

## DOES A SMALL STATE NEED A STRATEGY?

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### **Abstract**

In modern conditions the word 'strategy' is increasingly used, by both nations and institutions, to refer to a published declaration of policy intent covering a wide range of security challenges. The importance of a strategy varies according to the scale of a country's problems, including the difficulties of reaching internal consensus. It may be designed to preserve the nation by indirect as well as direct means, for instance by embracing the programme of a potential protecting power or institution. Small states are more likely to have to employ this tactic but may also pay a higher price of adaptation for the cover they gain. A test-case study of the five Nordic states shows that all publish the equivalent of a comprehensive strategy (though not in a single document) and all echo the strategies of major European institutions. In some cases the instrumental logic of the strategy, and the willingness to adjust it to changing problems and opportunities, is clearer than others. The more indirect and instrumental the strategy becomes, however, the greater the risk that public understanding and 'buy-in' may lag behind the reasoning of the élite.

### **1. Aims of this Paper**

This paper has two aims: first, to re-examine the concept of state 'strategy' from an empirical standpoint, reflecting current international practice and focusing especially on the possible dichotomy of 'deep' and 'declared' strategies (as defined below); and secondly, to apply the resulting analysis – expressed as a critical path for state choices – to the particular predicament of 'small' states. It is far from being the only recent attempt to link these two topics<sup>1</sup> but tries to be original, principally, in its consciously non-theoretical and practitioner-oriented approach.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Anders Wivel, 'The Grand Strategies of Small European States', paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association's 50th Annual Convention, New York, Jan. 2009, available at [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p311749\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p311749_index.html); Jean-Marc Rickli, 'European small states' military policies after the Cold War: from territorial to niche strategies', Cambridge Review of International Affairs Vol 21 Issue 3 2008.

When is a state to be considered 'small'? The expert literature suggests several criteria above and beyond crude population numbers, GDP size, or military assets.<sup>2</sup> Smallness can be measured in relative as well as actual terms: thus North Korea with its 24 million people is 'small' within the North-East Asian region but would be medium-to-large in Europe. It can be explained as a shortage or lack of certain 'normal' attributes of state power, autonomy and international standing. Finally and quite convincingly, it can be argued that a state is 'small' when it feels and acts small – implying that it could become smaller or less small at different points in its history.<sup>3</sup>

The first, generic half of this paper cites examples of small states from all around the world, taking account of all these criteria but generally focussing on the challenges facing those with a population of 5 million or less. The second half applies the emerging findings to a case study of the five Nordic states and their sovereign territories, a group that ranges in size from over 8 million (Sweden) to c.300,000 (Iceland).<sup>4</sup> Though differences of size are influential and keenly felt within this group, all its members would commonly be thought of as small by other Europeans and by their North American and Russian neighbours. The paper ends with a summary of findings and with some tentative do's and don'ts for small-state strategy-making.

## **2. What is 'a' Strategy?**

Annoyingly for purists, the word 'strategy' has in recent years acquired a meaning in the practice of international relations that deviates from its original, military-grounded definition. In the military context or in the discipline commonly defined as 'strategic studies', strategy concerns the application of military forces (and/or other concrete implements of power) to the achievement of a major goal of more than passing significance – typically defined by or on behalf of a nation-state, or its historical equivalent.<sup>5</sup> Strategy provides the starting point or foundation from which more detailed, local, and often more flexible 'tactical' actions can

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<sup>2</sup> See eg Baldur Thorhallsson, 'The Role of Small States in the European Union', Ashgate: London, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion of definitions see e.g.: Clive Archer and Neill Nugent, 'Introduction: Small States and the European Union' in *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* 11 (1): 1-10., 2002, and Baldur Thorhallsson and Anders Wivel, 'Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19(4), 2006, pp 651-668.

<sup>4</sup> For an earlier and much more substantial treatment of the topic see the six articles in a special edition of *Cooperation and Conflict* (Vol. 40 No. 1 of March 2005) on 'Nordic Strategic Cultures', downloadable at <http://cac.sagepub.com/content/vol40/issue1/>; especially Darryl Howlett and John Glenn, 'Epilogue: Nordic Strategic Culture'.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Hew Strachan, 'The Lost Meaning of Strategy' in *Survival*, Vol. 47 (2005) pp 33-54.

proceed. Even when transferred to different contexts such as 'business strategy',<sup>6</sup> the word has generally kept the sense of a specific, tightly-reasoned plan founded in self-defined interests, and providing a basis for rational application of resources over a sustained period.

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the USA, Russia, and institutions like the OSCE, NATO and EU have all adopted public documents called 'strategies' that resemble the traditional variety in being unilaterally adopted by the state or organization in question, in pursuit of its own ends, and in being politically rather than legally binding. They differ, however, first and foremost in their publicly declared quality which perhaps brings them closer to the concept of a 'statement of intent'. They are also wider and looser in the issues they cover, in how they deal with them, in the nature of the directives they contain and in the range of aims they seek to achieve.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure One: Threats/Challenges from Major 'Strategy' Documents 1999-2003**

<u>NATO 1999</u>	<u>Russia 2000</u>	<u>USA 2002<sup>8</sup></u>	<u>EU 2003</u>	<u>OSCE 2003</u>
Tensions+Conflicts	State of economy	[Human Dignity]	Terrorism	Conflicts
Nuclear+hi-tech	Weaknesses in state power+society	Global terrorism	WMD proliferation	Terrorism
Vulnerabilities to: Terrorism	Crime+terrorism, inter-ethnic tensions	Regional conflicts	Regional conflicts	Organized crime
Sabotage	'Aggravation of international relations' e.g.	Threats from WMD	State failure	Discrimination +intolerance
Organized crime	Weakened global order+balance	[Global growth]	Organized crime	Migration
Disruption of supply	Nearby conflicts	[Development]		Economic+ enviro't probs
Uncontrolled Migration	Cyber-threats	[Partnerships]		Pol-mil threats
	Military threats	[Transformation of institutions]		
	Espionage			

*Key to documents cited:*

*NATO 1999 = NATO's Strategic Concept adopted at the Washington Summit, April 1999*

<sup>6</sup> Other common usages in non-governmental as well as governmental contexts are media strategy/information strategy/PR (public relations) strategy, development strategy/fund-raising strategy, exit strategy, etc.

