

## Security In The Baltic Sea Region

### **The Baltic Sea Region in History**

The notion of the Baltic Sea region as a specific entity in Europe, not only geographically but also in economic and strategic terms, is no great innovation; on the contrary, we should refer to this development as a return to history. The division of the region, as part of the bipolar confrontation during the Cold War, has constituted a historically abnormal situation. In the past, the Sea has been a uniting factor - the facilitator of cultural exchange and trade, flows of ideas, goods and people - also during times of major power confrontations in the region.

Certainly, the region has been the stage of protracted conflicts and wars between the shore states - either the "permanent" great powers, "Germany" and "Russia", in various historical shapes, or "temporary" great powers, such as Denmark, Poland and Sweden (during the "Swedish century" 1621-1721) - but also with the involvement of external forces, the maritime powers of Western Europe trying to safeguard their strategic, commercial and other interests in the region. In the 1600's, there were the Dutch, then for some 200 years the British, and, since 1945, of course, the Americans. From time to time, regional hegemony - including both Danes and Swedes - have tried to establish Baltic Sea "systems" controlled by them both politically and economically but these have never quite succeeded in disrupting the flow between the Nordics, Western, Eastern and Central Europe running through the Sea and its links with the Continent through the major rivers Elbe, Oder/Odra, Wisla, and Daugava/Dvina, and through the Baltic Sounds. Not until the Cold War was there a total hiatus, a break in continuity, with the Sea divided by a line drawn in the water for some forty years. Now, with the end of the Cold War, we return to history.

The European seas have become conceptually attractive in the post-Cold War analysis of building new networks, new areas for cooperation and trade. The European Union has been less concerned with the Baltic region than with the Mediterranean but has nonetheless been forced to accept various "Northern Dimensions" of European integration. The Northerners themselves are now operating both with a Baltic Sea concept and with the Barents region; and the Black Sea offers another European inland sea around which to focus on regional cooperation across former or still existing political and cultural divides. Again, the seas do not sunder but bring together. The scholarly interest in regionalism, strong in the late 50's and 60's (the Karl Deutsch inheritance) is thus returning, also combined with a rising interest in the historical experience as mirrored in recent studies of the Baltic Sea area, a region now calling for its own Fernand Braudel.<sup>1</sup>

### **... and in Geography**

The Baltic Sea region must apparently include the shore states of that Sea, but historical experience, as already referred to, also indicates that states not Baltic in terms of their location may from time to time consider themselves Baltic in terms of their interests. The Council of

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<sup>1</sup> Karl W Deutsch e.a., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (1957); Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Philippe II* (1949); for recent studies, see David Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772 - 1993: Europe's Northern Periphery in an Age of Change* (1996); Matti Klinge, *Itämeren maailma* (1994; "The Baltic World"); Juergen von Alten, *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee* (1996); and Peter Unwin, *Baltic Approaches* (1996).

Baltic Sea States, founded in 1992, includes the shore states as well as Norway but does not include any of the one time or still remaining "maritime powers". On the other hand, environmental concerns have added a totally new dimension to regionalism. Ought not those states that are connected with the Baltic Sea region through the flow of waters (with their pollution) also be considered as parts of the Baltic Sea region? To the strategic and commercial interests recognized in the past, we would thus add the environmental ones that concern our present and future. This would include the Czech Republic, as well as Belarus, with the Baltic Sea states - because of the waters of Wisla and Daugova/Dvina. So far, however, neither of these two states, has been offered a seat on the Council.

On the other hand, the European Commission is accepted as a partner to the Council of the Baltic Sea States. This should serve to remind us of the obvious: Thinking in terms of national geographies, states, is not enough when analysing the strategic situation in the Baltic Sea region. The region constitutes a stage for interaction involving national as well as organisational interests - with a multitude of cross-cutting relationships. There are well established regional networks: the Nordic Council with the five Nordic states; on a similar pattern there is the Baltic Council involving the three Baltic republics; there is also a new network emerging, bringing the Nordics and the Baltics together as a group meeting regularly. These meetings have from time to time also involved Russia.

The European security architecture vaults the region with the European Union and NATO memberships (and projected enlargement processes), with the OSCE - of which all regional states are members - directly engaged in missions to Estonia and Latvia, and with the WEU having exploratively put out its flag also in the Baltic republics. A new, strategic trilateral relationship involving Denmark, Germany and Poland has been established with a combined exercising army corps.

There are thus NATO, European Union, Central European, Russian, Nordic, Baltic and all other matter of interests in the region, as complicated and "European" an area as any in Europe. Regionalism, cooperation in the region itself, offers one obvious possibility: that of transcending the boundaries between the major "architectural" rifts in the region. The Council of Baltic Sea States may still have a limited agenda, resources and ambitions, but it has had (and still has) an important assignment: that of bringing NATO and EU members together with the outsiders - the Poles, the Baltic Republics and the Russians. Regional cooperation is exclusive, because it is limited to the region, but also inclusive because it brings in all the states in a region still divided by institutional affiliations.

This points to one of the key strategic elements of the new situation: Russia's "outsidership" and how this is to be handled by the "West". The observation has been made repeatedly that the Baltic Sea region in itself is a laboratory, a trial ground for the integration of Russia into "Europe"; here, in the North, fateful encounters will supposedly take place that will decide what Russia's future role in Europe will be - as partner or as outsider, potentially also as enemy. While this may overdramatise the importance of the region (as well as exaggerate the spectrum of Russia's choices today), there is still no denying the fact that it is here, in the North, that Russia is in direct contact with Western Europe, with the Union and with NATO. Furthermore, to the traditional notion of a Russian window to the West is added a more recent strategic factor: the supposedly continuing importance of the strategic base area in the Kola peninsula, adjacent to the Baltic Sea region, with Russia's nuclear deterrent.

