (and much-translated) handbook published by the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces states the following:[7]

> As far as parliament is concerned, the debate on the national security policy should not be a single event but a process developing through all its four phases: development, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. While there

[5] United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report, 1994*"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf .

[6] Hans Born, Philipp Fluri and Anders Johnsson, *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2003), pp. 26-7, availablet at http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Parliamentary-Oversight-of-the-Security-Sector.

7. Ibid., p. 28.

> should be no interference in the responsibilities of the executive in drawing up and implementing this policy, the process should be as transparent and participatory as possible, allowing a proper balance to be reached between all those exerting any kind of influence on it, including the security sector itself and the military-industrial complex.

Is this prescription followed in practice, not only by states undergoing an SSR programme with external aid, but also by the Western democracies that commonly take the lead in defining security norms for others? The present paper probes that question through a contemporary case-study covering the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. All have high reputations both for democracy and responsible diplomacy, and all take part in peace operations where they promote (among other things) weaker nations' security reforms. If anyone can provide a model of handling security strategies, one would expect these states to do so: and yet, as we shall see, there are marked differences and complications in the national reality. Probing such Nordic variations may help to reveal processes – notably, interactions between domestic politics and external behaviour - that are important for executive-legislative relationships more broadly.

The rest of this paper has four sections, starting with further general information on security strategies. Section 3 then provides background on Nordic security themes and parliamentary traditions, and the results of the case-study are in Section 4. Section 5 provides brief conclusions.

2. What is a security strategy?

Clearly, a 'strategy' in the sense used here is different both from the original military meaning of the term, and from the concept of 'grand strategy' as used in International Relations research. It is not (purely or mainly) about military defence or traditional power-play: it is consciously formulated and openly declared at a given moment in time, foregoing surprise in the interests of transparency. That does not necessarily make it an honest statement or a simple translation of realities. A government - or institution – promulgating a strategy is consciously sending a message: of reassurance, of welcome or perhaps of warning to the audience abroad; and of resolve and competence, perhaps also a warning against bad behaviour, to citizens at home.

A published strategy paper thus has an *instrumental* character, in several senses. It may seek to create common ground among internal factions, military and civilians, different government agencies, or member states in the case of an institutional strategy. In the wider Europe from the 1990s onwards, many post-Communist states used their new strategies to signal support for policies and norms of Western institutions – the European Union (EU) and NATO – that they hoped to join. In the data-bank of some 100 defence white papers and security strategies provided by the International Relations and Security Network (ISN),[8] a high proportion of self-styled strategies or strategic concepts come

[8] "The International Relations and Security Network", accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Series/Detail/?id=154839.

from 'transitional' countries such as Albania, Armenia, Serbia and FYROM as well as now-established NATO members like the Baltic States, Hungary and Czech Republic.

The tactical nature of a given published strategy may limit its life expectancy (many countries issue new versions every four-five years), but does not reduce its political importance. The US's National Security Strategies, currently issued five-yearly and drafted by each new Administration, regularly create a literally worldwide sensation. That of 2002[9] notoriously tried to build a rationale for pre-emptive invasion (as in Iraq) while the Obama Administration's 2010 version[10] caught attention with its talk of a strategic 'pivot' towards Asia.

Smaller countries' offerings are normally less contentious in external terms. Dependent on others' opinion and support, such nations need to tailor their statements to foreign ears and current international trends. If, however, they depart too far from their own people's security understandings and beliefs – or what might be called the existential 'deep' strategy[11] – there will be a price to pay in terms of a public/élite rift, and perhaps a sharper political penalty. In the decade from 2001, many US-friendly governments placed the terrorist threat higher on their declared agendas and joined in remote military operations against it, only to face domestic backlashes that (among others) caused countries like Spain and Italy to pull out from Iraq prematurely.

One feature shared by practically all modern 'strategy' documents is their multi-functional coverage. NATO's and the EU's current strategies are worth citing here, i.a. as various Nordic countries have subscribed to them (Denmark, Iceland and Norway being members of NATO and Denmark, Finland and Sweden of the EU).

Figure: Threats/risks in the NATO Strategic Concept of 2010[12] and EU Security Strategy of 2003[13] (updated 2008).[14]

> **NATO**: Conventional attack, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), terrorism, external conflict and instability, cyber-attack, interruption of supplies and communications, high technology, environmental and resource constraints
>
> **EU:** Terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts, state failure, organized crime; cyber security, energy security, climate change

[9] "National Security Strategy Archive", accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://nssarchive.us/?page_id=32.
[10] "National Security Strategy Archive", accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://nssarchive.us/?page_id=8.
[11] This term is introduced and developed in Alyson JK Bailes; Alyson JK Bailes "Does a Small State need a Strategy?" , Centre for Small State Studies Publication Series, University of Iceland, Occasional Ppaper 2 (2009), available at http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/old/Bailes_Final%20wh.pdf.
[12] Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence" (Lisbon, 2010), available at: http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf .
[13] European Council, "A secure Europe in a better world: European Security Strategy", (Brussels, 2003), available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf .
[14] European Council, "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World" (Brussels, 2008), S407/08, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf.

This range also typifies most national strategies, although the latter may include even 'softer' issues such as health, economic security, social cohesion and resilience. Civil emergencies such as major accidents, infrastructure breakdowns and natural disasters are often a high priority, not least for developed countries where they threaten the complicated, co-dependent systems and services underpinning modern lifestyles. Their importance is recognized even by Europe's militarily strongest powers: among top priorities in the UK's 2010 national strategy[15] we find 'A major accident or natural hazard which requires a national response, such as severe coastal flooding affecting three or more regions of the UK, or an influenza pandemic.' First-order risks listed in the French White Paper on Defence and Security from 2013[16] include 'major crises arising on the national territory and resulting from natural, health, technological, industrial and accidental risks'.

Such wide security agendas demand equally diverse tools and methods, engaging officials from many departments, and also involving cooperation with private business, independent experts and social actors. One function of a 'strategy' is to provide clear common goals and guidelines for such many-sided collaboration; but to affect security realities, it must be supplemented by administrative arrangements for follow-up including resource allocation and coordination. These may or may not include extensive civil-military cooperation, as nations (including the Nordics) differ considerably in their readiness to give armed forces a domestic role. Where there is a stronger sense of military distinctness, it is not uncommon to find a separate national *defence* concept or *military* strategy being published.