<sup>7</sup> For a direct critique of these 'non-strategic' features see eg François Heisbourg, 'The European Security Strategy is not a strategy', in 'A European Way of War', CER Pamphlet, Centre for European Reform, London May 2004; for further details, Alyson JK Bailes, 'The European Security Strategy: an evolutionary history', SIPRI Policy Paper No 10 of Feb. 2005, text at <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRI10.pdf>; and Roland Dannreuther and John Peterson (eds.), 'Security Strategy and Transatlantic Relations', Routledge, London July 2006.

<sup>8</sup> The US strategy document is mostly structured in terms of positive goals to work for. A revised version of March 2006 has the same headings plus challenges connected with Globalization.

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*Russia 2000 = Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation, January 2000*

*USA 2002 = National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002*

*EU 2003 = 'A Secure Europe in a Better World', European Security Strategy, December 2003<sup>9</sup>*

*OSCE 2003 = 'OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century', December 2003*

All the strategies listed here, and others adopted by smaller powers or on narrower issue ranges, review a variety of challenges arising in the present international system that are relevant to the survival, values and aims of the strategy's 'owners' but also to the fate of the world community in general. In 'post-modern' style, they extend their analysis far beyond the traditional military field, or even sideline the latter, to focus instead on a wide range of issues from different fields of public affairs which they either relate explicitly to an extended definition of *security*, or implicitly place in that context by including them in the 'strategy' at all. They tend also to recognize the significant roles (for good or ill) of non-state actors, more than earlier strategic definitions would; and they stress the centrality of *change* – national, regional, and global – as an apparently enduring characteristic of the post-Cold War environment. Figure One above illustrates this shift and broadening of agendas by listing the main 'threats' or 'challenges' discussed in five key documents.

The public nature of these 21<sup>st</sup> century strategies hints at their multiple aims and functions. Internally, that is within a nation or vis-à-vis the members of an institution adopting a collective strategy, they can be designed to create confidence in leadership and/or unity around a new policy consensus; and to promote coordination of actions serving the strategy's purposes in perhaps widely varying fields and jurisdictions. Towards the outside world they offer transparency, signals of determination, and possibly more specific promises, inspirations or warnings. For neither of these purposes do they need to be very specific on actions to be taken and resources applied, and it is in fact rather rare to find – usually at national level, as in some parts of the Russian document of 2000 and US National Security Strategy of 2002<sup>10</sup> – prescriptions that could be translated more or less directly into executive action. Also, none of them has anything like a budget plan attached.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A review exercise on the EU Strategy in Dec. 2008 further highlighted the topics of energy security, climate change, cyber-security and piracy, and the links between security, development and arms control among others. 'Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: Providing security in a Changing World', Council document S407/08 of 11 Dec. 2008 at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> These do contain some instructions and definitions of competence relating to particular organs of state, including the armed forces.

<sup>11</sup> This is no doubt, among other things, because none of these nations or institutions has an executive that can determine financial allocations completely on its own (without parliamentary and/or inter-governmental process).

The opinion-shaping function of this new breed of strategy document also means that the document itself is an instrument, a signal, and not necessarily a direct and sincere expression of what its drafters think. A state or institution can proclaim a strategy without really having one – using it as a cover-up for lack of unity and resolve, or as a pious vision of how things *ought* to be. It may proclaim one strategy while knowing full well that its real intent is different. It may not proclaim any strategy at all, but still possess one for its own use and guidance. This latter aspect of what the state or institution *'really' thinks, wants and intends* comes closer to the traditional meaning of a strategy, which links the concept to the definition of basic national interests and the creation of principles and plans to serve those interests – including but not necessarily limited to the use of military power. *'Grand strategy'* may be a useful term to capture this concept, as it underlines that abiding issues of national survival are at stake and may demand mobilizing of all relevant national resources across multiple dimensions. Another much used and discussed notion is *'strategic culture'*, hinting as it does at parameters evolved over time that unconsciously as well as consciously guide judgements both on what the nation needs, and on who is in charge of providing it.<sup>12</sup>

For purposes of this paper, which is firmly placed in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context and adopts a broad multi-functional approach to security, the two kind or levels of strategy mentioned in the last paragraph will be distinguished with the following terms:

- **'declared' strategy** will be used for the kind of documents summarized in Figure One, and for other open national/institutional statements of intent, allegiance, etc which have a similar function (range of functions);
- **'deep' strategy** will be used for a nation's true strategic intent which may or may not coincide with what is 'declared'. The term 'deep' is chosen (rather than 'grand', for instance) to underline that a nation's strategy may be covert or to some degree unconscious and instinctive, and may or may not be strongly grounded in popular views, not just elite calculations. This opens the way for many further complications – can different 'strategies' exist within a nation at different levels, in different regions, economic sectors, social classes and ethnic or confessional groups?<sup>13</sup> – and some of the implications of an absent, divided or confused 'deep' strategy will be returned to below. For the moment, however, the presence of an identifiable 'deep' strategy may

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<sup>12</sup> On 'strategic culture' see for instance Ken Booth, 'The Concept of Strategic Culture affirmed' in C G Jacobsen (ed.), *Strategic Power: USA/USSR*, Macmillan: London, 1990; by the same author, 'Strategic Culture, Validity and Validation' in the Oxford Journal of Good Governance Vol. 2 No. 1 of 2005, text at [http://ocgg.org/Fileadmin/Journal/OJGG\\_Vol\\_2\\_No\\_1.pdf](http://ocgg.org/Fileadmin/Journal/OJGG_Vol_2_No_1.pdf); and the resources mentioned in note 3 above.