Again, this brings additional attention to the fact that the region still remains difficult geographically to delimit. During the first twenty years of the Cold War, Nordic strategists were quite happy to consider Northern Europe as "flank" territory, far away, seemingly, from the Central Front where the attention of the pacts was focused. With the Soviet build-up of

both conventional long range and nuclear capabilities in the High North and a shifting balance in favour of the Russians, as well as with the CSCE process involving all of Europe, the Nordic strategic perspective tended to change. Now it seemed safer to be a part of Europe, when danger also appeared to have shifted to the High North.

The end of the Cold War itself has not changed this perspective. The Baltic Sea region is not a closed one but a part both of a European and a trans-Atlantic context.

### **The New Strategic Situation**

The end of the Cold War with the dissolution of the Stalin empire and of the Soviet Union itself has produced a situation not unlike that in 1918 after Brest Litovsk with Russian retreat behind a barrier of emerging new states - Poland and the three Baltic republics. Russia, a very short time ago the hegemon of the Baltic region with close to 70% of all naval tonnage in the Baltic Sea under its own command, is now reduced to two strategically disadvantageous "bridgeheads" on the Baltic coast and with a rusting and rapidly ageing fleet largely confined to port. Kaliningrad is exposed and dependent on communications through Belarussian, Lithuanian and Polish territories. St Petersburg-Kronstadt, on the other hand, is "far in", at the bottom of the Finnish Gulf with a potentially vulnerable transit towards the more open sea. Kaliningrad, as an exclave, presents particular problems of its own with a population of some 900.000 (predominantly Russian), very great economic, social and environmental problems but also with ambitions to be a centre for Baltic trade, a Hongkong of the North. These ambitions, however, do not square very well with the exclave's present function as a military base area, a "fort" in the non-trading sense, and with very limited attraction to foreign investors. The Kaliningrad oblast is not only a remnant from the Cold War but a genuine challenge to Moscow because of the latter's inability under present economic circumstances to do anything much for it - while the "West", just over the horizon, generates unfulfilled expectations on the parts of the Kaliningraders. The garrison now held in the oblast is not seen as any threat to the Western states in the region - but regarded with suspicion by the three Baltic states. The Baltijsk naval base serves the Russian Baltic Fleet.

Russia's retreat certainly does not mean that the leadership in Moscow today, despite overwhelming economic, social and political problems, has changed its mental map of what Russia ought to be in the Baltic Sea region: the largest power with corresponding claims to respect for its strategic and other interests. The resources to exercise such influence and power are, however, very limited, as already indicated. The recent economic crisis has changed our perceptions of what time horizons may be involved in a possible Russian "comeback". The military reform program has not yet taken off and as reforms require new money such a take-off does not seem imminent.

What Russia seems likely to have at its disposal for the time being is thus a very large but also rapidly ageing military arsenal the use of which is greatly constrained by lack of conscripts, gasoline, supplies in general and, of course, money in particular. The software side of the military system, rather than the hardware, has broken down and efforts to reorganise in the region - such as placing all land and air forces under the command of the Baltic Fleet - have not much improved the situation. There is, for the time being, not all that much "force" available - except, of course, in the nuclear sphere. While a "repossession" of one of the Baltic republics, disregarding all the probably catastrophic political consequences of such a Russian move, may be militarily possible, any military forays would (to the extent that they can at all be undertaken) in all likelihood land the Russians in new Chechnyas rather than bring them back the empire on the Baltic once established by Peter the Great. On the other hand, security and stability in the Baltic Sea region is impossible without Russian participation in some way.

It would be too simplistic to say that Russia has been replaced as the major actor in the region by unified Germany, the largest economy and potentially the most powerful state in Europe - simplistic also because Germany so far has demonstrated great restraint in exercising any such role, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. Nonetheless, Germany is now de facto a European heavyweight in all respects - except in the military one. Germany has no nuclear arsenal, seems highly unlikely to acquire any such weapons and also lacks conventional power projection capabilities, with political constraints still operating and still adhering to conscription. How Germany's relations with its neighbours will develop over the next few years will be of decisive importance for how the European security system will be shaped, not least in the Baltic Sea region. The Kohl administration has been extremely cautious, anxious always to put supposedly "European" interests ahead of "German" interests. Whether the same will apply to the incoming Schroeder administration remains to be seen; generally, analysts expect a German turn towards tougher, more Germany-oriented policies. What this would mean in term of the Baltic Sea region is difficult to predict. So far, criticism of Germany - in particular in the Baltic context - has been about too little engagement rather than too much. Still, Kohl leaves behind one promise of potentially great significance: Germany will build a relationship with Poland that is as close as the one now existing with France.

Poland has emerged as a new actor - also in the economic sphere. This is "Spain" in the North with close to 40 million inhabitants, economic growth and considerable additional potential. Its future relationship with Germany, as well as with Russia (and Belarus - a problematic neighbour) is an important factor in any calculus about security in the Baltic Sea region. Poland, however, suffers from much the same difficulties as Russia (and all of the former "East") as to its defence: Substantial paper strength (some 400 aircraft, 1.700 main battle tanks, 2-3.000 APCs etc) but lack of modernity, little compatibility with the West, and limited resources for upkeep and reforms.

The three Baltic states - whose military capabilities will be discussed later - are all small and weak countries in exposed positions, Latvia and Estonia also with substantial Russian speaking minorities. Their relationships with Russia are complicated. Only Lithuania has a boundary agreement, Moscow having so far refused to sign similar agreements with the other two - a blackmail situation of sorts thus existing given Baltic needs for such agreements in order to present themselves as credible EU and NATO applicants. As to the Russian speaking minorities in the three Republics, Latvia holds the largest one (some 34% of the population with a strong concentration to the capital, Riga) while the Estonian share is smaller (about 30%) and the Lithuanian rather insignificant (9% plus some 8% Polish). While the minorities constitute unintegrated components in the Republics, with demands for equal political rights, citizenship, and job market access, there is no indication of any substantial elements of the Russian speaking population desiring a return to Russian rule or the "Soviet Union". Expectations for a better future are tied to demands for Baltic citizenship - not to irredentism. This puts definite limits on the possibilities for Moscow to use the minorities for its own political purposes.