3. The Nordic background

a) Security environment, security policies

Table One: Main Features of the Nordic States *(all facts correct for 2013)*

	Territory (sq.km.)	Population (millions)	GDP (US$, constant Prices, in billions)	GDP per capita (PPP, in current US$)	Military Spending as % of GDP	Institutional Membership *(all belong to UN, OSCE, Council of Europe)*
Denmark	43,094	5.59	314,242	38,521	1.4%	NATO/EU
Finland	338,145	5.41	250,024	37,012	1.5%	EU (+PfP*)
Iceland	103,000	0.32	13,657	40,401	(0.1%)**	NATO/EEA ***
Norway	323,802	5.02	499,667	56,663	1.4%	NATO/EEA
Sweden	450,295	9.52	525,742	42,037	1.2%	EU (+PfP)

[15] United Kingdom Government, "A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy" (London: Crown, 2010), available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61936/national-security-strategy.pdf.

[16] White Paper, "Defence and National Security: Twelve key points" (France: Ministère de la Défense, 2013), available at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=167315.

Notes:
**PfP = NATO's Partnership for Peace*
***Iceland has no armed forces; the figure relates to civil security spending eg on the Coastguard*
**** EEA = European Economic Area*

The five sovereign states of the Nordic region share a strategic environment overshadowed by the power of Russia, but stable and relatively relaxed since World War Two thanks ultimately to NATO's deterrent shield. In modern times they have been free from internal conflict, violent disorders, major crime and major terrorist incidents, with the recent exception of the (home-brewed) Breivik case in Norway. On the other side, environmental awareness was early to develop in the Nordic region, while Nordic notions of social protection - which see the state as providing 'trygghet' (safety, assurance) for all citizens - highlight the security importance of issues like health, food and energy supply. The understanding of economic and financial security is probably strongest in Finland with its historic issues of managing/reducing dependence on Russia; in Sweden where this was the strongest driver for joining the EU; and in Norway where the control and use of natural resources is a primary issue.

The policy conclusions drawn by the five states from this shared environment differ most widely in the hard security sphere. Not only are three states (as already noted) in NATO and two outside, but Norway and Finland put much greater emphasis on territorial defence than do Denmark and Sweden, and Iceland has no armed forces at all. Sweden is also a considerable defence industrial power, the fifth largest arms exporter in the EU.[17] Finland and Denmark allow their military personnel a wider range of roles in homeland security than Sweden does, and there are differences also in the pattern of public-private burden-sharing in security. In handling non-military security, however, the five states have grown closer in conceptual and discourse terms. Sweden and Norway for some time have used 'societal security' as their overall policy framework, and Iceland's parliament has advocated the same approach.[18] Finland's 'comprehensive' security policy, directed at 'protecting the vital functions of society', and the Danish policy founded upon readiness and social robustness, come to the same thing in practice.

This 'societal' vision of security can be traced back to German, Danish and British thinkers and was developed as one dimension of modern security in the works of Barry Buzan.[19] It corresponds to the 'community' category in the UN's definition of human security; but besides highlighting vulnerabilities, expects developed societies to play some role in their own protection - thus legitimizing (non-military, non-violent) security roles for the private sector, non-governmental organizations, charities and ultimately everyone. In Nordic states, the operational focus of 'societal security' policies is on society's material dependencies (vital functions and services, critical infrastructures, etc) and the need to protect against all risks short of armed conflict. The resulting range of concern is very wide, but most institutional resources are devoted to coping with exceptional events

[17] For more details see the SIPRI arms transfers database on http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers.
[18] This refers to a parliamentary recommendation on security strategy of March 2014: see Iceland section below.
[19] Eg ´Peoples, States and Fear' (Brussels: ECPR Press, 2007).

– 'civil emergencies' – whether caused by deliberate non-state attack, accident, or natural forces.[20]

For more than two centuries the Nordic states have maintained a 'Nordic peace' among themselves. In the Cold War, defence was excluded from the close Nordic Cooperation system built up from the 1950s, and the Nordic militaries could only overtly cooperate in peace-keeping activities abroad. Since the 1990s, however, cooperation in defence equipment and a wider range of operations has developed, currently coordinated through a structure called NORDEFCO.[21] On the civil security side, the so-called 'Haga' cooperation was launched in 2009 with a five-country meeting in Sweden, bringing together the ministries responsible for civil emergencies and the corresponding rescue/response agencies.

Objectively, the results of such Nordic 'hard' and 'soft' security cooperation remain rather modest. Military collaboration has been slow to spread to actual self-defence operations, and remains largely limited to air forces, exercises and information exchange even after the latest enhancements driven by concerns over Russia.[22] The 'Haga' project has yet to achieve any major breakthroughs and may be losing impetus.[23] The reasons include important differences in the way the countries conceive and handle broader security tasks, as well as defence. It is clear, for instance, that the range of natural disasters threatening Iceland, Denmark and Finland will be different; but the countries also vary in their economic strengths and weaknesses, energy situation, and sensitivity to immigration and non-native extremism, to name but a few. Other variables concern civil-military relations, the level of public/private cooperation, and the tendency towards centralization or de-centralization. Differing external relationships and obligations arising from the Nordics' chequered pattern of membership in the EU and NATO also have their impact – all Nordic security policy statements highlight the importance of multilateral institutions for national safety and influence, but what precisely they say about them varies intriguingly.[24]

b) Nordic parliaments[25]

The Nordic region claims the world's single oldest parliament: the Icelandic Alþingi founded in 932, although it has not met continuously since. Nordic parliaments in their modern forms all have long and strong traditions as seen in Table Two. Voting turn-out in general elections is relatively high, with a peak of around 90% in Denmark and the

[20] Alyson JK Bailes, "Societal Security and Small States" in Clive Archer, Alyson JK Bailes and Anders Wivel (eds.), *Small States and International Security: Europe and beyond,* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.66-79.
[21] For more information see www.nordefco.org .
[22] *Aftenposten.* "Russian aggression: Nordic states extend military cooperation", accessed April 9 2015, available at: http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/Russian-aggression-Nordic-states-extend-their-military-cooperation-7975109.html.
[23] Alyson JK Bailes and Carolina Sandö, "*Nordic Cooperation in Civil Security: The Haga process 2009-2014*" *(Stockholm:* Swedish Defence Research Institute, 2014), available at: http://www.foi.se/en/Top-menu/Pressroom/News/2014/New-study-of-Nordic-cooperation-on-civil-security-/.
[24] Alyson JK Bailes, 'Does a Small State need a Strategy?', as in note 11 above.
[25] The classic work on Nordic parliaments generally is David Arter, *The Nordic Parliaments* (London: St. Martin's Press 1984). See also Erik Damgaard (ed.), *Parlamentarisk forandring i Norden,* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1990).