<sup>13</sup> One interesting discussion of the last point is Lisbeth Aggestam and Christopher Hill, 'Multiculturalism in European foreign policy', *International Affairs* Vol 84 No 1, Jan. 2008 pp 97-114.

be taken to mean a reasonably ordered and persistent set of ideas within the nation about national identity, survival, aims, and possibly values.

Finally, it should be obvious that the existence and even the quality of a 'deep' and/or declared strategy may bear little relation to the results that a state, or an institution, achieves when pursuing its interests and ambitions in practice.<sup>14</sup> In the first place, execution may be marred by internal dissent, misunderstandings, misjudgements, incoherence and lack of resources. In the second place, the results achieved on the international scene will be affected by interplay with other actors and by changes in the general context for which the strategy was designed. These two sets of factors are in feedback since a country needs to correctly assess which of its assets, 'image' features etc are most likely to bring best results in the outside environment, and trial-and-error and environmental shifts can both alter the answers. Rigid adherence to any kind of strategy over a period of time is thus likely, especially in today's fast-moving conditions, to be a handicap rather than a source of strength. More subtly, when a state's or institution's declared strategy differs from its 'deep' one and has an instrumental, ie secondary, significance, the logic of survival may dictate deliberately *not* achieving the stated aims of the declared strategy or at least, not accepting major risks and sacrifices for its sake. This set of considerations would lend itself to very interesting studies of the relationship between strategy, performance and results – for small states, among others – but it must be left outside the scope of the present paper.

### **3. To have or not to have a strategy?**

Do all states need to have a strategy, of either or both kinds? Two different questions may be distinguished: whether a state needs a strategy at all, and whether it needs one *of its own*. On the first point, a strategy might not seem absolutely necessary for a state which lives in benign and stable security circumstances, without too much to fear and with no pressing wants to remedy, especially if its system of governance is efficient and capable of rapid consensus-based action. Reacting to events as they come may be a rational choice in this case.<sup>15</sup> Not adopting a strategy does not necessarily prevent such a state from having security tools like

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<sup>14</sup> Thus Ken Booth, in the second work cited in note 12 above: 'A strategic culture...helps shape but does not determine how an actor interacts with others in the security field'. See also the discussion of theoretical approaches to the distinction between strategic 'cultures' and 'behaviour' in Iver B Neumann and Henrikki Heikka, 'Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence' in *Cooperation and Conflict* (40.1,2005), as note 3 above.

<sup>15</sup> It is tempting to remark that such conditions have hardly ever existed anywhere, but it is easier to find examples of states that are well enough protected not to require a strategy as a response to specific *military* problems. That is true to a great extent of Ireland after NATO's creation, or Luxembourg after the EU's creation, of some small island states in the remote Pacific, etc etc.

an army, intelligence system or whatever, but it will normally imply keeping these to a prudent minimum (with no surplus for intervention in other people's affairs *or* designed primarily for peace missions); tailoring the defence establishment also for social and economic purposes such as support for employment and provincial economies; and generally limiting the 'securitization'<sup>16</sup> of society and political culture.

Of course this theoretical case is rarely seen in practice, because most states have some potential security deficit that they worry about, some potential security task that they need to prepare for, and/or problems in coordinating all the actors (organs of government, political parties, civil and military, private sector actors) whose inputs are needed to secure national goals. When coordination and unity of purpose is an issue, implying that all national actors do not already instinctively share a 'deep' strategy, the case is stronger for making the strategy a 'declared' one and/or using the strategy-drafting *process* to create a formerly absent consensus. Finally, in the other extreme case where a nation has neither a stable and tolerable strategic environment *nor* unity among the relevant internal actors, it may not be able to create a meaningful strategy even if it wanted to. Real examples of this are found among the world's most chaotic states, like Somalia or Sudan: but the scenario may also develop towards a North Korean (or former Cambodian) model where a dictatorial regime seeks both to suppress internal enemies and defy external ones, producing a 'strategy' of an hyper-aggressive and ultimately dysfunctional kind. A basic model derived from the discussion thus far is in Figure Two:

***Figure Two: The Need for and Role of National Strategy under Different Scenarios***

	BENIGN ENVIRONMENT	SECURITY THREATS OR TASKS
NO COORDINATION PROBLEM	Not strictly needed	Need for (at least) 'deep' strategy
COORDINATION PROBLEM	Needs to be 'declared'	Doubly necessary but may be dysfunctional (eg multiple strategies, extreme choices)

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<sup>16</sup> The concept of 'securitization' is especially associated with Ole Wæver of the 'Copenhagen school' (see <http://cast.ku.dk/people/researchers/ow> for a current research profile) and such seminal writings of his as 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in Ronny Lipschutz, ed., *On Security*. New York: Columbia University Press 1995, pp 46-86. Very briefly this approach stresses that issues in public policy and social experience can be defined and treated as 'security' challenges, or not, according to the interests of those who have the opportunity to define them. Its original message was that it is better, including for democracy, not to 'securitize' too much.

