

Speech delivered at the 2015 *Maritime Convention*, Berlin, Germany

Speech delivered by LtCdr Stefan Lundqvist at the *Maritime Convention*, 12 November 2015

Dear Sirs, Ladies and Gentlemen, thanks for allowing me the opportunity to present a Swedish perspective on Maritime Security in the Baltic Sea and the current challenges facing its coastal states.

It is a pleasure being here with you today.

My presentation does not represent the official SWAF view. Instead, it is based on my dissertation and my joint research with Associate Professor Widen outlined in three research articles. The first is a chapter in an edited volume by IOS Press which was published in August; the second is under review for *Defence Studies*; while the third is accepted by *RUSI Journal*.

That maritime security is increasingly important follows from the recent releases of maritime security strategies, the UK National Strategy for Maritime Security in May 2014, The EU Maritime Strategy in June 2014 and the US Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy in August this year.

These strategies focus on protecting national interests, maritime trade flows and maritime resource extraction, while securing blue growth opportunities. All of them apply a wide conceptual frame for maritime security, which result in calls for regional and global maritime governance. This concern for management is clearly linked to the economic dimension of security, but since the environmental impact of some activities associated with "blue growth" remains to be clarified, they also address environmental security.

Notably, traditional sea power considerations are also at the heart of some of these strategies. Conflicting geopolitical interests now tend to superimpose low level threats such as Human Smuggling, Drug Smuggling, Piracy and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

With regards to the US and the Asia-Pacific, it is worth noting that the USCG operates on its own to foster maritime security in island states such as Micronesia and Melanesia, while operating integrated with the other Sea Services in bi- and multilateral co-operation in the SCS.

Let us elaborate on some key aspects of the US Asia-Pacific MARSEC Strategy. Promoting Maritime Governance is clearly linked to the US effort to further liberal norms and free trade. In this endeavour, the USCG has taken on a leading role in the Caribbean, in Africa and in Southeast Asia, supported by the USN and the USMC. Addressing local maritime security challenges rather than global ones have contributed to make states such as Indonesia and Malaysia more willing to co-operate politically, economically and military with the US, but also to make Vietnam a US strategic partner.

As widely recognised, China has gradually been assigned the role of a US rival, dimensioning US strategy and capability developments. China uses the assets of its five maritime law enforcement agencies to protect its national interests such as fishing and maritime oil exploitation. Around disputed artificial islands, to which it claims indisputable sovereignty, China claims a territorial sea and an EEZ. In some cases, ADIZs are proclaimed. Notably, China considers its national jurisdiction

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applicable in its EEZ. The US, for its part, enforces its right to execute military activities on and above the High Seas through its FON programme. Recently – on 27 October– the USS *Lassen* cruised within 12 NM of five of these disputed islands of the Spratly group, resulting in fierce Chinese protests.

Here, minor incidents might result in military escalation. The extreme case would involve that Chinese *Anti-Access/Area Denial* capabilities would be put to the test versus US *All Domain Access* capabilities and the US *Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons*.

Let us apply these insights from Southeast Asia to the Baltic Sea region, where one of the coastal states displays some clear similarities with China. The Baltic Sea, which we delimit in the west by a line between Drogden and Langeland, is one of the world's largest inland sea by surface area with brackish water. Its shallow and narrow connection to the North Sea is particularly sensitive to disturbances. The Drogden Sill is only 7 meters deep which sets a limit to Øresund, while the depth of the Darss Sill is 18 meters. A disruption of shipping in this gateway would have far-reaching consequences.

I would also like to point out some key geostrategic areas. The usefulness of the Island of Gotland is apparent if we consider an intervention in support of the Baltic States. The demilitarised Åland archipelago is of particular legal concern with regards to the ever deepening naval co-operation between Sweden and Finland. For Finland, and Russia, the Gulf of Finland is of critical strategic importance.

The greatly varying topography of the Baltic Sea influences some of today's maritime security challenges. The maximum depth of 459 meters is found in Landsortsdjupet, while the founder Gotlandsdjupet with a depth of 239 meters has been the scene of some conflicting interests in the last two years.

I also want to highlight a key aspect of the region's Security Policy Environment.

Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland represent the coastal states separating the Schengen Area from Russia. Russia's ongoing remilitarisation of the Kaliningrad oblast, sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania, involves particular security policy concerns. This development sharply contrasts the special economic status which Russia assigned Kaliningrad in 1996, resulting in increased trade with the EU and improving economic growth which peaked in 2007.

At this time, the hopes for a Russia that would move closer to Europe, at least in terms of trade and tourism, were well justified.

Although the Northern Fleet and the Pacific Fleet have priority over its Baltic Fleet, based here in Russia's only ice-free European port (Baltiysk) and in Kronstadt, it will be reinforced with new vessels and weapon upgrades through the ongoing 2020 Armament Programme.

Let us acknowledge the importance of uninterrupted commercial sea transport to all of the region's coastal states, connecting to this convention's theme "Sicherheit & Handel im Maritimen Raum",

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The slide illustrates the major Sea Lanes of the Baltic Sea. These are daily trafficked by 2000 vessels carrying some 15 % of the world's container transports. Notably, this shipping carries about 40 % of the Russian trade.