Faroes but falling under 70% in Finland and Åland. All Nordic nations, including the self-governing territories, send a cross-party delegation of their members to sit in the Nordic Council, the original and still central organ of Nordic Cooperation.[26] A similar but smaller West Nordic Council[27] consists of parliamentarians from Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

Table Two: Key facts on Nordic parliamentary bodies, including self-governing nations *(correct as of 2015)*

Nation	Name (website)	Date created	Number of Members	Relevant Committees
Denmark	Folketing www.ft.dk	1849*	179	Defence, foreign affairs, European affairs
Faroe Islands	Løgting *www.folkting.fo*	1852**	33	Foreign affairs
Greenland	Inatsisartut *www.inatsisartut.gl*	1979***	31	
Finland	Eduskunta *www.eduskunta.fi*	1906	200	Foreign affairs, defence, EU ('Grand Committee')
Åland	Lagting *www.lagtinget.ax*	1922	30	
Iceland Alþingi	Alþingi *www.althingi.is*	1844**	63	Foreign affairs
Norway	Storting *www.stortinget.no*	1814	169	Foreign affairs and defence
Sweeden	Riksdag *www.riksdagen.se*	1866**	349	Defence, foreign affairs, EU affairs

*Bicameral until 1953 when the Rigsdag and Landsting were united as the Folketing
**Modern (re-)establishments of assemblies with precursors going back to Viking or medieval times
***Preceded by Grönlands Landsråd, established in 1951

The powers of Nordic parliaments are well developed in all fields including the oversight of military, security, and intelligence affairs. All have committees (though with different names and divisions of competence) entrusted with handling the latter issues and they are typically well supplied with funds, advice, opportunities to question ministers and officials, and so forth. Parliaments in the self-governing territories might seem an exception, as defence is reserved to the motherland's competence. However, the Åland parliament (Lagting) has often debated possible violations of the islands' demilitarized status, and all three such parliaments can address police and civil security matters. Denmark has agreed that its self-governing territories may negotiate some external agreements directly, and will be consulted on proposed Danish agreements affecting their interests:[28] some of these concern 'softer' security issues such as the environment and fisheries protection.

[26] For more information see http://www.norden.org .
[27] For more information see http://www.vestnordisk.is/english/ .
[28] Further information available at

To illustrate parliamentary powers in the four Nordic states that maintain armed forces,[29] their parliaments' constitutional rights[30] relating to military activities include:

> Denmark: Power to approve the use of force against another nation other than for self-defence, and to approve any agreement entailing military obligations.
> Finland: Power to approve President's decisions on war and peace.
> Norway: Power to approve changes in size of armed forces, admission of foreign troops, sending abroad of forces other than 'troops of the line'.
> Sweden: Power to approve peacekeeping deployments, especially peace enforcement.

Yet the Nordic cases have some complications worth noting, especially if contemplating them as 'models' in an SSR context. First, while the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish monarchies are 'constitutional' and non-problematic in the present context, Iceland's and Finland's presidents are far more active. The Finnish President is traditionally seen as the custodian of national destiny and is constitutionally the leader of foreign policy and supreme commander of the forces;[31] although the post's practical role in external affairs has diminished notably since EU entry, which had the effect of enhancing the Prime Minister's position.[32] In recent years the President of Iceland has used referendums on some strategically important issues to overturn parliamentary votes, and controversy over his 'alternative foreign policy' provides one impetus for ongoing efforts to re-write the Icelandic constitution.[33] The holding of referendums, indeed, qualifies Nordic parliamentary powers more broadly as they are commonly convoked on strategically momentous issues involving the EU, even if not on specifically military ones.[34]

The weakness of Nordic governments built on complex coalitions and/or on a parliamentary minority is generally held to boost parliament's authority, since *ad hoc* bargaining is needed for the passage of any and all legislation. In Denmark, however, such deals tend to take place among party leaders, pre-determining the result of the actual parliamentary debate. It might be disputed whether this really shifts the executive/legislative balance towards legislators, or whether it rather creates a different (variable geometry?) model of the executive – and we shall see below that Denmark's major defence choices are also made this way.

A final point to bear in mind when drawing the overall picture of Nordic parliaments' powers is the possible effect of shifting decisions to a more-than-national level in the

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http://www.stm.dk/_a_2956.html (Faroes) and http://www.stm.dk/_p_13090.html (Greenland).

[29] Lacking armed forces, Iceland has no similar constitutional rules and the government can decide alone on deploying police or civilian peacekeepers. This has proved controversial, e.g. when Iceland contributed to the US-led coalition against Iraq.

[30] For the five Nordic states' constitutions in English translation see the LegislationLine website: http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions.

[31] "The President of the Republic of Finland", accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://www.tpk.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=44821&culture=en-US&contentlan=2 .

[32] Heikki Paloheimo, 'The Rising Power of the Prime Minister of Finland', (Scandinavian Political Studies, 2003), vol. 26/, pp 219-43.

[33] A new draft constitution was prepared – but not adopted - under the Left-leaning coalition government of 2009-13, and was effectively put on ice by the centre-Right coalition elected in May 2013.

[34] Examples have included the issue of EMU membership (Sweden) as well as EU accession. Denmark would require a referendum in order to rescind (any of) its four opt-outs from EU integration, including its non-participation in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

context of multilateral organizations. Nordic Cooperation, as we have seen, does not go as far as this: the separate consent of all contributing countries would be needed, for instance, to deploy the joint Nordic Battle Group[35] (and this may explain why it has never gone into action). Nor does NATO membership override the national prerogative for its three Nordic members, since national consent is also needed to activate the collective defence mechanism under the Washington Treaty's[36] Article 5. The European Union's supranational features do not (yet) extend to the realm of military defence, yet it does take decisions with potential life-and-death consequences when it launches overseas deployments using its member states' military and/or civilian personnel under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).[37] Traditional framings of parliaments' war powers will by definition not cover actions of this new type, and it is left to member governments whether to extend existing mandatory/voluntary consultation procedures to cover them – and the equivalent NATO non-self-defence operations such as ISAF in Afghanistan. A study in 2007 found that at that time, barely half of the EU states' parliaments had been given consultation rights over such multilateral missions and very few – including those of Finland and Sweden – were allowed to discuss the matter before their governments agreed to contribute troops.[38] Even when such arrangements exist, they are unlikely to cover missions using police or other non-military personnel.

