

Total Defence at the Crossroads

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Building a modern Swedish system of total defence must focus on creating maximum defence impact. An important question will be which critical defence activities should be undertaken by the armed forces and which should be delivered by civil defence. The current organisation of governmental organisations, and the division of responsibilities and roles may need to be revisited to ensure the best possible defence impact. Ultimately, the civilian aspects of total defence need to produce a visionary, long-term plan for its active capability development, instead of, as in today's crisis management, allowing its development to be mainly reactive.

Swedish thinking about war and preparing for an armed attack have long been seen as unnecessary and all too expensive. Planning in several areas of society, including crisis management, has not anticipated being threatened by an aggressor, but instead concentrated on handling peacetime events in the form of minor disturbances and short-term supply disruptions. In response to the deteriorating global situation, however, the defence policy bill of 2015 focused on heightened alert and war, and prioritised enhancing the operational capability of battle units as well as planning a cohesive "total defence".¹

This chapter focuses on the new modern total defence and outlines a number of important points of departure and choices facing its development. The aim is to show how individual questions can influence the cumulative capability of total defence and to contribute some ideas on altering its aims and circumstances.

¹ The Swedish concept of "total defence" includes all activities needed to prepare Sweden for war. Total defence contain military activities (military defence) and civil activities (civil defence). During a state of highest alert (e.g. a state of Sweden being at war or in danger of war) total defence consists of all societies' activities. Swedish law 1992:1403 on Total defence and High Alert/ Totalförsvaret och höjd beredskap

TOWARDS A MODERN TOTAL DEFENCE

Total defence is being rebuilt in order to deliver maximum defence impact. These efforts must examine, among other things, which of the critical defence activities should be taken on by the armed forces; what civilian actors, i.e. civil defence entities, should be responsible for; and how total defence should be organised to achieve the best possible defence impact. It is questionable whether the development approach that dominates crisis management today, which is mainly event-steered and reactive, is suitable now that society is building its defence capability to the level of heightened alert and a possible war footing. The systems, structures and capabilities put in place now will steer the later development of total defence for a long time to come. It is therefore essential to analyse what readiness levels the various requirements should be set at, and how Sweden's defence should be developed to achieve the best possible defence impact.

The 2015 *Strategic Outlook* highlighted three challenges for the development of civil defence:

- how to manage the so-called grey zone and the transition from the peacetime organization of society to a war footing;
- how to integrate civil defence with current systems for emergency preparedness; and
- how to balance the different goals of civil defence in order to avoid a one-sided focus on the goal of supporting the armed forces.

These challenges remain valid and are also relevant for total defence. Based on what has happened since, however, it is now possible to identify new choices and challenges for the reconstruction of a modern total defence.

At the political level, there is broad agreement about the direction of defence policy and the government's increased economic resources for defence. The response to the government's decision to revive total defence-



planning demonstrates a willingness among the authorities and other actors to participate. The attitude to total defence is changing as knowledge and awareness are increased, not least as a result of education and training activities.

In its opinion survey, *Opinioner 2016* (Opinions 2016), the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) found a relatively strong increase between 2013 and 2014 in the proportion of Sweden's population that believed Sweden needed a military defence – a change that has persisted in more recent surveys. In addition, according to the survey, a major part (78%) of the population believed that today's preparedness for dealing with and facing a military attack was inadequate. According to a 2016 opinion poll commissioned by daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* and carried out by IPSOS, a majority of Swedes agreed that defence allocations should increase. All the above provides a good basis for building a modern total defence.

Total defence as a concept is focused on antagonist threats, and thus has additional requirements to crisis management. It is therefore not surprising that the return to total defence planning was initially met with some scepticism by the authorities concerned. In a study of wartime organisation and resource increases conducted by FOI in 2014, the governmental agencies with special responsibility for national defence readiness raised the lack of knowledge and resources that hampered their engagement in total defence issues. A clear expression of political will combined with the communication of positive attitudes and signals from their respective leaderships and other decision-makers will be of vital importance to the development of total defence, and not least to changing the mindset that excludes the possibility that Sweden could ever be threatened with war.