Applying the second question, about whether a state needs a strategy *of its own*, brings us a step closer to the complexity of real life. The obvious alternatives to an autonomous, national owned strategy are:

(i) To adopt, voluntarily or under compulsion, the strategy of a larger national power;

*Examples: 'satellite' states such as the Soviet Union's smaller neighbours in the Warsaw Pact, partner states that adopted the USA's post-9/11 agenda<sup>17</sup>*

(ii) To work within a group, either a limited group of neighbours or a larger institutional entity, that owns or is building a collective strategy - sometimes aimed at balancing or containing a large national power or powers;

*Examples: [small-scale]the Visegrad group<sup>18</sup> when working for enlargement, GUAM attempting to balance Russia,<sup>19</sup> [large-scale]the EU and NATO, the African Union and ASEAN<sup>20</sup>, etc*

(iii) To adopt a model of strategy that is shared by other states of a similar kind and/or similar convictions, not necessarily geographically linked.

*Examples: members of the Cold War non-aligned movement,<sup>21</sup> non-European states adopting Communism,<sup>22</sup> small island states campaigning on the dangers of climate change.<sup>23</sup>*

The cited examples underline that these models are rarely seen in an absolutely pure form either. When a number of states declare their adherence to or adoption of the same strategy,

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<sup>17</sup> One way to define the second group referred to is to note the countries joining the US-led 'coalition' for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003: for this list see <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030327-10.html>. Many of these states were also helpful to the US in other aspects of the 'global war on terror' over the period 2001-8.

<sup>18</sup> This group was originally formed by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland after their emergence from Communism and was designed to further their joint entry to the EU and NATO as well as cooperation between them. Despite the split-up of Czechoslovakia and phases of non-enthusiasm by both its successor states, the grouping is still meaningful today.

<sup>19</sup> GUAM is a grouping of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova which briefly also included Uzbekistan, and which seeks the support of Western powers and institutions in order, i.a., to allow the member countries to resolve the conflict issues affecting them on their own terms rather than under Russian pressure.

<sup>20</sup> On security-related roles of such institutions see Alyson JK Bailes and Andrew Cottey, 'Regional security cooperation in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century', in *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, OUP 2006, text at <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006/04>.

<sup>21</sup> The Non-Aligned Movement (<http://www.nam.gov.za/>) was founded in 1955 to bring together states not wishing to align themselves with either the US-led or the USSR-led bloc. Its leaders were as diverse as India, Yugoslavia, Ghana and Egypt.

<sup>22</sup> Notably the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Mongolia, North Vietnam, North Korea – none of which had a political/intellectual tradition comparable to the one that produced Marx and Engels, thus their interpretations and application of Communism became significantly divergent in practice.

<sup>23</sup> Alliance of Small States, <http://www.sidsnet.org/aosis/>.



each state almost certainly has different motives for making this choice; and when adherence is forced, the weaker state may actually become more aware of its own identity and distinctive 'deep' wishes as a result. The role each state plays within the strategy or the sincerity with which it applies it also varies for other reasons of size, capacity, traditions and internal politics. Besides such national variations, *groups* of states within a larger strategy-making entity may also have different emphases: vide the discussion of 'new European' vs 'old European' attitudes in the EU and NATO at the time of the Iraq war, or the region-based differences in strategic outlook between Northern, Southern and Eastern member-states of the EU.<sup>24</sup> Further, in the modern international system states often belong to several institutions each with its own, non-identical strategy (eg EU plus NATO plus OSCE plus a sub-regional group), which gives the individual state some room for manoeuvre in how it emphasizes and prioritizes each set of rules - or each facet of its strategic 'identity'.

The last level of complexity is added by recalling the distinction proposed above between a state's '*deep*' and its '*declared*' strategy. Not every state has to have both, and when it does, they may be completely consonant so that the 'declared' version simply manifests the 'deep' intention in appropriate language. However, there are several scenarios in which the two may diverge in content as well as expression – with the 'deep' level reflecting the true national imperative, and the 'declared' level typically playing an *instrumental* or *tactical* role. For example, to go back over the scenarios in Figure Two:

- A state enjoying benign circumstances and with no pressing external goals may stress its independence, non-alignment and availability as a honest broker, i.e, a 'strategy of no strategy'. But it might also choose to adopt a collective strategy (of the benign sort, eg dedicated service to the UN, EU membership) on a 'why not' basis, to carry out altruistic tasks more effectively by pooling resources and/or to reinsure against its circumstances worsening;
- A state that has a fairly united 'deep' perception of national interest but also faces serious security challenges or burdens may be driven to adhere either to a group strategy, or to the strategy of a single stronger power: not necessarily because the

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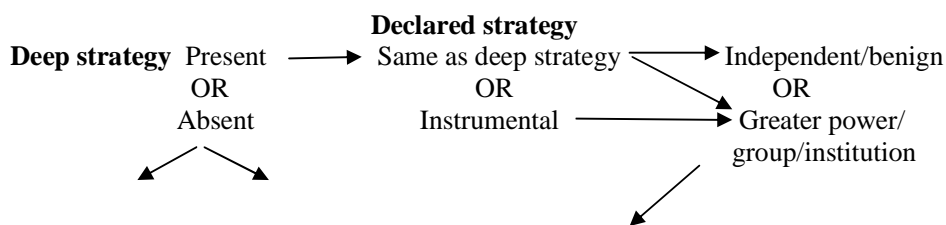
<sup>24</sup> The then US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld characterized the 'new Europeans' (recent EU/NATO members) as being more supportive than 'old' ones (eg France and Germany) in the US action of 2003 in Iraq and the War on Terror generally. In the EU policy making process, concerns about Mediterranean security (migration, crime etc) are typically pushed forward by the Southern tier of members, concerns about terrorism by the UK, France, Spain etc, concerns about the environment and human rights by the Northern European members, and so forth. Peripheral members of the EU/NATO in the North and East are naturally enough the most concerned about handling Russia, and Eastern members (who often import their oil and gas from Russia) about energy security. For more background see Alyson JK Bailes, 'Differentiated Risk and Threat Perceptions and their Impact on European Security Cooperation', *Dis-Politika/Foreign Policy* (journal of the Turkish Foreign Policy Society) Vol XXIX nos 3-4, 2004, pp 35-55, see <http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/periodicals.html>.

