

# Prerequisites for the total defence then and now

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**Total defence planning was resumed in 2015. The last time active work was carried out in this area was during the 1990s. Since then, Sweden has become an EU member, the Swedish Armed Forces has been radically transformed, technological development has accelerated and Sweden has been opened to an increasingly changing world. At the same time, we have the same needs as then for basic security, including the supply of essential goods and services. A new total defence concept needs to be informed by previous experience, but above all to be built on new capabilities and knowledge based on current conditions. This chapter highlights some differences and similarities between conditions at the present time and at the end of the period when active total defence planning was last carried out, i.e. the 1990s.**

## **THE TIME OF THE GREAT DECOMMISSIONING**

During the 1990s, the total defence was transformed, from the Cold War's nuclear threat and invasion defence into a defence against a strategic assault. The then new focus was on the risk of a military attack with minimal warning, with limited forces of high quality, aimed at controlling functions vital for the country's total defence. A transition was initiated away from a total defence that involved a large part of the population, by means of conscription, civil defence, voluntary organisations, home guard and so-called war-critical companies (companies important for the war effort). It also included extensive stockpiling of fuel and food in particular. The development of a smaller but more appropriate total defence had started.

There was an overall need for change, and work began on a large scale to achieve this. The existing methods for developing operational capability were gradually changed from a focus on resources, equipment and contingency plans. Amongst other things, the transformation was aimed at increasing quality at the expense of quantity. In the mid-1990s, the Swedish Armed Forces was formed after a merger between a large number of separate authorities. In addition to this reorganisation, cost cuts in the total defence was initiated. The overall result was an extensive disbanding of military units and resources for civil defence.

The concept of a 'grey zone' was already used in the 1990s, at that time to illustrate the lack of clarity over what conditions prevailed. Then, as now, it was not clearly defined. Some parameters were *the preparedness level* i.e. the threat scale of peace-crisis-war; *total defence actors*, both military and civilian, both public and private; and *antagonists*, i.e. enemies that could be a nation, organisation or individual. Dependencies between the Swedish Armed Forces and various civilian functions were emphasised, and a need for better coordination therefore started to become clear.

In the 1990s, there was already a long tradition and a lot of accumulated experience in the total defence sector, since so many individuals had been involved in total defence and many still had a role in the system. Many people with a military background also worked within the civilian part of total defence. In addition to experience and broad knowledge, there were networks and structures for command and control, even at a higher regional level. The

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total defence was divided into different areas with designated responsible authorities and thus a clear structure of responsibility.

With its entry into the EU in 1995, Sweden began to open up to cooperation in many areas, not least in the defence sector. Sweden also phased out a food policy based on a high level of self-sufficiency. Entry into the EU, in combination with globalisation, changed the basic conditions for both Swedish security policy and total defence.

Other significant trends during this period included market liberalisation and internationalised trade flows, as well as a reduction of the state's role in society. Amongst other things, this led to a transition from public to private ownership in many sectors of society. Today, this places new demands on clarity and clarification of any preparedness requirements in procurement – especially with subcontractors at multiple levels.

During the period from the turn of the millennium to 2015, the focus, on the military side, shifted from total defence to international operations and to the crisis management system on the civil side. The disbanding of units and total defence resources continued. Responsibility for the total defence was divided between two ministries, and today there is no longer any special organisation or any special resources for a heightened state of alert and war. Knowledge about how to plan for war has been forgotten.

### **CHANGED AND NEW CONDITIONS**

Since the end of the 1990s, not only has the outside world changed, but so have Sweden and Swedish defence. An important detail in this context is that considerably fewer people have contact with total defence-related activities today. Conscription was mothballed for a number of years and fewer people are currently involved in voluntary defence organisations. Citizens are not involved to the same extent as before, and therefore knowledge is also lower in large parts of the population. A generational

change has taken place in many authorities, and few of their employees today have first-hand experience of total defence planning.

The demand for development of and knowledge about total defence has grown with the need to be able to handle changed or new conditions. One example is the changes that have taken place in information technology and (social) media, which place completely different demands on information security in particular, and on security protection activities in general. A clear structure also needs to be developed for command and control of the total defence with both geographical and functional divisions, i.e. which roles the authorities and other actors occupy. The arenas for warfare have extended

beyond the traditional land, sea and air into space and cyberspace. This calls for new knowledge and planning. There is also a need to clarify concepts based on the new conditions. The fact that these new arenas exist, and that an opponent can use means of attack other than traditional military action, places new demands on the development of capabilities within the civil defence.

International cooperation takes place in many areas and in a completely different way today, in particular within the EU and the Nordic countries, and support is provided and received in different ways. One example is the aviation resources that Sweden borrowed for firefighting during the extensive forest fires in the summers of 2014 and 2018. Within the EU, the development of defence cooperation between governments is also underway through the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in which Sweden participates.

### **TIMELESS NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Although the conditions of the 1990s differ to the present day in various respects, there are also common denominators. Society's need for functioning services and basic security remains. As was the case then, the focus is on increasing operational defence

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capability, the individual's ability to survive, and the robustness of important societal functions. These can be considered as basic starting points for total defence concepts regardless of the time we live in. There are a number of generic capabilities that need to be developed and which will always be needed based on these common denominators. These include energy and food supply, healthcare, communication and transport.

The threat scenario is now characterised by great uncertainty and the importance of being able to handle a grey zone situation with elements of surprise. The concepts of hybrid warfare and non-linear warfare are sometimes used to describe these conditions.

Common to the 1990s and the present day is the need for a joint overall priority regarding both resource building and the utilisation of such resources in order to strengthen the country's overall defence capability. The need to clarify the dependencies between different societal functions remains, as well as the need to plan, train and practise in order to be able to provide adequate mutual support (between the military and civil defence).

### **THE ROAD TO A NEW TOTAL DEFENCE**

The Defence Act of 2015 initiated a change when a military threat was emphasised again. New funds were provided and, amongst other things, the defence of Gotland was emphasised. Many activities are now underway in the total defence. For example, total defence planning has been restarted, conscription has been reinstated, resource build-up has been started, military defence has been reorganised and governmental inquiries have been initiated.

Above all, there is a significant need to build new knowledge about total defence, but also to seek knowledge from the past. One way of doing this is by consulting retired key personnel with relevant experience who can provide support in understanding the system. Both the Military Archives and FOI's archives have become sources for recalling knowledge. It is important to learn lessons from the work that was carried out to modernise the total defence in the 1990s, and at the same time to adapt capability building according to current and future conditions. Problems may be encountered when attempting to strengthen capability within vital parts of the total

defence without first having thoroughly investigated the current conditions, and thereby risking developing old solutions, that do not need to be recreated or which are obsolete. Another risk is sub-optimisation if different needs are not weighed against each other as part of an overall societal balance.

However, the major challenge is to be able to provide simple and comprehensible answers to authorities and other actors, which can be used for managing and planning the total defence, an area where complexity is extensive and where there is a high degree of uncertainty. As civil defence consists of all relevant authorities, organisations and companies, it has been proven difficult to develop relevant plans and policies, as well as follow-up and control, for civil defence. There is therefore a need for development with regard to governance, financing and follow-up in order to manage the range of actors on the civil side.

A new total defence concept needs benign conditions to grow. This requires knowledge in many areas, some of them new; analysis capacity; interoperability; and not least time to think.