DEFENCE IMPACT IN FOCUS

Even if planning for total defence has already resumed, the construction of a modern total defence remains a major undertaking. This work must be based on the capability requirements of total defence and the focus must be on collective defence impact, that is, Sweden's capacity to defend itself from attack.

Adopting measures that only improve the capability of parts of the military or of civil defence in isolation

is too low an ambition. The measures taken and the special efforts made must all be appraised in the light of a comprehensive assessment of the various aspects of total defence. For example, building a capability to provide long-term support to another actor's activities would be a poor use of resources if that actor's activities are planned to have an expected lifetime of only two weeks.

Limited resources and major development requirements mean that building the capability of different actors needs to be balanced and prioritised, but all the time with the defence impact in focus. Centralised governance using carrots and sticks will be required, but attention must also be paid to the development and adaptation that naturally occur when civilian and military, and private and public sector actors meet, plan and conduct exercises together. In the first case, there must be agreement at the political level to provide central authorities with the prerequisites needed to carry out planning. In the second case, it is the primary responsibility of regional and local authorities to develop efficient solutions based on their specific needs and opportunities. At the extreme, however, both cases involve the identification of areas that are important from a total defence viewpoint, and getting agreement on how resources will be distributed within total defence during a real event, and by whom.

There is also a danger of getting stuck in today's structures, accountabilities and regulations when proposals or initiatives are being presented and assessed. These regulations may need to be changed if the defence impact is to remain the focus, to create the conditions that total defence needs in order to deal with the range of threats that Sweden could face. Since the establishment of total defence in the 1940s – and its subsequent dismantlement at the end of the 1990s – Swedish society has undergone major changes. This is no less applicable to the issue of the market reforms applied to a broad range of societally critical functions where public actors had previously had a dominant role as owners and operators. Therefore, modern total defence must not only be able to deliver new capabilities that meet the needs of today and tomorrow, but also be designed on the basis of different societal conditions.

TOTAL DEFENCE AT THE CROSSROADS

The decisions made today will influence and steer tomorrow's total defence capabilities. There are several fundamentally important questions where choices must be made.

- Which critical defence functions should be carried out by the armed forces and what should be delivered through civil defence?

The division of responsibility between civil and military defence is not clear. When responsibilities are being assigned and resources distributed, a central question should be: which tasks are best performed under the auspices of the armed forces and which should be assigned to civil actors? Examples of where such choices need to be made include health care and the supply of food, fuel or other necessities to units of the armed forces. Different alternatives should be considered and weighed against each other but the focus should be on the best possible defence impact even if this means that other interests have to take a back seat. The combatant status of civilian actors is a vital question that includes protection levels and security for the personnel categories and distributors concerned.

Planning for total defence and other preparations will result in the identification of a range of specific civil and military requirements connected to heightened alert, and the solutions chosen to meet these requirements must be based on today's deregulated society and leaner armed forces. The search by public and private sector actors for cost-effective solutions means that many critical societal functions have little or no redundancy built in for anything other than minor disturbances. This is sufficient for peacetime events, which can be dealt with through redistribution, but such capabilities are likely to be inadequate in the event of an attack on Sweden. We do not believe, however, that it will be possible to accumulate sufficient redundancy for society to function normally during a war situation. From a total defence perspective, different functions are not equal in importance and some capabilities must be prioritised over others. There are also differences in the requirements that will be placed on different municipalities and counties, depending on their geographic and military-strategic location.

- How should total defence be organised for the best possible defence impact?

Sweden's official defence organisation is based on sectoral divisions, for which different authorities have designated areas of responsibility, and geographical divisions at the central, regional and local levels. Its focus on the national territory probably means that the geographic dimension needs to be more prominent and clearer in the organisation of society's total defence capability. One problem that affects both total defence and crisis management is the fact that the geographical boundaries of government agencies at the regional level are inconsistent. This complicates collaboration. A unified higher regional level that comprises several counties would simplify coordination of total defence and also of crisis management. A uniform geographical division of state activities at the regional level would simplify coordination.