However, considerable interdependence already exists between Russia and the Baltics because of the very large amount of Russia's external trade that has to pass through the Baltic ports. This may involve as much as 50% of external trade volume. Of particular significance are Riga and Ventspils (both in Latvia). In 1996, Baltic trade with Russia was somewhere between 15 and 25% of total trade; this share has since declined but still leaves the Baltic states exposed to the effects of a collapsing Russian financial system. At the same time, this threatening collapse of Russia as an economic partner will serve as a reminder to the Baltics of the need to "go west", i.e. head for the European Union.

The new policies of Finland and Sweden vis-à-vis Europe are also elements in the new strategic situation. While still not members of NATO but pursuing military nonalignment, both are now members of the European Union - a fact signifying that these states are no longer just western countries but also actors in the West, partners in a "Common Foreign and Security Policy". This inexorably changes the strategic map of Northern Europe.

The United States remains the guarantor and protector of European security also after the end of the Cold War. However, the debate runs high about the extent and duration of both US interests and commitments in Europe. As to Northern Europe, US concerns were obvious during the Cold War: Soviet nuclear as well as conventional long range potential (Northern Fleet) was based on Kola and the Americans also had to guard against the risk of a Soviet attack across Scandinavia (possibly through Finland and/or Sweden) against Norway and the Atlantic coast. Swedish strategists seem also to have assumed that Sweden in fact was under the US umbrella, whether neutral or not.<sup>2</sup> With the decline of the Russian threat doubts may, however, arise as to whether the same situation still applies. Do the same reasons, or other reasons, still force the US to maintain the same vigilance and readiness as before? True enough, the ex-Soviet nuclear arsenal still exists, although in decline and increasing difficulties as to upkeep. As long as such a potential threat exists, the US has to maintain interest in the region.

On the other hand, trends suggest that a modernised Russian nuclear arsenal over time replacing that of the Cold War will again be based on landbased ICBMs and that the Russians by conceding the US the seas, will thus remove some of the attention from the Kola and High North issues.<sup>3</sup> The consequence would be less reason for the US to maintain the same interest in the region as before. But then, we say, there are other reasons for the American interest in the region - as witnessed by the Baltic Charter granted to the Baltic states in January 1998. While there obviously is a measure of US interest, however, the conclusion is still that the US may now consider itself in the right to expect the regional powers, including also smaller and independent actors such as Sweden (and Finland), to actively pursue "stabilising" policies on their own; the old issue of "burdensharing" may now, after the Cold War, acquire a new meaning with the US increasingly a "global power" concerned with global issues and viewing the regional problems against a background of global demands on US resources.

While this is obviously a highly condensed presentation of a complicated argument, it would amount to a fading threat resulting in diminishing American presence and growing US demands on regional security-building by the locals. This would in itself constitute a new strategic situation in the North - a new challenge to the shore states, not least to the Nordic non-aligned, who have hitherto, just as much as their NATO-allied brothers, been Atlanticist in their security orientation. One problem for the regional Baltic shore states is that Russia, while shorn of its global superpower status has also become more of a regional, European as well as Eurasian, power - for which the European and regional issues are now "closer" than they were before.

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<sup>2</sup> Had There Been a War. Preparations for the Reception of Military Assistance 1949-1969. SOU 1994:11 (Cabinet Office, Stockholm).

<sup>3</sup> Ingemar Dörfer, "Reinvestigating Kola" (Unpublished paper; Swedish National Defence Research Establishment 1998).

### **Building Security in the Baltic Sea Region: NATO, EU, and the OSCE**

When the Cold War structure unraveled in 1989-91, the major European organizations were involved from the start. The NATO structure was preserved but also began to change as a result of the Soviet Empire dissolving. Germany was unified, and thanks to the stubborn resistance by Chancellor Kohl to any other alternatives, kept intact and enlarged within NATO, although with limitations on the size of the German armed forces, as well as on future Western armed presence in the former DDR.

Applications to the European Union for membership were submitted by the nonaligned states - first Austria, then Sweden and Finland in succession. These states became members of the Union in 1995. The debates over the Maastricht treaty clarified a European vision of a Union gradually widening to include not only the nonaligned (who were already part of the Western economic system) but also of Central and Eastern Europe (which was not).

The CSCE became directly involved in the Baltic issues through the use made of the Organization by, above all, the Swedes (strongly supported by the United States) to secure the evacuation of the three reemerging Baltic Republics by the ex-Soviet armed forces. This evacuation took considerable time - the last units leaving only in 1998 (the Skhrunda radar base in Latvia) - but the bulk of the forces had left by 1994-95.

Initially, i.e. in 1989-91, ideas were circulated for the creation of a larger "nonaligned zone" in Europe combining the old neutral states with the former Warsaw Pact members and new states emerging out of the former Soviet Union in 1991. Daring Eurostrategists, primarily of the political left, saw this as a useful buffer between the West and Russia, that would cushion the ex-Soviets against hard knocks and make it possible for them to reconcile themselves to the course of history and refrain from "revenge". It did not take long, however, for the Central and Eastern European states to reach the conclusion that, as Czech President Vaclav Havel put it, neutrality was not "affordable" given the geostrategic and economic circumstances in which these states found themselves.<sup>4</sup> Their need for firm anchorage, political and economic support was seen as too urgent to allow for any Swedish or Swiss solutions. By 1994, a line of applicants was beginning to form at the gates of both NATO and the newly ratified European Union.

The response of both the Union and NATO to this growing pressure for membership was initially cautious. In early 1994, NATO adopted the Partnership for Peace Programme, intended to offer the Central and East European states cooperation with rather than membership in NATO. While this was a disappointment to the Central Europeans, it offered more than expected to the Baltic states - at the time. Even though these states had been independent during the 1920-40 period, they had still been parts of the Soviet Union itself.. By now applying for NATO membership the Baltic states challenged a possible assumption that former Soviet republics would be excluded from such membership.<sup>5</sup>

NATO's position on enlargement gradually changed during 1994-96 and in the summer of 1997, after the signing of the agreement between Russia and NATO, the formal decision on enlargement was taken by the Atlantic Council, whereupon the first three candidates were identified: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The disappointment of the Baltics was

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<sup>4</sup> Havel himself originally advocated the neutral buffer zone concept.

