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A functional defence

FACT SHEET

Ministry of Defence, Sweden

March 2009

Government Bill on the future focus of defence.
A focus that extends over a five-year period, 2010–2014.

Sweden's defence must be well-prepared to be able to defend the country, but also to contribute to stability in the surrounding world. This requires a defence system that is adapted to today's threats and to the rapid sequences of events in which conflicts arise and are determined. This requires an operational defence that is functional and available. The Government is therefore establishing a new focus for Swedish defence in its Bill *A functional defence 2008/09:140*. A focus that will provide a significantly stronger defence capability.

In the Bill, the Government proposes a principle focus for the work of achieving a more functional and available defence. A defence that, unlike the old model, can immediately be deployed, wherever it is needed. The Swedish Armed Forces and its supporting agencies will therefore implement extensive reforms, in which the organisation will be given an entirely new basis and structure. This is necessary to achieve the best possible defence.

The operational organisation

The new defence will be based on an operational organisation, consisting of permanent and contracted units. The Home Guard will be an important part of this, with its newly established national protection forces. The permanent units, which will primarily be manned by full-time personnel will be on constant standby, which will make them directly available for rapid operations in Sweden and within and outside the region.
The majority of soldiers in the contracted units will be employed on a contract basis and will have their main employment outside the Swedish Armed Forces. They will have a service obligation for training, exercises and operations.
The permanent unit structure will provide soldiers and sailors with better conditions, since they will be trained, conduct exercises and when needed, take part in operations with the same unit.

The Army

The army will consist of permanent and contracted units. Only a small proportion of the soldiers will be employed fulltime.
It should be possible to organise most of the army's forces in battle groups (seven of them). A battle group will be put together around a manoeuvre battalion, which comprises the core of a unit. Based on actual needs and tasks, the manoeuvre battalion will be built on, using different parts of other units, such as artillery, engineering or air defence units. The navy and air force should be able to strengthen the battalion when needed, for example, for support and transports. Battle groups should be able to conduct independent operations and be part of a larger unit, which may also be multinational.
These combined battle groups will be highly mobile and will be able to move rapidly throughout the country. On the other hand, it will take longer time for particularly heavy materiel such as tanks. In order to have good standby capability on Gotland, a company of tanks will be stored there.
Outside the operational organisation, a reserve unit of four mechanised battalions will be available.

Fact box

The operational organisation consists of approx. 50 000

Personnel in permanent units
Personnel in contracted units
approx. 28 000

The Home Guard and national protection forces
approx. 22 000

Civilian personnel amount to approx. 5 000

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The Home Guard with national protection forces

The Home Guard will continue operations throughout the country and will also be given a greater role in the new operational defence. National protection forces will be set up, and more modern military and personal equipment will be provided. At the same time, training will be improved. This means that increased resources will be invested in the Home Guard and Sweden's domestic defence capability.

The national protection forces can be compared with today's operational platoons but will have a considerably larger volume – some 17 000 instead of 5 000. They will have more qualified assignments than the rest of the organisation. Soldiers will be recruited to them under contract and will be able to be mobilised from standby preparedness to operations within 24 hours. They will also have a service obligation in peacetime as well.

The traditional Home Guard will continue to serve as a voluntary support to society in peacetime and as a supplement to the national protection forces in times of war. Localisation will continue to be regional, but greater functionality and mobility will enable the units to be deployed throughout the country if necessary.

The Navy

Naval forces are to operate in our region by protecting Swedish interests at sea. Naval units, which are required by necessity to be available and to use personnel rationally, will exclusively be permanent units.

Today's amphibious battalion will be converted into a manoeuvre battalion with amphibious capability. This will primarily focus on off-shore sea combat and port areas.

The navy should be able to participate in marine operations together with other countries, in Sweden and within and outside our region. Through them, Sweden will be able to effectively contribute to the protection of shipping and other maritime activities.

The Air Force

The Air Force must have a high degree of availability and a qualified capability to engage in combat throughout the entire scale of low-intensity to high-intensity conflict levels. The air force must primarily develop the capability to operate in our region. It should also be able to participate in air operations together with other countries, in Sweden and within and outside our region. Most of the air force will therefore consist of permanent units.

As far as equipment is concerned, around 100 JAS 39C/D aircraft will be available to the Swedish Armed Forces, in four divisions. Apart from this, the helicopter battalion's capability will be gradually developed through the introduction of new helicopter models. The need for helicopters for medical evacuation means that helicopter 10 will be modified.

A defence based on voluntary participation

The transition to a more functional, available and flexible defence means that all units will be manned by personnel who have voluntarily sought employment in the Swedish Armed Forces.

Sweden must have a defence with functional units – here and now. This requires soldiers and sailors who have already decided during their training on a career in the Swedish Armed Forces, and who, after training, are available for operations in Sweden and abroad.

The inquiry on the national total defence service has proposed that voluntary military basic training is to replace today's compulsory military service training. The advantages include more effective training, joint exercises and personnel planning. Voluntary training will be preceded by tests and controls concerning suitability.

But this does not mean that the compulsory total defence service will disappear. The Total Defence Service Act remains and can be applied if required by military preparedness. In that case, compulsory military service will be gender-neutral.

Military equipment

The new guiding principles for military equipment supply , together with certain other measures to make the organisation more effective and rational, will contribute to freeing up funds for operational activities. In this way, changes in military equipment supply can be said to help increase defence capability.

The operational organisation will be supplied with appropriate, good quality military equipment of sufficient volume, relative to stated requirements and needs. As far as possible, existing equipment will be maintained, and when needed, renewed and upgraded. Where new equipment needs to be procured, ready-developed and proven equipment that is available on the market will primarily be considered. Weapons development should be conducted when needs cannot otherwise be met.

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