There are several ways to organise at the higher regional level. A county administrative board might for example be given extra responsibility and resources for a larger area that corresponds to the military regions of the armed forces. The MSB could organise some of its activities in a way that strengthens their geographic dimension, with the aim – within the framework of its responsibilities for civil defence² – of providing better and more targeted support to actors at the regional level, most notably the county administrative boards. There are two possible ways to achieve this. The less sweeping one would be for the MSB to organise units that primarily support the county administrative boards and municipalities in their work. The slightly more extensive one would be for the MSB to establish a regional presence that mirrors the higher regional level. In addition to supporting the higher regional level, a regional presence would improve the MSB's ability to represent the needs of civil defence to the central government.

The new special responsibility for readiness only affects certain central authorities. Other equally important authorities are absent from current planning arrangements. The six existing cooperation areas that form the basis for coordination are also poorly suited

² According to its administrative instruction, the MSB should: "represent civil defence at the central level on questions of significance to deliberations on civilian and military need for societal resources, in the absence of specific regulations"

to concrete planning, since they encompass so many different activities. These should be replaced by clear sector responsibilities, where one authority in each respective sector has responsibility for coordination in order to facilitate unified planning and capability development.

The overall principles on coordinating and prioritising society's resources need to be further elaborated – not just the capabilities of individual actors. Central and regional directories of critical resources would facilitate an overview of what is available, which would in turn make it easier to make decisions about the distribution of these resources. An examination is also needed of what stocks of important supplies are needed, which contracts need to be signed or revisited and the measures required to prepare for requisitioning (according to the law on requisitions) for the needs of total defence.

- Will crisis management's event-driven development work for civil defence?

The evolution of peacetime crisis management – and with it the foundation of civil defence – has in recent decades been primarily event-driven and reactive. Experience and analyses of serious events and the management of major crises have formed the basis of measures to enhance the capability to manage future crises.

In the revived planning for total defence, it will be necessary to proceed from plausible assumptions about the possible concrete acts of war that might strike society, rather than from experience of previous crises. Certain long-term analyses are already being conducted in the area of crisis management. There is therefore no lack of supporting material on the future development of various capabilities, but this also needs to be weighed against the requirements of total defence. If civil defence is to avoid being imbued with the same kind of event-driven ethos as crisis management, strategic decision-support materials must be produced, including alternatives for maintaining and developing civil defence, that have the impact on defence in clear focus. The so-called *perspective* studies performed by the armed forces are an example of how a cohesive forward-looking analysis can be translated into an analysis of future capability needs.

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Who will do what in situations of heightened alert – civilians or the military, the private or public sector – is a fork in the road where the greatest challenge is likely to be to reaching agreement on long-term solutions at the political level, which can then be confirmed by the central authorities. The core principles for organising total defence is another area where several alternatives should be analysed, as well as the issue of whether – and if so, how – civil defence should develop a long-term planning process.

Thus far, the renewed focus on total defence planning has primarily involved the armed forces, the MSB and the other governmental agencies with special responsibilities linked to situations of heightened alert. More agencies need to be engaged in this development work; these include the defence agencies (e.g. the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration, FMV, the National Defence Radio Establishment, FRA and the Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI), other central authorities, the municipalities and county councils/regions, as well as industry and business. Furthermore, sector-wise analyses and assessments, as well as consideration of geographical conditions and differences, will be central to achieving functioning and credible total defence planning.

Interest in and awareness of total defence have increased in recent years. Today's more explicit political priorities, along with broader societal engagement, create a window of opportunity for changes to and the development of total defence that should be exploited. This chapter has highlighted several important choices regarding the continued development of total defence. A focus on the collective defence impact may seem obvious, but different interests, forces and agendas – as much civilian as military – risk obscuring the overall aim – to construct a total defence that is capable of facing an armed attack against Sweden.