Does a similar problem arise with regard to strategy documents adopted at more-than-national level? The stakes are clearly lower inasmuch as such documents are neither legally binding, nor do they directly trigger the use of force or other actions likely to affect national survival and values. Any follow-up measures will require separate executive decisions, usually in contexts that do trigger some kind of parliamentary control – for instance, any measures adopted by the EU on environmental, energy or health security (among others) will take a legislative form that is subject to both European Parliament and national scrutiny under the general procedures of EU governance. If taken seriously, however, the original documents should have an effect in setting the parameters for any national strategies subsequently adopted by the member states that have signed up to them, and should thus be of concern both to representative institutions and other national stakeholders. Within the limits of the present study, it has not been possible to check whether national parliaments have accordingly been allowed to debate such strategies before and/or after adoption; but one may hypothesize that national practices on this will vary as do the general scrutiny powers of the relevant institutions. In the UK, for example, the House of Lords carried out formal enquiries (after the fact) into

[35] The Nordic Battle Group, including contingents from Finland, Norway, Sweden, the three Baltic States and Ireland, was formed in the framework of an EU initiative to create rapid response units for overseas missions, and has been ready for action since 2008.

[36] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Washington Treaty", signed 4 April 1949, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_67656.htm.

[37] For background on CSDP see http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/ .

[38] Hans Born et al. (2007), as note 2 above, p. iv; See also Ariella Huff, "Problems and Patterns in Parliamentary Scrutiny of the CFSP and CSDP" (OPAL Online Paper Series 14/2013), available at: http://www.pademia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/14.pdf .

both the 2008 review of the EU'S Security Strategy and the 2011 International Security Strategy,[39] but this is likely to reflect the upper end of the scale of parliamentary activism.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament's (EP's) ability to exercise control over the same transactions at EU level has developed only gradually as the EP's general interest in and competence for security and defence has strengthened. When the 2003 Security Strategy was adopted the EP did not yet have a Sub-Committee for Security and Defence. By 2008 it did, and not only took the chance to debate the up-dating of the Strategy but injected substantial views on the need to make security evaluations more realistic and to reinforce CSDP. The EP now expects an even higher degree of engagement in work done on the next EU Strategy, not least as the current High Representative for CFSP has promised greater parliamentary accountability in the work of herself and the European External Action Service.[40] Monitoring this development, and comparing it with the EU national parliaments' roles (past and present) vis-à-vis European-level strategy writing, would be a very apposite follow-up to the present study.[41]

4. Nordic strategies (or equivalents) and the role of parliaments

The cases of the five countries are presented here in alphabetical order.

a) Denmark

Greenland and the Faroes aside, Denmark's geography binds it more closely than other Nordics to the European continent, making Germany as much of a historic concern as Russia. Famously NATO-sceptic at times in the Cold War, in recent decades the Danes have become keen Alliance supporters and frequent followers in US-led actions, including Iraq.[42] In the 1990s they led the lobby for bringing the Baltic States into NATO and preparing them for membership through tri-Baltic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation. With Baltic accession assured, Denmark could enjoy a new depth of strategic protection from the East; and it responded in 2004 with a Defence Agreement[43] that re-moulded its forces' tasks to concentrate more on overseas missions and internal support for the civil authorities than on old-style territorial defence. This remains the governing defence concept and it is one that assures close civil-military relations, while the Danish

[39] See respectively, UK Parliament, *Adapting the EU's approach to today's security challenges— the Review of the 2003 European Security Strategy* (Lords European Union Committee, 2008), available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/ldeucom/190/190.pdf ; UK Parliament, , *EU Internal Security Strategy* (Lords Select Committee, 2012), available at: http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-home-affairs-sub-committee-f-/inquiries/eu-internal-security-strategy/.

[40] At her inaugural hearing in the European Parliament on 6 October 2014, Mme Mogherini explicitly promised to consult the Parliament *ex ante* on all 'new strategy documents, policy papers and mandates', available at: http://ephearings2014.eu/post/99339258991/federica-mogherini-high-representative-of-the.

[41] To be fair, one should add that both NATO when preparing its 2010 Strategic Concept and the EU when preparing the above-mentioned Strategies carried out wider consultation processes including 'wise men''s studies, public hearings and academic seminars, in which parliamentarians could and did participate on a personal basis.

[42] Anders Wivel, "From Peacemaker to Warmonger? Explaining Denmark's Great Power Politics", (*Swiss Political Science Review*, 09/2013).

[43] Håkon Lunde Saxi, *Norwegian and Danish Defence Policy in the Post-Cold War Period: A Comparative Study*, (University of Oslo MA thesis, 2006), available at: https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/23764/1/Saxi_MA_Thesis.pdf.

authorities also draw extensively on contracted-out private sector services and support from volunteer bodies. Denmark's awareness of non-military threats has been raised in recent years notably by experience of extreme Islamic violence, giving it a more immediate concern than the other Nordics with (externally-rooted) terrorism and other security implications of immigration.

Danish strategy-making for national defence purposes - and for other functions of military forces – has a well-established tradition and will be the focus in what follows, but matters of purely internal security have thus far been treated separately as a responsibility of the Justice Ministry and other sectoral departments. A complication is that the Danish agency for coordinating responses to civil emergencies, DEMA,[44] comes under the management authority of the Defence Minister. While this facilitates the use of troops when required, the agency itself has a purely civilian character. Further, it is the *Foreign* Minister's responsibility to address parliament annually on Denmark's general security environment ('sikkerhedspolitisk redegørelse'**),** sometimes leading to a vote on approval of his/her report.[45]

The key instrument of Danish defence planning is the 4-yearly Defence Agreement made among all parties represented in parliament: the current version runs from 2013-17.[46] Its preparation takes place outside parliament with varied inputs, sometimes including the summoning of a Defence Commission (combining officials and experts) to make a Defence Report on current issues,[47] and/or reports requested from academic institutions or from individuals. NATO policy changes are an important trigger given Denmark's Atlanticist orientation. The draft Agreement is then discussed by the Defence Minister with all Party leaders until consensus is reached for its adoption in parliament. Annual defence budget levels are pre-set thereby, and should not need further parliamentary votes unless changes are forced, eg by general budget cuts.

Between times the concerned Ministries issue frequent documents called 'strategies', including one for each military mission abroad (example: 'The Afghanistan Plan 2013-14'[48]), and several on generic issues like air policing for the Baltics, the Counter-Piracy Effort 2011-14, and 'Stabilisation Engagement' in weak states. These are all presented to parliament, which can decide whether to debate them but does not generally see a need to vote. By definition, none of them approaches the role of a comprehensive security strategy; and although officials have thought about the latter, it has so far been felt that

[44] "Forsvarsminsteriet Ministry of Defence", accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://www.fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/ResponsibilitiesoftheEmergencyManagementAgency.aspx.
[45] The report for 2014 (in Danish) is at http://www.ft.dk/samling/20131/redegoerelse/r7/1321850.pdf.
[46] Official English translation at http://www.fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Documents/TheDanishDefenceAgrement2013-2017english-version.pdf.
[47] This step may also be requested by parliament itself and is seen i.a. as a way to 'manage' politically divisive questions.
[48] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Danish Ministry of Defence, "The Afghanistan Plan 2013-2014: Towards full Afghan responsibility" (Denmark: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013), available at http://afghanistan.um.dk/en/~/media/Afghanistan/AfghanistanPlanen_2013-14_UK_web.pdf .

existing procedures serve both the principle of departmental responsibility[49] and the need for flexibility.[50]

The limited scope for the Folketing as a whole, or indeed ordinary Party members, to revise defence decisions taken among Party leaders has so far been uncontroversial given the large cross-party consensus in this field.[51] Parliamentarians have been more interested in procedures for approving missions abroad: the constitution only requires parliamentary assent in cases where use of force is expected, but the government has agreed to seek a prior vote in every case and a two-thirds majority for use-of-force decisions. Parliament also expects to approve major procurement choices, and its Defence Committee is active i.a. in visits and investigations abroad.