<sup>5</sup> Estonian Foreign Minister Thomas Ilves in a lecture at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm in 1997.

apparent. On the other hand, Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius all had to recognise the decision for what it was: a well balanced compromise based on a number of necessities. Russian opposition had to be finessed, as well as divergent views among the allies, and the sensitivities of the US Congress to additional commitments and financial burdens. References were made to the aspirations of the Baltic states to become members, and a new appraisal of the situation was indicated for the 1999 fiftieth anniversary meeting, although without any promises made.

Instead, a new road was opened to the Baltic states with the Baltic Charter signed in January 1998 with the United States. Again, this was not a question of security guarantees or a bilateral alliance offered by Washington, but the Charter amounts to a declaration of interest and cooperation with the US - a political marker laid down as a message (or even warning) also to third parties, intended both to give reassurance to the Baltics and to inform Russia about US concerns for the region. In practical terms the Charter outlines a number of ways and means for cooperation in different fields between the United States and the Baltics.

NATO will meet again in 1999, not only to celebrate but also to receive, one expects, the three applicant states - the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, and to discuss possible further enlargement of the alliance. Expectations about what will happen in 1999 should be kept modest. It seems unlikely that a new batch of candidates will be identified in the same way as happened in 1997. Further NATO enlargement is more likely to be defined as an open ended process with no individual candidate named. For the Baltic states, this would be another disappointment and it may also underline their dependence on the nature of their relationship with Russia but also on the Nordic nonaligned countries: Baltic membership without a closer Finnish and Swedish relationship with NATO than exists today will be difficult to accept for the members of the Alliance. Polish membership is one thing, as Poland has a substantial (and growing) weight of its own and Polish membership in NATO will contribute to stability in the region - by itself. The Baltic states, however, are more difficult to see as individual entities and tend to be defined as parts of a Baltic regional package. There are complications with this, especially as the three Baltic states are a lot more individualistic and different from one another than observers from outside the region prefer to think. Nonetheless, we have to assume that Baltic NATO membership will still take time to materialize and that we have accordingly to think about the interim.

NATO enlargement beginning in 1999 will thus focus on Central Europe but will, as stated, have a direct impact also upon the larger Baltic Sea and Nordic region. The region is already the scene of intensive PfP activity with added local initiatives "in the spirit of PfP", including the large October 1998 "Nordic Peace" exercise in the Swedish island of Gotland - tailor made for Nordic and Baltic states actors. "We are all in a family" as was observed by one of the Baltic participants - a declaration if not of fact, still of expectations. From the point of view of the Nordic and Baltic states, PfP has become a miraculous formula for doing things together which would have been difficult to do yesterday, because of considerations for alliance membership and nonalignment respectively. Few countries in Europe tend to be more enthusiastic Partnership Partners, or to assume, to the extent that the Swedes do, that these activities in themselves have confidence- and security-building effects.

The enlargement of the European Union has achieved a certain parallelism to that of NATO. In the same summer of 1997, the Union also decided on procedures for a fourth enlargement process to follow, in the 2000's, those of the 1970's, 80's and 90's. A first group of candidate states were subsequently identified: the three Central European ones (also NATO candidates), Slovenia, Cyprus (with which the EU was already committed to negotiate) and Estonia. The identification of a Baltic state as a legitimate aspirant for membership

represented an international breakthrough for the Baltics, that which had not been granted by NATO. Triumph was, however, mixed with worries among those left out, Latvia and Lithuania. The Nordic Union members, which had all been strong supporters of Baltic state admittance to the Union, took somewhat different positions on the issue with the Danes and Swedes in favour of all three being admitted, invited together; the Finns being happy to settle for one, i.e. Estonia, their immediate neighbour to the south. Regardless of these differences, all three Nordic states remain committed to Baltic membership of the EU as soon as possible. "Membership of the Union is European security" as is the declared position on the Swedish side.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, the Union of which the Nordics are members and into which they want to guide both the Baltic and the Central European states, is still basically an organisation for intergovernmental cooperation, non-federal, and supranational only in carefully delimited areas. Neither is it a hard security organisation. The Nordics still tend to be Atlanticists in their security thinking, also after the Cold War and regardless of whether they are nonaligned or NATO members. The Baltic states, on the other hand, will look for security also in the "hard" sphere, wherever it may be found, and are thus likely to view the Union somewhat differently from the Nordics.

EU enlargement is not likely to be a very rapid process. The basic rule of thumb is supposed to be that all other things being equal (such as political and legal systems) chances look better the less agricultural the respective national economies are. Estonia has been identified as the front runner but the Latvian economy is now supposed to be doing increasingly well and Baltic pressure on the Union will thus grow. A contributing factor will undoubtedly be the grave economic situation in Russia since the summer of 1998, which by itself will tend to push the Eastern and Central European states (including, perhaps, a politically reformed and industrial Slovakia) towards the West. The assumption in the Nordic-Baltic region will still be that EU membership for the Baltic states will increase regional stability and European security - the sooner, the better.

This argument is reinforced by the fact that Russia still seems willing to accept Baltic Union membership as potentially useful also for Russia, in need as it is of access and conduits to the West. This is in stark contrast to the Russian attitude towards Baltic NATO membership, which remains adamantly negative not to say bellicose. Russian sabre rattling over the latter issue has been quite dramatic - and one should not rule out the risk that also Baltic Union membership may become the victim of Russian domestic politics and international posturing against the background of some future crisis inside or outside of Russia. The relationship between Russia and the Baltic states remains a potential source of instability in the region.

