

# Summary

## **Abstract**

The Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) has undergone a remarkable transformation the last fifteen-odd years. At the start of the transformation there was a full-scale draft system, entirely oriented towards defending the Swedish territory, a national security policy for neutrality in war and a large military organization, where a considerable part of the officers were mainly occupied with conventional civil service administrative tasks (although in uniform) or training the consistent flow of new recruits. The aftermath of the Cold War, has for the Swedish military been a period of downsizing and also a search for legitimacy. The main objective is no longer to prepare for a full-scale interstate war, but to participate in international military operations. Sweden's European Union membership and the resulting commitments is the main impetus for this change. Sweden joined the EU in 1995, and has declared a willingness to participate fully in the EU decision-making processes. To participate fully means contributing actively to the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), launched by the European Council in 1999. This marks an important break from a long Swedish tradition of not committing Swedish troops to missions other than the ones commanded by the United Nations.

In the year of 2010, the situation is thus largely different from 1989. Sweden is now following other European countries by moving towards an "all volunteer" personnel system. A majority of military officers are still occupied with administrative tasks, but a number of changes have recently been introduced (including Non-Commissioned Officers) in order to create a "more functional and available defense". The draft is officially abandoned (or "sleeping"), government in the last ten years has proclaimed that

international missions is a, or perhaps the, main task for SAF and a fairly small professional or semi-professional military force is to be organized for “use here and now”. Future missions for Sweden’s Armed Forces will predominantly be limited intervention missions of a humanitarian peacekeeping or peace enforcement nature, within the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

While international missions are not new to the Swedish Armed Forces (Sweden has participated in UN peacekeeping missions since the 1960s) those missions have historically not been awarded any major significance. Domestic assignments and internal training are required for officer promotion, while international mission experience is not. Promotion is a regular, normalized feature of Swedish officer careers and the required education consists exclusively of program based training in military academies. Swedish officers have thus never had to set foot at any university.

The new missions and the move towards new personnel policies pose challenges to the Armed Forces’ traditional military education and career systems. Future Swedish military officers will not automatically be lifelong employees like today’s, and many of them are expected to switch to civilian careers in their mid-30s. In this report, we discuss and analyze the extent to which the inheritance from the previous large-scale, territorial defense still casts its shadow on the SAF, in particular its officer corps. The Swedish Armed Forces traditionally constitute a peacetime establishment geared towards conscript training, planning and materials acquisition. This has been its role for many decades, and its dominant ideals and organizational systems are institutionalized based on this premise. We argue, based on empirical data, that the organizing logic for the education and training of Swedish officers is still heavily shaped by principles and practices developed during the cold war era. Regardless of its details, which were and still are consistently changed, the entire system for professional development of Swedish officers was predicated on *planned homogeneity*. Officers were, apart from mechanisms of selection and anticipatory socialization, put on a “line of refinement”, which each cohort followed in the same rhythm, attended the same schools, studied the same curricula and enjoyed the same teachers. Officers in a cohort became more similar to each other for every decade in their career, which was considered beneficial for SAF as a whole. Officers were expected to display an almost exactly comparable competence profile at each and every point in the

career. All majors were largely exchangeable with each other, something which made them easy to plan, as individual careers and as components in a large organization.

This report argues that the new emphasis on international missions as well as the all volunteer personnel policies are incompatible with the above old orientation. The present tasks for SAF are not suited to the existing model of developing competence. The military core competencies should still be the object of internal courses within SAF. Apart from that (which e.g. in the UK is dealt with in 11 months training), we suggest that a requirement for officers should be a bachelor or master degree from a civilian university. Adopting this "Sandhurst model" for officer training would mean that the Swedish officer corps would be developed according to a principle of "planned heterogeneity", creating a pool of intellectual and cognitive skills that would be considerably broader, and in many cases deeper, than the existing military academic training. The SAF would thus continuously plan for what cannot be foreseen, which in itself is contrary to an age old military logic.

The report thus proposes a study of the UK "Sandhurst model" as a first step towards introducing a more varied officer education system in Sweden. The report also proposes studying the consequences of adapting a more flexible system for military careers, based on principles of variation, validation and matching of competence.