This Danish case provides an initial hint that (at least in an established democracy) a strong parliamentary role in defence does not necessarily imply the wish for a comprehensive national strategy – let alone, parliamentary control over it. So long as respective government actions in defence and in internal security are seen as well-managed and transparent, parliament itself may be a force for perpetuating traditional procedures that channel consultative procedures along distinct departmental lines..

b) Finland

Finland is recognized as the most 'defence-minded' of the Nordic countries[52] and maintains the most participatory military model, with most young men still called up for national service; an extensive reserves system; and a philosophy of 'total defence' in time of war. The latter implies organizing all citizens to support the military effort, while in peace-time, military help is welcomed in cases like natural disasters and service failures. These long-standing notions mean that the military component of security is never seen in isolation, and it has been relatively easy for Finnish thinking to adapt to the multi-dimensionality of the modern 'societal' security concept. At human level, a National Defence Course[53] held several times annually to bring officers and officials together with business and social representatives (including MPs) helps ensure good civil-military relations.

Finland's 'Strategy for Securing the Functions Vital to Society', drafted through an inter-agency process led by the Defence Ministry and published in 2006,[54] was a milestone in articulating the resulting 'comprehensive' approach to national security. It brings out the complex interaction between 'hard' and 'soft' security and stresses the ability and

[49] This Nordic concept emphasizes the prior right of each ministry to take action in matters – including security-related actions – within its competence; and to answer to parliament accordingly.
[50] Testimony from a senior defence official.
[51] This paragraph draws i.a. on testimony from a well-placed parliamentary official.
[52] Tarja Cronberg, "The will to defend: a Nordic divide over security and defence policy" in Alyson J.K.Bailes, Gunilla Herolf and Bengt Sundelius, *The Nordic Countries and European Security and Defence Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[53] The Finnish Defence Forces. "National Defence Course". Accessed June 25, 2015, available at: http://www.puolustusvoimat.fi/wcm/EN+Puolustusvoimat.fi/Puolustusvoimat.fi+en/National+Defence+University/Studies/National+Defence+Courses/National+Defence+Courses.
[54] Finnish Government Resolution, "The Strtgey for Securing the Functions Vital to Society" (2006), available at: http://www.defmin.fi/files/858/06_12_12_YETTS__in_english.pdf.

responsibility of non-state actors to work for their own security in the national interest. The non-military dimensions it covers are internal security, the functioning of the economy and infrastructure, and the population's income security and capability to function; plus the need for 'psychological crisis tolerance'. Its findings were duly incorporated in the 2009 and 2012 versions of Finland's regularly published Security and Defence Policy Report ('Defence White Book'),[55] and reflected in several other official documents such as the Government Resolution of 2012 on Comprehensive Security[56] and a 2013 Resolution on Cyber Security Strategy.[57] For implementation, a central inter-agency Security Committee holds responsibility for monitoring, planning, coordinating and executing the necessary measures across the board.[58]

The story of parliamentary involvement[59] shows a curious reversal of the increasing engagement one might expect. Finland's first-ever report covering both defence and security policy was actually produced, as early as 1971, by Parliament's Defence Committee; it recommended repeating the exercise five-yearly, and new versions appeared in 1976 and 1981. In the early 1980s, disagreement arose between the political Left and Right over whether adoption of such a document pre-determined all decisions mentioned in it, such as annual defence spending (which would resemble Danish practice), or whether parliament could still vote on key issues separately. In practice, the authority of the report-writing process declined as a result and the parliamentary groups responsible for the 1987 and 1991 versions had weaker titles like 'review' or 'consultative' groups. When a new series of comprehensive Reports on Finnish Security and Defence Policy was launched in 1995,[60] the drafting was done by a group of officials from the defence, foreign affairs, and finance (sometimes also interior) ministries with military representatives, chaired by a State Secretary from the PM's office.

Such reports are now expected at four-year intervals, coinciding with government terms. As usual with security 'strategies' they are political rather than legislative documents, but provide an important basis for political consensus and resource use, especially when policies need adaptation. Originally, they treated broader security issues and military matters separately and reviewed Finland's 'security' environment in the narrower traditional sense. Since the late 1990s, the approach has become a more integrated and balanced, multi-functional, and 'whole-of-government' one. Parliamentary handling is formal and thorough-going, starting with the submission of each report to the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees. The latter forwards its written comments to the former which presents a full assessment, followed by a plenary debate and final adoption.

To date, the process has worked smoothly and the lack of major defence controversies or scandals confirms the traditional impression of broad cross-party consensus. The

[55] Finish Ministry of Defence, "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009", Accessed June 26, 2015, available at http://www.defmin.fi/en/publications/finnish_security_and_defence_policy/2009.
[56] Ibid, in Finnish available at: http://valtioneuvosto.fi/tiedostot/julkinen/periaatepaatokset/2012/kokonaisturvallisuus/fi.pdf.
[57] Finnish Government Resolution 'Security strategy for Society', (2010), available at: http://www.yhteiskunnanturvallisuus.fi/en/materials.
[58] Unlike other Nordics, Finland has no specific executive agency for coordinating civil emergency response, but locates this function with the Ministry of Justice.
[59] Next two paragraphs based on information from a concerned official.
[60] For further information see http://www.defmin.fi/en/publications/finnish_security_and_defence_policy .

relatively small variation in political attitudes helps explain why the leading role of official élites in drafting both military, and comprehensive, strategy documents has not – at least, recently - been questioned. Other reasons may include the increasingly complex and 'expert' demands of security analysis since Cold War days, and the need to consult other stakeholders such as business. The system will, however, be put to an interesting test under the new centre-right government elected in April 2015, which is headed by a non-professional politician and must tackle thorny issues over Russia and relations with NATO.

c) Iceland

The development of an explicit Icelandic security policy was inhibited until very recently not only by the country's lack of armed forces and its strategic dependence on the US, but by sharply polarized domestic views on NATO membership and defence in general. The very word 'security' was anathema to some left-leaning sectors of opinion, and was rarely applied to such challenges as natural disasters, battling crime or preserving the environment.[61] Change was triggered when the US unilaterally withdrew its forces from Iceland in 2006, and in 2008 the Foreign Minister mandated an independent commission to provide a comprehensive risk assessment for the country. Before it could report,[62] the economic crash of autumn 2008 painfully confirmed how much damage could flow from non-military causes. The commission accordingly gave high prominence to economic and financial problems, and identified many further 'soft' security challenges from terrorism to cyber-attack and from nuclear safety to climate change. It did not allocate priorities or discuss funding, but did comment on a number of specific weaknesses and possible solutions.