content of that strategy is natural or attractive for it, but because it holds out hope of the necessary protection and burden sharing;

- A state that has internal coordination problems may also hope that adopting someone's else, or a group, strategy will create the external discipline needed to pull itself together; some states will make the same move as part of a willed self-transformation, often in preparation for formal membership of a larger group (as EU and NATO in Europe), and/or in order to curb their own perceived tendencies towards, eg, aggressive nationalism as experienced in history;
- Sometimes adhering to a group may even overcome the combined difficulties of unstable security status and internal disunity: this is the logic of post-Yugoslavian states like Bosnia-Herzegovina striving to join the EU and NATO, thus pledging themselves to adopt or even pre-adopt 'civilised' collective strategies as a part of their self-transformation *on the understanding that their problematic neighbours will also do so*. The expansion of ASEAN in South-East Asia to states like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and most recently (and problematically) Burma offers a certain parallel.<sup>25</sup>

Figure Three below summarizes some of the national choices and variants discussed so far in the form of a critical path. It obviously cannot deal with all the subtleties such as who defines and 'owns' strategy at the two levels; whether a declared strategy uses one or more key solutions - eg seeking US *and* EU protection *and* being an independent mediator; or how we would tell the difference between a state that joins NATO because that is where its deep strategy and sense of identity tell it it 'belongs', and one that does so out of conscious reasoning about current security needs. (Some of these issues will recur in the Nordic section below.)

**Figure Three: A critical path for some basic choices on national strategy**



<sup>25</sup> ASEAN is the Association of South-East Asian Nations. On its security role and related history – including its direct involvement in the Cambodian peace process – see <http://www.aseansec.org/92.htm>. The extension of ASEAN's membership and its overt security functions since the end of the Cambodian conflict has coincided – to put it no more strongly – with a clear shift from inter-state conflict to a situation of exclusively intra-state conflicts arising in the South-East Asian region.

(Ideal conditions) (Danger or disunity)  
Not essential, Import from other power or group  
free choice

Indeed, the last distinction mentioned above is itself a dubious one because adopting someone else's declared strategy to serve distinct, deep national purposes may – over time – result in new national experiences and changed perceptions to the point that the deep sense of identity and strategy also changes. A good example is the often quoted remark that it is in other Europeans' interest to accept a 'more German Europe', ie the integration of Germany as a central member of the EU and NATO (making major inputs to both institutions' strategy), in order to achieve a 'more European [less nationalistic, less threatening] Germany'. The clear assumption here is of a transformative feedback between Germany's deep and declared strategies. The 'price', however, is that when and as the EU progresses towards a collective 'deep' strategy, this strategy will have important and perhaps decisive German inputs embedded in it.

To take a more recent case, smaller central European and Mediterranean states joining the EU or NATO must embrace the whole range of these institutions' collective strategies which cover many global regions and issues alien to them before. They may not only find themselves having to contribute materially in settings that once meant little to them (eg, to a peace mission in Afghanistan or mediation with Iran on WMD), but also developing strong opinions on the pros and cons of these new issues which – at least to the elite – can start to be felt as matters of national interest also at the 'deeper' level. In cases where a small state has gone a long way in 'internalizing' an outside entity's strategy that was first adopted for instrumental reasons, it is of course vulnerable to the outside power suddenly changing tack: a quandary currently facing several small states who tied themselves very closely to the US agenda under President George W. Bush, given the sweeping changes his successor is introducing in several fields.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4. Choices for Small States**

##### *The Basic Alternatives*

When a state is 'small' – as defined in the introduction to this paper – it does not have a radically different set of options regarding the two levels of strategy, but it does find the 'box' for its choices shifted in a specific direction. To start with, it cannot have an aggressive

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<sup>26</sup> A topical example is the Polish and Czech authorities' decision to accept US missile defence bases on their territory, in face of considerable popular resistance: which will leave them in an uncomfortable position if, as seems possible as of mid-2009, President Obama decides to freeze or abandon the basing programme under a bilateral deal with Russia.

agenda of going out to impose its strategic will on others, nor can it expect to lead or dominate any group that it engages with. If it wants to have some impact on the world its options are thus limited to:

(i) using national *influence* and *authority* which may be based on specialized 'niche' knowledge, and/or can be grounded in its very powerlessness (giving its proposals a non-threatening, enlightened or selfless quality) – a special case of the independent/benign alternative in Figure Three above;

(ii) seeking protection from or partnership with a major national power; or

(iii) joining a group or groups with collective power and/or influence.

It is not hard to think of situations where elements of all three can be combined: thus a smallish Nordic country can look to the US *and* to NATO for defence cover, using NATO also as some kind of balance and constraint on unalloyed US power, but may still credibly pose as a disinterested international mediator for other regions.<sup>27</sup>

How important is it for these various purposes to have a deep and/or declared strategy? It is natural to suppose that the smaller the state, the more it needs such a conscious and coherent plan. Its limited resources, including of influence, oblige it to prioritize and probably to mobilize several different assets to achieve even limited objectives. The smaller it is, the larger its problems are, and the more limited its potential niches, the more it is likely to have to '*leverage*' its declared strategy – as part of such a multi-tool approach - to achieve its true national ends by indirect or even unpalatable means. As a minimum, a small state has an existential interest in influencing the regional and world environment in a direction that makes it easier for small states (as a minority and untypical group in most regions, the Caribbean and Pacific aside) to survive. There are very few parts of the world so free from security competition and tension that a small state could be sure of achieving this while taking the minimalist option in Figure Two. In fact, in cases where very small states seem to adopt a 'non-strategic' or 'anti-strategic' stand of non-involvement it will often be found that they are actually being manipulated by some other player, albeit often a non-state one (business interests, campaigning groups etc)<sup>28</sup>; or are trying to keep flexibility to be profitably courted by different stronger players at different times – which is a kind of strategy in itself.