The role of the CSCE (or, subsequently, OSCE) in the region has already been underlined concerning the Russian military retreat from the three Republics. Two additional observations should be made. In the first place, CSCE missions were sent to Estonia and Latvia during the Swedish CSCE presidency in 1993, with the aim of monitoring minority issues. In the beginning, this was somewhat resented by the host countries as "control" and imposition of legislation too generous to the Russians and thus, not acceptable to the Baltics themselves. The Baltic perspectives, however, have changed with time as the presence of the missions may also be interpreted as providing legitimacy for legislation adopted by the national parliaments. Secondly, the OSCE as such has the dual attraction of being, like the UN, an organization

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<sup>6</sup> See Större EU - säkrare Europa ("A larger European Union - a safer Europe"; SOU 1997:143. Cabinet Office, Stockholm).



open to all Europeans and thus granting all both a hearing and legitimacy as sovereign states. This, in itself, serves as security - in good weather even if not in a storm. There is no reason to underestimate the importance of the OSCE as a norm creating and monitoring organization that from time to time will contribute to conflict amelioration if not solution - also in the Nordic-Baltic region.

### **Building Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Regionalism**

The Nordic Council was founded in 1952 by Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - later adding Finland in 1955 as a member. The membership now also includes the Aaland and Faeroe Islands as well as Greenland. The Council engages in social, economic, cultural and other issues - but not in "high politics". Still, through careful attention to the everyday development of Nordic cooperation, facilitating daily life for the Nordic citizens rather than producing grand political designs the Council and its members created a separate world of sorts, independent of the Cold War division also in the North, a fact which in itself contributed to stability and security in Northern Europe.

When the Baltic states achieved independence in 1991, there was also a Nordic Council discussion about the Baltics becoming members. The idea was quickly rejected, however, by an overwhelming Nordic political majority, in favour of suggesting to the Baltic states the forming of a separate Baltic Council, on the Nordic pattern, with which the Nordic Council could cooperate in different ways, such as intermittent joint sessions. For a fleeting moment, there had thus been a possibility of a new membership composition and with that also a new, and possibly more political, role for the Nordic Council.

In 1991, a meeting of the Baltic Sea states at Ronneby in Sweden was called jointly by the Swedish and Polish Prime Ministers Carlsson and Masowiecki, over an agenda of environmental issues. This proved a beginning to a new regional forum, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, formed in Copenhagen the following year at a meeting sponsored by Denmark and Germany. The agenda was widened to include support for the development of democratic institutions, economic issues, and problems related to infrastructure and Baltic communications.

In 1996, with Sweden chair as country, a more ambitious proposal for a programme for regional cooperation was submitted at a Council summit at Visby in Gotland, including the active cooperation in fighting organised crime in the region. Proposals for a permanent secretariat for the Council were, however, rejected but cooperation in the Baltic Sea region had advanced a few more steps. The future development of the Council is likely to stay away from the high security issues - just as in the case of the Nordic Council, but still the Baltic Sea Council will probably have a role in the building of a security community in northern Europe. The region is now busy with various inter-city and inter-county projects for cooperation, and more will follow. In this way, the old unity of the region is already reemerging.

The limitations on regional cooperation were still demonstrated in the final days of 1997, when Russian Prime Minister Yeltsin, in connection with an official visit to Stockholm, submitted proposals for the creation of a "Pact of Confidence" in the region, in the first place intended to connect Russia with the three Baltic and the two Nordic nonaligned states. The "pact", which also included "hard security" and confidence-building proposals, was received with limited enthusiasm - not much more, anyway, than had been granted a previous joint Russian-Belarussian proposal to Poland for a "corridor" through Polish territory to ensure communications between Kaliningrad and Russia-Belarus. No doubt, Russian diplomats will offer more skillfully drafted proposals in the future - and there will be opportunities presented here to the advantage of all parties - but the hesitation on the parts of the smaller states to join

arrangements exclusively limited to Russia and themselves seems a recurrent theme. Regional cooperation in the field of hard security has so far been rejected by the Swedes (as well as the Finns) with references being made to a larger, European context. Still, regional cooperation will offer possibilities for engaging both the Baltic states and Russia in arrangements that may facilitate security-building in the widest sense - and to this also the Nordics will have to address themselves in the future.

European arms control arrangements, primarily the CFE treaty, do impact upon the region, although in a limited way. The CFE provisions only commit NATO and former Warsaw Pact states - thus excluding the Nordic neutrals as well as the Baltic states, neither of which have demonstrated any great interest in joining the CFE regime. Russia, on the other hand, is interested both in involving both these groups of states (most obviously the three Baltic ones) and in seeking continued revisions of the treaty itself. Such revisions have already brought the Russians some relief as to the ceilings on treaty covered arms categories (primarily APCs), which have created some concern in the Baltic states and hardly made them more anxious to commit themselves to the treaty. Still, the CFE regime does contribute to stability and security also in the North - as a part of the network of treaties, organisations and agreements now in existence.

As compensation for the NATO membership not attainable now for the Baltic states, various proposals, essentially emerging out of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic or academic circles, have been made for regional security cooperation involving the Baltic states and the Nordic group, primarily the two nonaligned states. An ambitious programme involving a number of points related to Nordic-Baltic cooperation, Baltic-Russian and intra-Baltic cooperation as well as Baltic-EU relations was advanced in 1996 by a group of experts at the Rand Corporation - all with the aim of establishing an interim "regime" involving Nordic support (although not security guarantees) for the Baltic states.<sup>7</sup> The Nordic reactions were generally negative and there is also an obvious reluctance on the part of the two Nordic nonaligned states to be grouped together with the Baltic three in a "maison à cinq" joined to a larger Russian household.

So far, regionalism thus constitutes bits and pieces in a larger Northern European network, connected with the rest of the Continent through the larger, European organizations. Another example, which also underlines the limited scope of these regional initiatives is the Barents Council and the particular inter-county cooperation that now takes place in the High North involving Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden - but at the sub-regional level. The major Euro-organisations still dominate the scene as they are likely to continue to do.