Follow-up to these findings was delayed for two years – during which the government proposed a more specific 'Arctic strategy' and asked parliament to take the final decisions on its contents[63] – but in 2011, the Foreign Minister invited the Alþingi to develop principles for a comprehensive security strategy.[64] MPs set up a cross-party working group for the purpose which took evidence from experts at home and abroad, supported by a secretariat from the Foreign Ministry. Its report was delayed by political distractions towards the end of the government's term and the election of a different coalition in May 2013, but in February 2014 the text was finally delivered to the Foreign Minister and published the next month.[65]

This parliamentary document reflected something of a political breakthrough as all parties endorsed it, with few caveats - such as the Left Greens disassociating themselves

[61] *Stjórnmál og Stjórnsysla,* Alyson JK Bailes and Þröstur F Gylfason, '"Societal Security" and Iceland', (2008), available at: http://skemman.is/handle/1946/9019.
[62] *Risk Assessment for Iceland*, (2009), available at: http://www.mfa.is/media/Skyrslur/A_Risk_Assessment_for_Iceland_-_English_Summary.pdf.
[63] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Iceland's Arctic Policy* (2011), available at: http://www.mfa.is/media/nordurlandaskrifstofa/A-Parliamentary-Resolution-on-ICE-Arctic-Policy-approved-by-Althingi.pdf. No other Nordic state submitted its Arctic strategy for a similar parliamentary verdict.
[64] The Alþingi was also asked to consider security governance arrangements, and whether Iceland should have an institute of security studies.
[65] Report of the (parliamentary) working group on National Security Policy, February 2014 (unofficial English translation), at http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iceland/documents/press_corner/20140324en.pdf.

from the mainstream support for NATO membership. It maintained the risk assessment's broad approach and rejected any hard divide between military and other issues, arguing that military help could be vital in civil emergencies. It prioritized the main challenges for Icelandic security, giving top place to civil security risks (accidents etc) resulting from new activity in the Arctic; cyber-threats and sabotage; and natural disasters. The report did not challenge existing government responsibilities but made sensible suggestions on coordination, emergency stocks, and the like. At conceptual level it applied the framework of 'societal security', thus – as already noted - bringing Icelandic discourse in line with other Nordic practice.

The government's response to this document needed to take account of a separate strategy for societal challenges being prepared by the Ministry of the Interior, and another ongoing study on cyber-security. A year passed before, in April 2015, the Foreign Minister sent back to parliament a draft of a document[66] to be adopted as the formal national security strategy, dependent on parliamentary approval. The new text maintains the broad-spectrum approach and the policy principles of the Alþingi's own report but includes some updates and nuances, notably a higher priority for the 'moderate' risk of terrorism in Iceland – which leaves 'military threats' alone in the lowest category of probability. Non-military threats are left to be dealt with in detail in a separate civil protection strategy but stronger central coordination of all security aspects is provided for through the National Security Council. The Alþingi was starting its deliberations on this text at the time of writing.

Iceland represents an extreme case of deference to parliament in the construction of national strategy. Its method, used both for the Arctic strategy of 2011 and the broader strategy-making process of 2011-15, has so far been emulated only by the Faroe Islands when producing their own Arctic strategy of 2013.[67] The probable explanation is that since Party differences (i.a. within the government coalition!) were the real obstacle to successful strategy-building, there was little point in officials' preparing a draft without first exploring how far these could be overcome. As it happened, giving parliament the lead – at a time when both hard and soft security challenges in the North were patent – produced the best results anyone could have hoped for. Arguably also, with no armed forces and very few official experts, there was no obvious better place to tackle the task. Finally, the test of the strategy's quality will lie not in its words but in the implementation, which faces potential obstacles including lack of funds, confusion and rivalry among institutions. One of Iceland's greatest challenges – strengthening economic and financial security – has meanwhile been largely side-stepped by the strategy process, not least because of its links with the poisoned chalice of the EU membership issue.[68]

d) Norway

National defence has been a force for unity across Norway's large and diverse territory since the country's independence in 1905, with its importance and prestige further

[66] Text in Icelandic at http://www.althingi.is/altext/144/s/1169.html.
[67] The Faroe Islands, a nation in the Arctic', Faroese Government 2013, at http://www.government.fo/foreign-relations/the-faroe-islands-and-the-arctic/.
[68] Alyson JK Bailes and Kristmundur Þ. Ólafsson, 'Developments in Icelandic Security Policy' in *Stjórnmál og Stjórnsýsla* Vol. 10 no. 2 (2014), available at http://www.irpa.is/article/view/1621.

boosted by wartime experiences. Conscription for national military service still applies in Norway and in 2013 parliament voted to extend it to women. Following a 'total defence' philosophy similar to Finland's, the military can give aid for civilian tasks and *vice versa*, in a legal framework updated in 2004. The sense of national vulnerability and interests is strongly shaped by the country's long coastline, its extensive Arctic territories, and its economic reliance on offshore oil and gas extraction. These at the same time make Russia the obvious threat – driving Norway's reliance on NATO and the US - and dictate efforts for stabilization and local cooperation with the Russians in peacetime. This duality is reflected in Norway's national strategy for the High North, published in 2006 when it became the first country with such a document.[69] The main challenge for Norwegian defence post-Cold War has been how to balance between such immanent territorial challenges, and international pressures to join in new-style overseas missions with unfamiliar rationales.[70] Latest developments have, understandably, reinforced a swing back towards the former.