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<sup>27</sup> Denmark and Norway are the real-life cases that come to mind.

<sup>28</sup> Examples would include small states that let themselves be used by business interests as offshore tax havens, those whose economies are dominated by a tourist industry requiring major external investment, and those that have let their seats at the International Whaling Commission be used to further the aims of anti-whaling NGOs. The most common example of exploitation by a state partner is where the small state provides basing facilities for troops, ships, listening posts etc.

Thus, even if the primary choice of such a state is to 'go it alone' on a platform of inoffensiveness plus benign influence and niche authority (option (i) above), it will do well to formulate this course as a conscious strategy rather than 'muddling through' on the basis of traditions, other people's expectations and so forth. Among other things it should identify, test and update its stances and 'niche' contributions in the light of timeliness, reactions of the audience, comparative advantages over competitors etc – as well as in terms of their relevance to national interests. If working with outside partners including non-state ones, it should have a realistic understanding of who is exploiting whom and of any risks accompanying the benefits. It should have some notions, in 'deep' if not declared form, on where it would turn if circumstances became less benign through no fault of its own.

More typically, however, small states today are finding themselves impelled towards less self-sufficient strategies<sup>29</sup> that involve declaring allegiance to a large power (often called 'bandwagoning'), or joining an institutional group (possibly designed i.a. for 'balancing' a large member or non-member country), or even both at once.<sup>30</sup> This redoubles the need for conscious strategy-making and very commonly leads to a divergence of deep and declared strategies, where the latter – adopting much or all of the doctrines of the protector nation/institution – becomes *instrumental* and (in non-judgemental terms) increasingly artificial.<sup>31</sup> In this situation too, a small state that wants to profile itself through making niche contributions, including altruistic ones, must think hard about what ideas to put forward, and where and how, for the desired impact on group policy formation. Starting with a size disadvantage within the group and limited manpower and resources, what allies might it find for the purpose and what trade-offs might it need to accept? When is it necessary to take the larger risk of a unilateral veto - as Malta did at the Helsinki CSCE conference in 1976,<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jean-Marc Rickli has shown how this applies even to European states maintaining a formal stance of 'non-alliance'; J-M. Rickli, 'The Military Policies of European Neutral and Non-Allied States after the Cold War', forthcoming from University of Oxford (PhD thesis).

<sup>30</sup> As noted, a small state may use NATO primarily as the instrument to gain strategic protection from the US superpower, but at the same time as a multilateral restraint on and balance for US nationalist/unilateralist tendencies. Among other things this avoids the extreme asymmetry of a purely bilateral dependence; and there are interesting signs of smaller states moving away from bilateral towards multilateral security frameworks in other continents now besides Europe (Africa and its sub-regions, ASEAN as already mentioned, South Korea's support for the China-led Six-Party talks on North Korea, etc).

<sup>31</sup> Like all member states, small states may also play a different kind of dual game by invoking the demands and obligations of the big partner/institution in order to justify policy and practical changes that the national elite judges necessary for its own purposes.

<sup>32</sup> Malta threatened to veto adoption of the Helsinki 'Final Act' of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1976 unless a Mediterranean chapter was included, this being the aspect that Malta saw as most crucial for its own security. For a good discussion of this episode see the PhD thesis of Michael W Mosser, 'Engineering Influence: the Subtile [*sic*] Power of Small States in the

Liechtenstein did on the expansion of the EEA agreement of May 1992<sup>33</sup> and Cyprus has lately done in the EU on matters concerning Turkey<sup>34</sup> – and what is the long-term net cost of such tactics? Can a small member state still go outside the group policy framework to offer some more novel/idealistic ideas to the world as a whole, precisely because no-one can mistake it for the group's leader or spokesman?

Finally, any really small states that might go down the North Korean road of trying simultaneously to defy the world and sustain an artificial domestic regime will need very clear and determined strategies, ruthlessly exploiting such assets as they have and bargaining without scruple vis-à-vis both enemies and partners. They are potentially also very dangerous actors, being tempted to use the strongest means they can (such as WMD or complicity in terrorism)<sup>35</sup> to correct the obvious power asymmetries.

#### *Unity and Identity*

It may be less obvious that problems of internal cohesion or lack of a natural 'deep' strategy can also be an influencing factor for small states. Outside observers tend to expect the élite of such countries to act as a team with minimal communication difficulties, and some experiences – such as the way that Ireland or Luxembourg handles an EU Presidency – seem to bear this out. However, there are also factors pulling the other way. Politics in a small state can be more personal, less professional than elsewhere: differences can be pushed to a sharp pitch precisely because the stakes do not seem so high and/or the outside world does not care enough to exert a disciplining pressure. Many small states are young and have recently emerged from colonial control or from larger, more or less oppressive state frameworks (like the Soviet Union or Former Yugoslavia). While they may have had a clear and fairly united strategy of gaining independence and defining themselves in contradistinction to the former 'owners', it does not follow that they will automatically have clear and united deep strategies about what to do with independence once achieved. Finally, small states by definition have limited expert and professional resources, which can hamper them in mustering the

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CSCE/OSCE', published by the Austrian armed forces at [http://www.bmlv.at/pdf\\_pool/publikationen/05\\_small\\_states\\_07.pdf](http://www.bmlv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/05_small_states_07.pdf), pp 59-60.