It has been argued that the Baltic Sea is overstretched. I tend to agree!

Shipping, fishing, energy cables and pipelines, tourism and recreation; there are many ways in which the Baltic Sea is used today and the competition for sea area gets more intense every year. Wind farms, oil extraction and cables are being projected at many places on the sea floor while shipping routes, boat traffic, fisheries and other human activities are already affecting the same areas.

This phenomenon is well illustrated by the 48 turbines of the densely configured Lillgrund Wind Farm inaugurated in 2008, producing some 330 Gigawatt Hours of electricity per year resulting from the strong, constant winds in the area.

Notably, the navigational fairways Drogden and Flintrännen border the wind park area to the West and Northwest, while the navigational fairway Lillgrundsrännan borders it to the East. To complicate the picture, one of the Baltic Sea's 174 Marine Protected Areas of the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) borders the area to the south. This area – the *Bredgrund* – also constitutes a Natura 2000 area, sensitive to pollution resulting from accidents at sea.

Interest in oil exploration in the Baltic Sea is growing, and drilling has shown there is more oil to extract.

Currently, there are four oil platforms in the Baltic Sea, all of them located in the south-eastern part of the region in the oil fields of *Kravtsovskoye* and *B-3*. Three of the platforms are Polish, whilst one is Russian. The reserves in these fields are estimated to last until 2030 or longer.

Also here, we must bear in mind that large sea areas off the coast of Poland and Lithuania represent HELCOM Marine Protection Areas and Natura 2000 areas.

Nord Stream is the world's longest (1,224 kilometres) sub-sea gas pipeline and has been controversial from political, environmental and strategic perspectives. Inaugurated in 2011, its capacity is equivalent to about 10 percent of the consumption of natural gas in the EU.

On Thursday 18 June, Gazprom, Shell Oil, the German E.ON and the Austrian OMV signed a preliminary agreement on building another gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea, placed in parallel with the existing Nord Stream. Russia aims at doubling its gas deliveries through the Baltic Sea and thereby reducing its exports via Ukraine and Poland.

The seabed is also increasingly used also for placing cables for high-voltage power transmission.

On 6 February 2015, the EstLink-2 was handed over to its owners and made available for commercial operations, boosting the existing power transmission capacity between the Baltic region and the rest of the EU.

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The need for control over submarine communication cables was highlighted in October (2015) by the NYT's reports on the American and Norwegian concerns over the ongoing Russian survey of transatlantic communication cables with submarines and the ocean survey vessel *Yantar*. Admiral Mark Ferguson, Commander US Naval Forces Europe, considered these operations as part of Russia's emergent hybrid warfare strategy.

These exploration activities, however, also face risks from former and current military activities.

There are large amounts of chemical warfare munitions dumped in certain areas of the Baltic sea.

Increased geopolitical tensions lead to increased military exercises, why continuing conflicts and frictions with civilian interests can be expected.

Finally, we have the remains of an estimated 170,000 mines and unexploded ordnance that has been laid in the Baltic Sea since 1855.

It is against this backdrop that the calls for maritime governance and management have been strong in Sweden since the millennium, as in the US and in the rest of Europe. In Sweden, as well as in the US, the demands have been built up through a gradual incorporation of a broader concept of security. In this type of conceptualisation of maritime security, navies only have supporting roles while law enforcement agencies are in the lead.

When we consider Russia's current behaviour, the need for navies once again becomes stronger. This does, however, not entail a return to an earlier concept! To manage a maritime security environment with a broad spectrum of threats – one in which the military security sector is key, but complexly linked to the other sectors of security – we need to take on a co-operative and comprehensive approach in which the military component is allowed to wear the leader's jersey.

If Russia continues to pursue a hybrid warfare strategy, we will be faced with the task of managing threats of coercion and violence – or exercise of graded violence – in a strategic context of peace. The perpetrator might be hidden or use proxy elements to influence various societal sectors. We will be acting within the framework of continuous crisis.

To Sweden and Finland, the Russian conduct is perceived as 'challenging' and 'aggressive'. In fact, Russia is seen as the main and highly capable actor inducing maritime insecurity in the Baltic Sea region by wielding its Sea Power. Maritime security is thus given a wider interpretation than in the new US Maritime Strategy. Essential functions such as All Domain Access, Deterrence, Sea Control and Power Projection are interlinked with their bilateral effort to provide maritime security.

Media frequently reports on border infringements and 'harassment'. These are well illustrated by the repeated harassments of the Finnish research vessel *M/V Aranda* between 2 August and 2 September 2014 and in April this year. Picture #1 shows the aggressive behaviour of a SU 27 towards the Swedish Armed Forces signals intelligence Gulfstream plane in fall 2014. Picture #2 depicts Vladimir Putin during rally for elections. Picture #3 shows the Russian corvette *Boiky* photographed from the deck of the Finnish research vessel *M/V Aranda* on September 2, 2014. Picture #4 depicts

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the Finnish research vessel *M/V Aranda*. Notably, the scheduled activities of *Aranda* took place in *Gotlandsdjupet* – thus interfering with non-announced Russian submarine activities.