Norway's non-military security profile resembles Iceland's more than Denmark's, with frequent natural disasters and relatively little exposure (*pace* the Breivik incident) to international crime, terrorism, or internal unrest. The country's far-stretched communications and supply systems highlight the importance of what official documents call 'critical infrastructure and main public sector functions', and civil security preparations – headed by the Directorate of Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB) under the Minister of Justice and Police[71] – are focused largely on emergencies in such fields. However, Norway's official security doctrine is a version of 'societal security' (samfunnssikkerhet) that extends more broadly over all relevant fields from health to traffic safety.[72]

In strategy making there is a clear division between 'hard' defence and related security analysis on the one hand, and the non-military 'societal' field where the Ministry of Justice leads. The explanatory document on civil-military cooperation, (Støtte og samarbeid – 'support and cooperation')[73] was jointly published by the defence and justice ministries. On the civil side, policy reports are produced *ad hoc* on relevant topics, including one on terrorberedsskap ('preparedness for terror') based on the work of the '22 July Commission'[74] following the Breivik case.

Procedures for parliamentary handling of defence strategy developments are in some ways more regular, in others more complex. At the core is a four-year defence planning cycle, under which an elaborate annual 'Proposition' is submitted to parliament by the

[69] *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*,(2006), available *at* https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/ud/vedlegg/strategien.pdf.
[70] Håkon Lunde Saxi, op.cit. in note 43 above.
[71] For further information see: http://www.dsb.no/nn/toppmeny/English/
[72] Alyson JK Bailes, op,cit. in note 20 above.
[73] For further information text, available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/fd/dokumenter/rapporter-og-regelverk/fd_stotte-samarbeid_web_april.pdf.
[74] English summary available at http://www.sintef.no/globalassets/project/nexus/01--report-22-july-gjorv-commision-summary_english_version.pdf.

Defence Ministry.[75] This includes the defence budget estimates and often also legislative proposals, and both aspects have to be approved by parliament. As in Finland, committees play a role in preparing the plenary decisions. However, the ways in which strategy *development* are triggered are more various, not according parliament any special role and sometimes not including consultation. For instance, the Ministry's documents on a Strategic Concept for the Armed Forces (2004 and 2009) were not submitted to the Storting. An expert commission on defence policy, made up of various military and civilian stakeholders outside parliament, is consulted at need on changes in defence planning. *Ad hoc* commissions and consultative groups play important roles, such as the Willoch Commission looking at the new wider security spectrum in 1990, an expert group on defence in 2000, and a military group under the Chief of Defence which was tasked in early 2015 to advise on the next four-year planning period starting in 2017.[76] As the latest example, an *ad hoc* group set up under Professor Rolf Tamnes, consisting largely of academics, produced an influential report in April 2015 calling for more focus on, and greater resources for, traditional home defence.[77]

In sum, therefore, while parliament has solid consultative rights – and comes even closer to decision-making when minority governments have to bargain with MPs over every detail - it cannot claim the kind of upstream role played earlier by its Finnish and lately by its Icelandic counterpart. Given the degree of cross-party consensus and popular understanding for successive defence and security adaptations, this has not thus far caused serious tension; the question of control over overseas missions (as in Denmark) has been more of a live issue for the Storting.

e) Sweden

Sweden's two hundred years of neutrality – now termed non-allied status in war – have profoundly coloured its whole approach to security and defence. In Cold War times, the logic of independent defence drove Sweden to maintain a military effort similar to its neighbours'; but when the chance for relaxation arrived in the 1990s, a series of cuts began that have left this largest of Nordic nations with the numerically smallest forces today.[78] They are, however, exceptionally highly mechanized partly as a result of Sweden's own strong defence industry, and have continued to perform well in international peace missions.

While Sweden has actively developed and promoted 'softer' concepts like environmental or gender security, it faces particular obstacles in integrating the military and non-military elements of security thinking. First, there is a persistent reluctance to deploy the military on civil tasks at home, resulting from memories of a traumatic incident (killing of workers) at Ådalen in 1931. Secondly, Sweden's post-Cold War measures included

[75] The Proposition for 2014 (in Norwegian) is availableat https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/prop-1-s-20132014/id739392/ .

[76] The Norway Post 'Minister of Defence: The military needs reforms in order to meet future challenges', accessed 21 January 2015 .

[77] Norwegian News in English, *Experts: "Increase defence spending"*, accessed 28 April 2015,available at http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/04/28/experts-increase-defense-spending/ .

[78] The resulting vulnerabilities were exposed in a report commissioned from Ambassador Tomas Bertelman by the government in 2014: *International Defence Cooperation: Efficiency, Solidarity, Sovereignty, available at* http://www.icds.ee/fileadmin/media/icds.ee/failid/Bertelman2014.pdf.

dropping the concept of 'total defence' which had provided for military-civil interactions in a crisis; stopping work on civil defence; and disbanding most 'territorial' and reserve troops. Conscription ended in 2010 and well before that, had involved a shrinking proportion of young men as troop numbers fell. On the civilian side, security awareness is often low among ordinary Swedes who have been shielded both from war experiences, and from most forms of violence such as terrorism, organized crime, and civil disorder.

This lack of experience doubtless contributed to Sweden's hesitant response to its citizens' involvement in the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, leading eventually to the then foreign minister's dismissal. The system for handling non-military emergencies was then strengthened by combining the former rescue services and coordination centre in the Civil Contingencies Bureau, MSB[79] – at that time, ironically, situated under the Defence Ministry – and creating a new staff within the Prime Minister's office. The MSB operates under a doctrine of societal security (samhällssäkerhet), and Sweden has actively promoted both operational Nordic cooperation (see the 'Haga' reference above) and joint Nordic research in that field.[80] Compared with other Nordics, however, Sweden devolves more responsibility for civil security to local authorities, and is cautious in sharing tasks with voluntary organizations and the private sector.

Sweden's strategy forming has traditionally focused on national defence within a broader external security environment. It makes use of an extra-parliamentary Defence Commission (DC) first launched in 1995 that convenes whenever the government requests a new analysis. Serviced by the Defence Ministry, the DC combines officers, officials and current MPs and draws on expert advice; its last report (taking account of the Ukraine crisis) was presented in May 2014.[81] Based on DC findings, the government tables a 'Defence Resolution' in parliament every five years that covers force development, resource planning, and any changes in policy such as the 'solidarity' commitment whereby Sweden in 2009 offered its neighbours support against military attack.[82] Each Resolution needs parliament's approval and the Riksdag can and does reject specific details if wished. The last Resolution enacted in March 2010 had the title 'A functional defence': it shifted the focus from territorial defence towards new tasks, and hailed the flexibility of Sweden's trimmed-down forces.[83]

This procedure has served the government's purpose of building broad political consensus and marginalizing dissent before seeking parliamentary votes. It has, however, sometimes caused bad feeling between the DC and parliament's own committees. Further, although DC reports and government documents since the 2000s have drawn attention to broader security challenges such as climate change, cyber-attack and civil emergencies, the Defence Resolutions do not govern internal security decisions and there is no overall civil-military plan.[84] By 2014, officials were debating whether a more

[79] For further information see http://www.msb.se
[80] Bailes and Sandö, op.cit in note 23 above.
[81] Swedish Government, *Defence Commission presents its defence policy report,* available at http://www.government.se/sb/d/18638/a/240432.
[82] Bailes and Sandö, as note 23 above.
[83] Summary in English at http://www.government.se/sb/d/574/a/137705.
[84] In 2005 the DC produced a 'Strategy for Sweden's security' (http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/56226) that by its title, might recall the comprehensive Finnish and Icelandic documents. In fact it was driven by

prescriptive five-year defence planning process (which existed in the Cold War) should be revived; whether the DC should become a Security Commission; and more.

