



Press Release 15 September 2008

## Russia's choice of action changes the international playing rules

**Fourteen FOI analysts describe in the report *The Caucasian Test Case (Det kaukasiska lackmustestet)* the consequences of the war between Russian and Georgia that took place on August 7-12.**

According to Robert Larsson, security policy analyst at FOI and editor of the report, the war shows that Russia has chosen its direction and given itself new rules to follow. The after effects of the war are still ongoing, but several general conclusions can already be made:

*Europe's security policy has been weakened as a result of Russia's actions.* It is not the conflict itself that caused the deterioration, but that Russia has chosen to lower its threshold for when to use force.

*A local war changes the global, strategic playing field.* The war illustrates that an isolated incident in the Caucasus can unleash forces that very rapidly impair security policy in Europe, including the Baltic Sea region.

*When Russia challenges the world, the mechanisms of the international community become paralyzed.* The agreements and international fora that are in place to handle security policy issues have been blocked after the war in Georgia.

The report also concludes that:

For Russia, the western world's lack of action during a number of incidents is also a litmus test for which of the various foreign policy instruments can be used. The war in Georgia also puts several of NATO's core issues to the test: what do a NATO membership and the alliance's reciprocal defence obligations entail in practice? The European policy with regard to Russia that is based on integration and confidence-building has not worked.

"The risk for new incidents that from a western perspective can appear improbable, irrational and counterproductive has increased," concludes Robert Larsson.

Download the report (Swedish) or the English abstract from the first page of [www.foi.se](http://www.foi.se), or at: [Report \(Swedish\) or abstract \(English\) as pdf-file](#)

### Contact

Maria Hugosson, Press Officer, [maria.hugosson@foi.se](mailto:maria.hugosson@foi.se), +46-8-555 031 55, +46-73-444 77 55  
Robert Larsson, Security policy analyst, [robert.larsson@foi.se](mailto:robert.larsson@foi.se), +46-8-555 037 60

FOI is financed on a contractual basis and is responsible to the Ministry of Defence. Its core business is research and method and technology development that benefit the area of defence and safety. The organisation has approximately 1,000 employees, of which around 800 are researchers. This makes FOI the largest research institution in Sweden.

More information is available at [www.foi.se](http://www.foi.se).