<sup>33</sup> Liechtenstein had in 2003 indicated it would refuse to sign the extended EEA agreement with the new EU members because of a disagreement with the Czech Republic about the confiscated lands of the Liechtenstein ruling family in the Czech Republic. See 'Liechtenstein will sign EEA agreement' *News of Radio Prague* 5 November 2003, at <http://www.radio.cz/en/news/47089#3>

<sup>34</sup> The Republic of Cyprus became an EU member in 2004 without having full territorial control of the divided island, and has had a policy of objecting to EU decisions both on relations with the Northern part of Cyprus and on some other EU-Turkey questions (including Turkish accession) so long as the issue of reunification has not been solved.

<sup>35</sup> The People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) declared in Feb. 2005 that it had manufactured a nuclear weapon and would produce more. It has only recently been removed from the USA's official list of states directly supporting and using terrorists.

information and skill needed to construct a strategy (especially of the declared sort) for themselves, let alone finding tools to achieve its goals on their own.

All this may help to explain why so many small European ‘new democracies’ in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century set their course almost instantly for EU and NATO membership. In combination, the two institutions not only provided a comprehensive (military and non-military) strategic prescription, but supported applicants in adopting it - and tested and verified their achievement - as part of the accession process. For each nation, joining these institutions’ collective strategies was at the same time a ploy for strategic protection and a statement about values and identity, shutting the door both upon the Communist period and nationalistic excesses of the past. All these points made accession also (at least in the early days, before the full ‘price-tag’ was clear) a relatively easy platform on which to achieve domestic cross-party and popular consensus. The internal transformative effect of adopting the new strategies was correspondingly large, helping to explain why so many people now see the same process of double accession as the only hope of escaping the vicious historical circle of violence among South-east European states.

#### *Wider security challenges*

Much of the analysis so far could be read in terms of traditional power and counter-power logic. Small states are, however, also exposed *par excellence* to all the factors of non-military, non-traditional threat and risks that figure so strongly in the leading 21<sup>st</sup> century strategies (Figure One above). Indeed, in their cases such factors are more likely to take on a life-and-death significance than for nations with more extensive territories and more complex economies. A rising sea level caused by global warming could mean the end, literally, of several small island states. Attention was drawn already in the 1980s (though incidents in the Seychelles and Maldives) to the risk of small states being taken over by military, terrorist, or criminal coups involving just a handful of people. Montenegro is often accused today of having become a ‘Mafiocracy’ by less violent means and some Caribbean leaders have allegedly been in the pocket of drug traders.<sup>36</sup> Both the remoter small states, and those that are surrounded by large neighbours and integrated in the latter’s energy, transport and communications systems, could be hit disproportionately hard by infrastructure failures and the cutting of lines of supply, including imported foods. Volcanic eruptions have also forced major evacuations, *vide* most recently Montserrat. Estonia has become a leading expert nation

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<sup>36</sup> In a further example, the support of dictator Manuel Noriega for drug smuggling was one of the justifications given by the USA for invading Panama and deposing him in 1989.

on cybersecurity, the hard way.<sup>37</sup> A global pandemic like avian influenza could hit small states especially hard because of the greater likelihood that all experts in some given vital function would be out of action at once.

Last but not least, small nations face a Catch-22 situation on financial and economic security. If they take a conservative approach of exploiting their most obvious resources (like phosphates in Nauru or fish for Iceland), they will end up with narrow economic profiles that are very vulnerable to changes in world prices and fashions, and/or to the exhaustion of assets. The corollary is an over-specialized society where even a small economic or environmental change can hit a large proportion of the people with obvious consequences for internal stability. However, a small state that takes the opposite course of embracing globalization and complexity, often by developing itself as an offshore financial centre or a major capital investor (like Iceland more recently), will carry all the risks of an economic personality that is 'too big' for its natural political base and socio-economic resilience and is highly exposed to external changes beyond its control. Much the same is true of dependence on tourism as a major income factor, since the flow of visitors depends not just on the 'image' of the small-state destination (itself prone to sudden change) but on much wider trends in consumer confidence and disposable income, transport costs, concerns about travel security and so on.

These are hardly new perceptions but they now need to be integrated into the question of strategy requirements. What they imply is that even if a small state appears to have minimal need for a strategy in *conventional security* terms – enjoying a situation of little military and political threat and/or easy protection from a large national/ institutional power – it very much needs one to cover the *other dimensions of risk* affecting its territorial, economic, social and even 'moral' survival. Moreover, its task in creating such a multi-dimensional strategy will be harder than for many modern states in that

- (i) its 'risk profile' in non-military dimensions is likely to be an unusual, skewed one making many text-book prescriptions inapplicable,
- (ii) its degree of vulnerability to the main risks is often extreme,
- (iii) the dynamics of these risks are typically beyond its control or perhaps even its comprehension, and

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<sup>37</sup> NATO and several individual Allies helped Estonia to establish a 'centre of excellence' for cybersecurity in 2008, following cyberattacks on it apparently originating from Russian territory in the previous year. See 'NATO backs cybersecurity defence centre in Estonia', <http://www.scmagazineuk.com/NATO-backs-cybersecurity-defence-centre-in-Estonia/article/110198/>.



- (iv) its resources for coping are by definition limited, even if not so dramatically as in the military sphere.

Further, turning back to the internal rationale for strategy-making: experience suggests that it is by no means as easy to produce a natural, 'deep' strategy or a negotiated consensus among power-holders in a small state on *non-military* issues as it is on *traditional security* questions like whether to side with or stand out against a big power. As a small state is not itself a wielder or broker of power, it should be possible to approach the latter kind of question with a certain detachment. But when it comes to economic and financial, social, environmental and perhaps cultural choices, there can be genuinely and deeply divergent interests and values held even within the smallest society.

