



GÖTEBORGS
UNIVERSITET

The “Reinvention” of Swedish Total Defence

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Swedish Security Policy and Practice – A Very Short Introduction

- Stability and Change:
 - Neutrality and “armed neutrality” (19th Century => 1990s)
 - Military Non-Alignment
 - The “solidarity clause” of Swedish foreign and security policy
 - “Territorial (re-)turn” after 2014
 - NATO membership application 2022
 - Idealism <=> realism (pragmatism)
 - Changing self-image



Source: ABC News Graphic

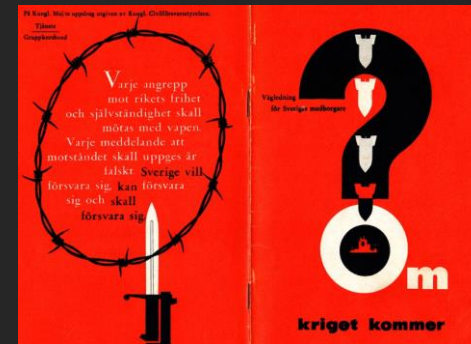
The Return of “Total Defence” in Sweden – Back to the Future?

- Resumed total defence planning from 2015 => Total defence 2.0?
- Swedish Defence Commission Reports (e.g. 2017: “Resilience, The Total Defence Concept and the Development of Civil Defence 2021-2025”) => Territorial (re-)turn
- Reissue of “Cold War” (1943-1987) booklet on war/crisis preparedness, distributed in 2018 to 4.8 million households => framing total defence and war/crisis preparedness
- Reintroduction of (now gender neutral) conscription in 2017/18, possible introduction of “civilian service” etc.
- Increased military spending (recruitment, “growing pains” etc.)
- Increased focus on (and funding of) civil defence and popular resilience (incl. a new Minister for Civil Defence and the establishment of the Psychological Defence Agency in 2022)



IF **CRISIS**
OR **WAR**
COMES

If Sweden is attacked by another country, we will never give up. All information to the effect that resistance is to cease is false.



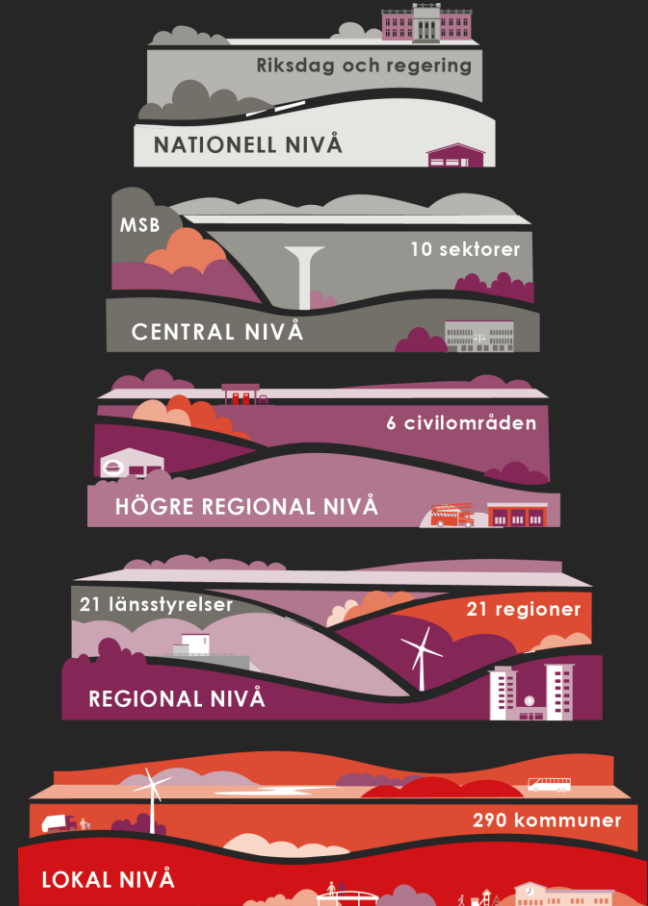
What is Swedish Total Defence (2.0)?