### **Building Security in the Baltic Sea Region: National Defence**

All of the states of the region are going through processes of military reorganisation. In most of them, this takes the form of a controlled transition from a Cold War order of battle to something else, sometimes described to as "normalcy", Europeanisation or internationalisation, moving from "deterrence" or "national defence" to "international operations" etc. In the Russian case, the retreat from the Cold War military establishment shows some resemblance to a free fall, uncontrolled because of economic shortages and major societal disorganisation.

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald Asmus & Robert Nurick, "NATO Enlargement and the Baltic States" *Survival*, Summer 1996). On Baltic security, see also Gunnar Artéus & Atis Lejins, eds., *Baltic Security. Looking towards the 21st Century* (Swedish National Defence College Acta B7; 1998) and Robert Dalsjö, "Are the Baltics Defensible?" (Unpublished paper; Swedish National Defence Research Establishment; 1998).

The Nordic states are in more or less orderly transition with the greatest difficulties faced by Sweden, logically enough, as Sweden's war time military organisation was by far the largest, most technically advanced and costly of them all. The Nordic countries display rather different profiles in their search for a new model. Denmark has gone all out for international operations with virtually its whole army organised for NATO, international and regional cooperation with other states. Finland has maintained its national anti-invasion defence, refused to sign the anti-mine convention, and is upgrading its air force around the American F-18 aircraft; but has also begun organizing brigades for international operations. Norway has also maintained its Cold War posture with a concentration to the North Cape.

Sweden is in the process of abandoning the anti-invasion defence, which it has built at great costs during the whole post-1945 period, in favour of both flexibility (adapting to changing strategic conditions) and international operations and compatibility. The basis for this is the 1996 defence plan with 13 army brigades, 13 air squadrons, 24 surface combatants, 7-9 submarines etc - an order of battle which, however, will be subject to further cuts. Still, Sweden's armed forces will muster some 200 new JAS aircraft, new tanks, submarines, surface attack etc etc. The Swedish problem remains the ambition to try to do everything at the same time: maintain general conscription, a high technology national arms industry, all around defence capability and a high international profile. This is no longer possible and painful choices will be necessary.

Hard choices may also face the German armed forces which still rely on conscription and where a change in the direction of professional forces on the French, Spanish and Benelux patterns will be difficult for political reasons. Germany thus does not seem likely to be able to muster expeditionary or international forces on a scale comparable to that already maintained by the British and clearly aspired to by the French.

The Polish armed forces seem headed for further reductions in numbers and inventories with a long process of adaptation to Western standards ahead. How soon such a basic change is begun will be important as this will also decide operational capability over the long term; unless European politics turn drastically for the worse, the period of transition will be long and capability subsequently limited. Present paper strengths - numbers of tanks, aircraft etc - will be of little help to determine real ability. As has already been stated, the Russian armed forces reform program seems dead in the water - largely because of lack of economic resources, but perhaps also because of continuing disagreements on what ought to be done. Drastic decline in conventional capabilities has forced the adoption of a new nuclear strategy ostensibly dropping all previous declarations against nuclear first use. Russian capabilities in nuclear (as well as, possibly, chemical and biological) warfare is thus compensation for a continuing state of weakness.

In accordance with the START 2 treaty, not yet ratified by the State Duma, Russia is supposed to "move to sea" with the highly potent land based and MIRVed ICBMs being gradually replaced by submarine launched missiles. Submarine systems are, however, more expensive and given present economic (and perhaps also technical) difficulties it seems possible that a re-orientation will take place back to land based ICBMs and away from sea (and Kola) based systems. This in turn, as has already been observed, would have an impact on the strategic situation in the High North as it would make the Murmansk base complex less important - thereby diminishing United States military interest in the area.

Exact numbers of conventional forces that might be used for operations against neighbouring states are difficult to compute and assessments vary. For the time being, Russian attention remains directed towards the "southern" front - the Caucasus and Central Asia - rather than the Baltic region. This could, of course, change on short notice and in an

international crisis situation, but it is also obvious that the step which has been announced towards a professional, modern and high tech intervention force of some 200.000 men is a very long one indeed.

The three Baltic Republics are all small or even very small states. Lithuania has 3.709.000 inhabitants, Latvia 2.587.000, and Estonia 1,472.000 - a Baltic total thus of more than 7.5 million, or a population about one million short of that of Sweden. The military forces available to these countries, however, have no resemblance whatsoever to those of any of the Nordic countries. (See table)

The exact numbers cited are not of decisive importance. Uncertainties about spareparts and maintenance make capabilities difficult to assess. Two facts stand out, nonetheless. In the first place, in terms of both volume and quality, the Baltic armed forces are still weak seven years after independence. The build-up of a national defence capability is a long term project for any new state and given the economic and social realities involved in the Baltic case, as in all of the former Soviet-Warsaw Pact territory, other priorities will slow down the process. Secondly, and on the other hand, there may now be an emerging tripwire capacity, based also on the border guards and home guard units, that might, in a real emergency, make it possible to put up resistance strong enough both to constitute an obstacle to a possible Russian effort to stage a "Return" (as was the name of a recent Russian military exercise close to the Latvian border) and to give the "European Security Architecture" (and the CNN) time to react. Given the state of the Russian armed forces for a foreseeable future, the modest Baltic "order of battle" does not look quite as pitiful as at first paper sight. Real weakness lies in the absence of both air power (or even real surveillance and patrolling capabilities) and advanced anti-air capability.