Subsequent events have challenged and shaken Swedish practice more profoundly. The September 2014 general election produced a minority Left-leaning government, which decided *inter alia* to move the MSB under the authority of the Minister of Justice (co-heading the Ministry of the Interior). Russian actions in Ukraine and heightened tensions in Northern Europe, combined with the exposure of gaps in Swedish defence, have stepped up the pressure for a fundamental re-think of national security. In April 2015 the government duly announced an increase in future defence funding.[85] It has also committed itself to draft Sweden's first-ever national security strategy in the Finnish or Icelandic sense, i.e. one integrating the full spectrum of hard and soft security. Options for reviving civil defence and reintroducing reservist service will be considered in the process. While details of the process were unclear at the time of writing, the Defence Commission – with representatives of all Parties - will again be the deliberative instrument.

5. In conclusion

The variations revealed above in Nordic practice on national strategy and parliamentary involvement should, first of all, banish any illusion that there is a clear Nordic 'model'. Rather, Northern European behaviour reflects an above-average attachment to national particularities, bolstered not last by the high awareness of and attachment to these nations' respective constitutions and customs, and hardly challenged by the loose and flexible culture of Nordic Cooperation.

Secondly, Nordic policy-makers' acceptance of a broad security spectrum, and their espousal of corresponding 'societal' or 'comprehensive' concepts of security, do not necessarily produce an integrated civil/military, external/internal vision at the level of concrete strategy drafting and execution. Denmark and Norway still have largely military-focused strategies and Sweden is only now seeking to move on from that approach, while facing perhaps the region's greatest challenges in policy adjustment. However, it is significant that three out of the five states now have or are planning 'normal' comprehensive strategies, for proximate reasons that vary widely, but all influenced by specific policy shocks as well as changes in their regional environment. This suggests that the concept of a multi-functional strategy is not merely artificial or an 'educational' device imposed on weaker states: even well-governed states with no obvious democratic abuses within their security systems may come independently to see the need for it.

Thirdly, parliamentary involvement varies along a different axis, with Iceland (the weakest defence actor) putting parliament in full control; Finland and Norway following a consultation model; and Denmark and Sweden using some mechanisms that could be deemed para-parliamentary. Since all five parliaments enjoy a relatively high level of

tsunami lessons and argued for the changes subseqently made in the emergency reponse apparatus, as reported above.

[85] Yahoo News ,'Sweden raises defence budget amidst Russia concerns', Accessed 17 April 2015, available at http://news.yahoo.com/sweden-raises-defence-budget-amid-russia-concerns-185341647.html.

powers and prestige by international standards, this tends to confirm the thesis that the level and direction of parliamentary activism depends on all three of the A's: *attitude* as well as authority and ability.[86] Those parliaments that are willing to wait for a 'downstream' policy approval role on general policy documents may be influenced by a sense that nothing will go too far wrong, given the underlying consensus, the quality of official élites, and perhaps the corrective effect of usually having several parties in government. They may trust in their control over the budget as giving sufficient leverage at the final stage. Further, and not unreasonably, they may feel that a document as general as a defence and/or security strategy invokes such wide national interests that democratic control is best practiced in the early stages by a diverse and flexible consultative system, including extra-parliamentary commissions and/or independent expert studies.

One lesson this suggests is that any assessment of parliamentary powers in defence and security should look both closely and widely, scrutinizing all security-related decision processes, and assessing parliament's role against a broader background of political practice and culture. Parliamentary scrutiny – in this as in other fields – may, for instance, be nominal if a prior inter-Party deal has been struck. Its importance also depends on how well (seriously, responsibly, boldly) the parliamentarians use their powers, which is in turn affected by practical issues such as committees' access to funds and expert support, but also by competition from more salient and 'sexy' issues. Last and not least, whether the result is an effective or ineffective national security policy - and a strong or weak national consensus for executing it - depends on many other factors ranging from presidential powers, and the quality of national diplomacy and officialdom, to broader system features such as historical legacies, popular mind-sets, public-private role-sharing and civil-military interaction.

When considering the implications for future SSR work, two further conclusions might be drawn. First, would-be emulators would be wise to note the gap between what the Nordics preach and what they practise, and to reflect on the factors that – even in this advanced democratic context - push towards an idiosyncratic solution for each nation. Secondly, while a parliamentary role is important both in principle and practice for producing (or updating) an appropriate and effective national security strategy, it needs to be understood as just one part of a wider process of democratic control, transparency and quality assurance. To over-emphasize or over-rely upon it would be both simplistic and unwise.

Last and not least, by focusing on the relatively recent phenomenon of security strategy writing, this case-study may have helped to highlight the importance of keeping parliamentary powers under review and finding ways to adapt them to new national and international realities. The need to expand the scope, and/or update the modalities, of parliament's overview of security policy could arise (for instance) from new technological developments such as the use of drones and robotics, social media and genetic manipulation, or from unfamiliar risks arising in non-defence fields of governance. It is also, however, triggered by changes in the place and level at which relevant decision-

[86] For more on the three A's: Hans Born and Heiner Hänggi, DCAF Policy Paper no. 7:*The Use of Force under International Auspices: Strengthening Parliamentary Accountability*, (Geneva:, 2005).

taking occurs: whether as a result of sub-national devolution, privatization, or transfers of sovereignty to more-than-national entities. The shift in 'ownership' of overseas defence missions – as argued above – already provides a case where many national parliaments have lost elements of control that have not (yet) been fully re-provided at other levels. The 'internationalization' of broader security strategies would be an easily foreseeable parallel trend, and indeed has already gone some way with the growing political investment made in EU and NATO strategy documents, the burgeoning Nordic security cooperation, and plans for a joint West Nordic Arctic strategy among others. If this is to continue - and such clubbing together is a natural reaction at times of enhanced threat awareness like the present – those parliaments that have so far been relaxed about their role in strategy-making may have to wake up to the serious interests that might be compromised if their country enters such processes without having clearly defined, *and* democratically debated, its own strategic goals and normative bottom lines.

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