Energy security is increasingly important in the Baltic Sea region, why Sweden assigns great importance to completing the NordBalt sub-sea connection between Sweden and Lithuania as planned. This energy link will enhance the Baltic countries' supply security through its transmission capacity amounting to 700 Megawatts and contribute to connecting the Nordic and European electricity markets. The laying of the two high-voltage power cables and a fibre-optic telecommunications cable was finished in September and inauguration is scheduled for January 2016.

As with the *M/V Aranda*, Russian naval vessels interfered with the cable laying work at four occasions in March and April 2015, and on one occasion in spring 2014. The cable laying vessel *M/V Topaz Installer* was either ordered to alter course, or to leave the area and stay out for as much as 10 hours due to alleged Russian naval exercises in the area. In identical formal written notes to Russia in April 2015, Sweden and Lithuania expressed their deep concern about the repeated interference, disrupting peaceful shipping and economic activity in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provisions.

The written protests against these incidents illustrate the harsh diplomatic tone that currently prevails between Sweden and Russia. In August, Russia expelled a Swedish diplomat in Moscow. Swedish Defence Attachés in Moscow are reportedly facing problems in performing their duties, being denied the opportunity of visiting military units and participating in normally open briefings by the Russian authorities.

The current maritime security challenges are being addressed through various regional co-operation initiatives. To a large extent, they centre on the security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Here, the US launch of *Operation Atlantic Resolve* in June 2014 as part of its *European Reassurance Initiative* with the resulting series of rotational deployments is particularly important, augmented by the co-ordinated initiatives of NATO.

The fact that NATO territory is under potential threat in the Baltics is taken into careful consideration also by Finland and Sweden. This summer's US *BALTOPS* exercise – aimed at demonstrating US, NATO's and partners' resolve to defend Poland and the Baltic States through training amphibious landings, air lifts and assaults in Poland, Sweden and Germany – has reinforced the co-operative dimension. Thereto, the use of US B-52s has forged a link between the US Strategic Command and regional exercises with NATO.

The baseline for providing maritime security, however, constitutes of shared MDA. Therefore, Sweden and Finland operate the SUCFIS interface for exchanging target information in the Northern Baltic Sea between the autonomous Swedish and Finnish Maritime Surveillance Systems. SUCFIS was established in 2006 and enables exchange of SECRET target data.

Sweden and Finland have also taken on lead roles in the wider, UNCLASSIFIED, SUCBAS and MARSUR co-operations.

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Quite tellingly, Russia was invited to join the SUCBAS co-operation, but has consistently refused to participate.

To cope with the current challenges, Sweden and Finland seek to merge their capabilities to create synergies and to send diplomatic signals of resolve. Notably, their navies strive to ensure interoperability also at the higher level of the conflict spectrum by fully operating according to NATO standards. Their co-operation is established within the NORDEFCO framework.

The “Flagship project” is the SFNTG, composed of task units for surface warfare, mine countermeasures, amphibious operations and logistics, and it will be led by a Task Group Commander with staff.

Finland and Sweden are currently implementing their vision document for the SFNTG 2023. The two navies have set a two-tiered objective for the SFNTG: i) to reach an Initial Operational Capability to conduct a *Surveillance and Reconnaissance Operation* in 2017; and ii) to form a *standing* Task Group with Full Operational Capability to conduct operations up to and including *Protection of Shipping Operation* in 2023.

To reach these capabilities on time, an ambitious bi- and multilateral exercise programme is scheduled. Mutual trust and cultural understanding is expected to be built through exchange of officers and NCOs at all levels of command. On 29 October 2015, the Swedish Government mandated the Armed Forces to negotiate bilateral agreements with the relevant authorities in Finland and Denmark to allow for use of each other's ports for alternative basing of naval units in peacetime.

To sum up, Maritime Security is increasingly important to Baltic Sea region's coastal states. Here, Maritime Safety considerations are superimposed by Russia's challenging and aggressive military conduct.

As the President of the Swedish National Grid, Mikael Odenberg, commented the NordBalt incidents in August 2015: “this as a manifestation of the Russians behaving in the way they would do if they mentally considered this their exclusive economic zone and not that of Lithuania”.

Notwithstanding the real threat that Russia poses to the three Baltic States – vulnerable to the kind of hybrid warfare that Russia employs in Ukraine – incidents involving Russian air or naval craft could well escalate into military violence. This concern was raised in May 2015 by Allan Widman, chairman of the Swedish Parliamentary Defence Committee.

Sweden and Finland have assumed lead roles in fostering shared regional MDA, and could preferably act in concert with NATO to protect the Baltic States and Poland although they are non-aligned. Needless to say, this would require their extended involvement in joint capability building, training and exercises. NATO's regional exercise program including the *Northern Coast*, the 2018 High Visibility Exercise *Trident Juncture* hosted by Norway, and the US *BALTOPS* series are already in place.

In conclusion, building Maritime Security in the Baltic Sea region where Russia is pursuing an emerging hybrid warfare strategy requires a co-operative and comprehensive effort in which their navies are assigned leading roles.