Baltic states armed forces 1998 (Military Balance)

	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>
Total forces (Active)	3.510	4.500	5.250
Reserves	14.000	16.000	11.000
Army formations (regular army)	3 btns (+)	3 btns	1 mortar rifle btn +m 2 btns
APCs	40	15	34
Artillery	57 mortars	24 (towed 100 mm) 28 mortars	18 mortars
Antitank	200 recoilless	?	recoilless
Air defence	guns 23 mm	guns 12,7 mm	?
Aircraft	10 tp & heli	11 tp & heli	19 tp & heli
Naval craft	3 patrol, 2 mine countermeasure, 2 support	13 patrol	2 frigates (Grisja), 3 patrol, 2 support

While there may be no imminent risk of a conflict between Russia and its smaller neighbours which would result in the development of an asymmetric armed conflict, given present Russian difficulties, assumed policy goals (economic recovery in cooperation with the West) and costs to Russia, should these goals change, a continued lack of a minimum deterrent (or dissuasion) capacity on the part of the three Baltic states still remains a factor of instability. It should be in the interests both of the Baltic Sea states in general and to the Russians themselves in particular to see a more stable situation with mutual confidence and selfconfidence developing. A certain buildup of the Baltic self defence forces is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for this.

### **Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Conclusions**

The most obvious observation to make is that developments in the region since 1989 have been characterised by a remarkable absence of direct violence. True, the Russians did undertake military operations in the Baltic (Soviet) Republics, intended to prevent their attainment of independence and lives were lost, but still, given what was at stake for the Soviet Union, the transition from empire to new nationhood has been miraculously smooth. The Nordic-Baltic area is a success in terms of international cooperation and (potential) conflict management - even though risks remain.

During the Cold War, there was never any military "balance" in the region; Soviet capabilities were always immeasurably larger and could only be checked by the over-the-horizon capabilities of the United States. Today, the Russian armed forces in the region, excluding nuclear assets, may be said to be balanced by the resources at the disposal of the regional states themselves; a triangular balance is thus, for example, said to exist between German, Russian and Swedish naval forces, and there is no real concern, outside of the three Baltic states, about Russian offensive capability. In reaction to NATO enlargement including also the Baltic states, various Russian voices have rattled the nuclear sabre - with proposed forward deployment (and even use) of tactical nuclear systems. This has caused considerable political reaction in the Baltic states, as well as south and west of the Sea, but it has hardly been seen as a direct and present military danger.

During the Cold War (from the 1940's to the early and mid-70's), the strategic focus in the region was on the Baltic Approaches - the Western control over entrance and exit to and from the Baltic Sea. During the so called New Cold War (late 70's to the late 1980's), attention shifted from the Approaches to the North Cape, the Norwegian, Barents and Arctic Seas - because of the Soviet military buildup in the High North and subsequent Western countermeasures (prepositioning of US and other allied equip-ment in Norway, COBs, the US Maritime Strategy). With the ending of the Cold War, focus again shifted, it has been said, to the eastern part of the region, i.e. the Baltic coast from St Petersburg down to Kaliningrad. It took time for the shore states to fully grasp these successive transitions. Today, the acute security problems have less to do with Kola and nuclear strategies than with instability, suspicion and lack of confidence, selfconfidence and development along the southeastern shore of the Sea. The problems are less military than political (as well as social and economic) but military factors (such as the weakness of the Baltic Republics, the intensity of PFP exercises, arms control regimes - such as CFE, INF and START) may have stabilising or destabilising effects.

The burden now seems greater than before on the shore states, not least the nonaligned and highly developed ones, to actively cooperate in the shaping of the security "order" of the region itself. If Russia is less powerful than before, the remaining superpower is also less "present" and appears to expect more burdensharing by the locals. We shall all, in brief, have

to do more for ourselves. This constitutes a new situation which has also produced a number of initiatives of a regional, cooperative character by the shore states. More of this will have to follow. Regionalism and "Europeanism" mutually support one another. In the background, there still remains an assumption about US succour (and strategic support) in case of an emergency - but also a belief in the possibility of managing the development and integration of Russia into the region as well as in a "Larger Europe". There is a cautious optimism about the region's peaceful future, despite the present calamitous state of Russia. There is not, however, much of a belief in old style neutrality and "Alleingang"; security has to be cooperative as well as common.

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## Problematik und Bedeutung der deutsch-französischen Beziehungen für die Weiterentwicklung von NATO und EU

Fünf Jahre nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs, am 9.5.1950, schrieb der damalige französische Außenminister Robert Schuman: "Der Weltfrieden kann nur durch schöpferische, den drohenden Gefahren angemessene Anstrengungen gesichert werden", und er schloß seine "Erklärung von höchster Bedeutung" mit dem für die damaligen politischen Zeitumstände geradezu visionären Satz: "Wenn Frankreich, Deutschland und weitere Beitrittsländer ihre wirtschaftliche Grundproduktion zusammenlegen und eine Hohe Behörde einsetzen, wird dieser Plan die ersten konkreten Grundlagen für eine europäische Föderation schaffen, die zur Erhaltung des Friedens notwendig ist." Aus der Montan-Union, die damals entstand, ist dann mit der Unterzeichnung der "Römischen Verträge" 1957 die "Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft" und 1993 mit dem Vertrag von Maastricht schließlich die "Europäische Union" hervorgegangen. Das Inkrafttreten der "Römischen Verträge" markiert zugleich auch den Beginn des Sonderverhältnisses der beiden ehemals verfeindeten Staaten Deutschland und Frankreich im neu sich formierenden Europa.

Neben Robert Schuman war der damalige deutsche Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer wohl derjenige unter den europäischen Staatschefs, der deutlicher als alle anderen sah, daß für die Gründung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft der Wille ausschlaggebend war, Krieg zwischen europäischen Staaten künftig unmöglich, ja undenkbar zu machen, und daß dafür das Verhältnis zwischen Frankreich und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von grundlegender Bedeutung sein würde.