- A “whole of society approach” to crisis and war, spanning multiple sectors (e.g. Wither 2020)
- TD = all “military activity (military defence) and civilian operations (civil defence)” needed to “prepare Sweden for war” (Swedish Code of Statutes 1992:1403, 1 §)
- “total defence resources shall be designed so that they can also be used in international peacebuilding and humanitarian operations and to strengthen society’s ability to prevent and manage severe strains on society” (Swedish Code of Statutes 1992:1403, 2 §)
- Total defence as both “permanent” and “future” condition
- Not a formal organisation, but a “security network” (Whelan 2017) operating and governed on/across multiple levels
- Defence against what? => From “total war” to non-conventional or non-conventional threats (transboundary crises, Boin 2018), including terrorism, hybrid warfare, grey zone activities, information and cyber warfare, pandemics, and climate change...



Organising for Total Defence

- Military + civil defence = Total Defence
- New regulations, e.g. on readiness among civilian state authorities (May 2022)
- Crisis and war preparedness in civil defence
 - International level (EU, NATO etc.)
 - National and central levels (10 sectors)
 - Regional level (6 civil defence areas)
 - Regional level (21 County Administrative Boards)
 - Local level (290 municipalities)
 - Individual level (personal preparedness)



Source: Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)

Responsibility and duty reinvented

Framing total defence: messages to the Swedish public

“It starts with you and me. Together we are total defence”

(Swedish Armed Forces Website 2023: Total defence).

“The Swedish population has a duty to contribute to Sweden’s total defence. This means that everyone who lives here and is between the ages of 16 and 70 can be called up to assist in various ways in the event of the threat of war and war. Everyone is obliged to contribute and everyone is needed”

(Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency 2018).



Source: "If War Comes" 1961



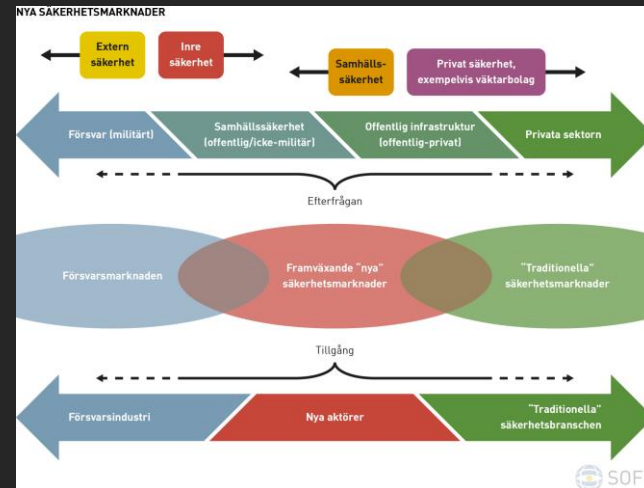
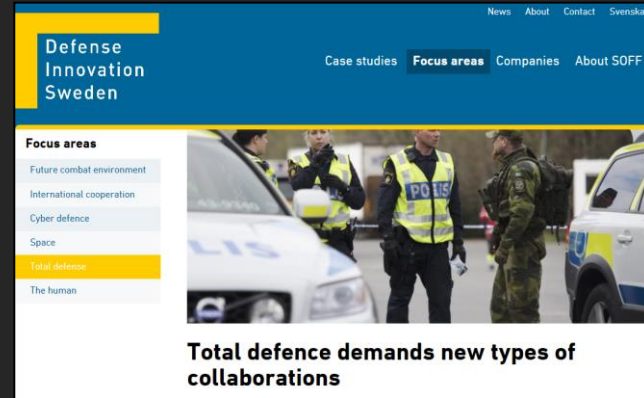
Source: Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)

The Business of Total Defence

- Total defence as an “emerging new security market”
- National business council => strategic level “forum for information exchange on issues of common concern for businesses, employers and the state concerning total defence and crisis management” (Swedish Ministry of Defence, 9 January 2023).



Members of this organisation include defence giants such as BAE Systems (Häggglunds, Bofors) and SAAB, but also private security companies such as Vesper Group, SRS and 2Secure.



Concluding remarks: some questions for the future

- How will current crises (e.g. war in Ukraine) and future developments (e.g. possible NATO membership) change total defence organisation (and war preparedness discourses) in Sweden (and beyond)?
- Will Swedes embrace or resist their new/old "duties" in total (civil and military) defence (in terms of willingness to defend, public opinion etc.)?
- What will be the role of business actors in total defence organisation and planning, and in shaping the emerging "market" for total defence?
- How can governance structures and functional collaboration across organisational, professional and social boundaries be achieved in a total defence "security network"?