Die "Römischen Verträge" waren ein erster Schritt für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, die staatliche Souveränität zurückzugewinnen. Dafür nahm Adenauer zwangsläufig auch die Einschränkungen in Kauf, die die Siegermächte des Zweiten Weltkriegs dem wirtschaftlich und bald auch militärisch wiedererstarkten Westdeutschland bereits mit dem Eintritt in die "Westeuropäische Verteidigungsunion" (1954) und der Integration in die NATO (1955) auferlegt hatten. Die mit dem Elysée-Vertrag von 1963 formell begründete deutsch-französische Partnerschaft war dann der zweite, vielleicht wichtigste Schritt, die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in die internationale Staatengemeinschaft zurückzuführen. Dieser Vertrag repräsentiert in der wechselvollen und überwiegend antagonistisch geprägten Nachbarschaftsgeschichte der beiden Staaten eine historische Singularität. Daß zwischen diesen beiden Staaten keine Feindschaft mehr besteht und auch für die Zukunft politisch wie völkerrechtlich ausgeschlossen sein soll, macht heute - darauf ist immer wieder hingewiesen worden - den Kern des europäischen Einigungsprozesses aus und unterstreicht deren besondere Rolle im politischen Zentrum von Europa.

Gleichwohl ist diese Kooperation, die durch die im Elysée-Vertrag vereinbarten regelmäßigen und dicht gestaffelten Konsultationen auf ausnahmslos allen Regierungsebenen zu einer fest etablierten Institution geworden ist, gekennzeichnet durch zahlreiche, im Vollzug der europäischen Einigung sich häufende Konflikte zwischen den Machteliten auf beiden Seiten, vor allem in der Verteidigungs- und Sicherheitspolitik sowie bei der Implementierung der Europäischen Währungsunion. Sie haben bereits mehrmals, zuletzt beim Streit um die Besetzung des Chefpostens der Europäischen Zentralbank, bis an den Rand eines Bruchs geführt. Daß diese Divergenzen sich nicht gleichsam von selbst abschwächen, geschweige denn völlig verschwinden, hängt - das ist die These, die hier plausibel gemacht werden soll - mit dem jeweils historisch anders ausgeformten Verständnis von konstitutiven Begriffen wie Staat und Politik, Sicherheit und Verteidigung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, Kultur und

Geschichte ab. In den Dissonanzen, die aus dieser beständigen "Querelle allemande-française" entstehen, liegen jedoch Chancen wie Gefahren, insbesondere wegen der essentiellen Bedeutung des Verhältnisses zwischen diesen beiden Staaten für die Weiterentwicklung von EU und NATO, nahezu unseparierbar nebeneinander. Wieviel an politischer Hermeneutik in diesem Zusammenhang in Zukunft noch zu leisten sein wird, damit dieser Prozeß irgendwann einmal erfolgreich abgeschlossen werden kann, soll im folgenden an einigen aktuellen Fallbeispielen aus deutscher Perspektive exemplarisch erörtert werden.

### **Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik**

Schon im Herbst 1996 hatte der französische Botschafter in Bonn, François Scheer, in einem Vortrag<sup>1</sup> in nonchalanter Offenheit eingeräumt, daß viele Entscheidungen, die der französische Präsident Jacques Chirac seit seinem Amtsantritt getroffen habe, "in Deutschland auf Ratlosigkeit und Unverständnis" gestoßen seien. Dazu gehörten neben der von der Weltöffentlichkeit vehement kritisierten Wiederaufnahme der Nukleartests vor allem die französischen Vorstellungen zur NATO-Reform sowie das Projekt der umfassenden Umstrukturierung der französischen Streitkräfte.

Die Verwirrungen und Irritationen auf deutscher Seite hatten schon im Frühjahr 1996 begonnen, als der damalige französische Verteidigungsminister Charles Millon in Interviews und Aufsätzen eine neue französische Sicherheitspolitik skizzierte. Diese Hinweise waren in Bonn sorgfältig analysiert worden und hatten schon damals zu Verärgerungen geführt. Denn alle Aspekte der neuen französischen Militärpolitik - die Verkleinerung und Umstrukturierung der französischen Streitkräfte, der Truppenabzug aus Deutschland, die Strukturanpassung der bestehenden binationalen Einheiten und die Abschaffung der Wehrpflicht - erfuhren die deutschen Stellen erst aus den Medien. Die formalen Konsultationsmechanismen dienten dann meist bloß noch zur beschwichtigenden, nachrangigen Kommentierung des jeweiligen "fait accompli".

Das Auswärtige Amt blieb von diesen irritierenden Umgangsformen nicht ausgenommen. In einem offenkundlich sorgfältig inszenierten Interview ließ Millon außerhalb der diplomatischen Kanäle mitteilen, Frankreich schlage ein parallel zum Kommandoschema der NATO einzurichtendes, rein europäisches Befehlskonzept vor, das den "militärischen Arm" der EU führen solle. Im Auswärtigen Amt vermutete man sogleich und nicht völlig ohne Grund, damit werde ein französischer Anspruch auf die Führungsrolle in einer solchen europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsarchitektur erhoben und deshalb rechtzeitig eine avancierte, an rein französischen Interessen orientierte Position aufgebaut. Für die offizielle deutsche Außenpolitik kam dieser Plan auch deshalb überraschend und äußerst ungelegen, weil sich die deutschen Beamten auf der Planungsebene für den damals bevorstehenden Berliner NATO-Gipfel bei voller Information der französischen Kollegen besonders dafür eingesetzt hatten, das neue Konzept der sogenannten "Combined Joint Task Force" (CJTF) nach NATO-Gepflogenheiten konsensfähig zu machen und so zu vermeiden, daß die bestehenden NATO-Kommandostrukturen für die erstmals systematisch vorgesehenen, rein europäischen Missionen ohne Teilnahme der USA dupliziert würden. Irritiert war die deutsche Seite im übrigen nicht nur wegen der fehlenden vorherigen Konsultation, sondern auch deshalb, weil Frankreich für die JFOR bzw. SFOR-Missionen in Bosnien jenes Strukturprinzip faktisch bereits akzeptiert hatte, das durch CJTF eine systematisch

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<sup>1</sup> "Frankreichs Sicherheitspolitik im Wandel". Vortrag in der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 24.9.1996, Ms.-Fassung, aus der im folgenden zitiert wird.