Last and not least, when it comes to possible strategic goals and solutions, the option of making one's 'declared' strategy identical with that of a large power or institution in order to get the latter's protection in *non-military* dimensions carries a heavier price tag than most traditional security alignments do. Being a military satellite or supporter affects one particular dimension of public affairs but need have little effect otherwise on national life – one need only consider the very different regimes and kinds of behaviour seen among the range of small states that sided either with the USA or the USSR during the Cold War,<sup>38</sup> or the small states that give strategic recognition to Taiwan today.<sup>39</sup> But remedies for economic, financial, social, environmental and other functional risks demand action *within* a society, and the international actors that at present offer the most powerful shared strategies in such dimensions – above all the EU – demand a very high degree of intrusive harmonization and legally enforceable compliance.

Thus, while a small state may only have to sell its soldiers or bases, and possibly compromise on some of its ethical preferences, to achieve a strategic aim of military/hard power protection, it may only be able to secure cover in the other fields by surrendering much larger parts of its sovereign discretion, its initiative, perhaps its national distinctness and identity. While just about every state today, not excluding the largest, has to accept some limits on its

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<sup>38</sup> The smaller states allied with the US and/or offering it military facilities included El Salvador, Bermuda, Taiwan, Bahrain and Iceland. Soviet allies in the same sense ranged from Algeria, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique to Cuba, North Vietnam and North Korea. Somalia was at one stage a US proxy in the conflict with Soviet-backed Ethiopia.

<sup>39</sup> Nations currently recognizing the Republic of China (Taiwan) are: Belize, Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nicaragua, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, São Tomé and Príncipe, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Tuvalu. The only obvious linking factor is that many are small and rather poor states benefiting from Taiwanese aid.

singularity for the sake of survival, the small state may find the trade-off even more painful in two ways. First, the small state can be much less confident that the amount of power it gains to sway decisions within the larger group or partnership will balance what it has given up. Secondly, the likelihood of shared strategies ‘feeding back’ to transform the way the state defines itself and its interests in the first place – as discussed above in the case of Germany and smaller ‘new Europeans’ – must be far higher than in the case of a large, ancient, diverse and historically influential nation-state. One day the nation may not even remember what were the national goals that led it to merge into the greater identity in the first place.

### **5. The Nordic Nations as a Test Case**

The five nations engaging in Nordic Cooperation<sup>40</sup> – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – together with their semi-autonomous territories of Åland, Svalbard, the Faeroe Islands and Greenland can all be considered as ‘small’ states in a global or even European comparison. Sweden, the largest, has a population not exceeding 9 million. More importantly for the present argument, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century when an age-old Swedish-Danish rivalry for leadership in the Baltic ended, Nordic international behaviour has shown many characteristic features of the most basic and benign small-state model identified above. These states are strongly associated today with limited and restrained military policies, lack of aggressive or hegemonic intentions, non-interference and an ‘honest broker’ stance on other states’ affairs, and policies that seek to build a peaceful environment as much by working for external (local, global) peace and development as by strengthening the nation’s own defences. Indeed, Iceland has no armed forces of its own, while the semi-autonomous territories mentioned are *de facto* (and in some cases formally) de-militarized, aside from the US air and radar base at Thule in North Greenland and one NATO radar post in the Faeroes. Sweden and Finland are well known as non-Allied states (this being the definition they currently prefer to ‘neutrality’) and in Sweden’s case the no-war tradition goes back now for two centuries. All Nordic states have made substantial and altruistic contributions to international ‘public goods’ such as development aid, humanitarian aid, private charity, mediation, and peace operations worldwide. Finally, they are all committed to an open and democratic approach to policy making, with substantial parliamentary powers, including in the external policy field – which ought to make the development of their strategies, both in formulation and in action, relatively easy to trace.

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<sup>40</sup> This term is used here in its specialized sense referring to membership of the Nordic Council and linked institutions, see <http://www.norden.org>.

At the same time, like many small states around the globe, the Nordics must survive in a geo-strategic environment that is anything but simple and safe. Since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century the main strategic reality in their neighbourhood has been the asymmetrical strength and often hostile intent of Russia, including in its Soviet incarnation. At times, especially in World War Two, German expansionism has also become a direct threat. After that war when Soviet power absorbed the Baltic states and much of Eastern Europe up to the inner-German border, the US and NATO set up a strategic counterweight backed by nuclear deterrence that in practice assured a stable environment for all the Nordics, including neutral Sweden and Finland, throughout the Cold War. However, the relations even of the three Nordic NATO members with their Western protectors were never simple, owing among other things to the region's strong anti-nuclear sentiments;<sup>41</sup> and since the great changes of 1989 and 2001 the five states have become increasingly varied and divided in their reactions to US policies such as the 'War on terrorism' and invasion of Iraq.<sup>42</sup> On top of this, the region faces a range of non-military hazards, from natural disasters, climate change and air/sea pollution through to international crime, smuggling and trafficking, that – while somewhat narrower than the typical European spectrum<sup>43</sup> – creates real challenges for their limited resources and (with the newer 'globalized' threats) limited experience. Three of the states in their modern form are relatively young (created during the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and each of the five has its own internal divisions, party- or province- or sector-based, over external and/or domestic security priorities. The environment for security policy in general is made no easier by the limited tolerance of most Nordic citizens (military service being somewhat of an exception) for 'impositions' on their resources and liberty in security's name.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Denmark formally disassociated itself from some NATO nuclear-related policies with 'footnotes' in the 1980s: see Klaus Carsten Pedersen, 'Denmark and the European Security and Defence Policy' in Alyson JK Bailes, Gunilla Herolf and Bengt Sundelius, *The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Denmark up to the present has strongly and concretely supported the US, also with forces in Iraq; Iceland sent a symbolic contribution to Iraq but withdrew it in 2008; Norway gave more guarded political support; while former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson called the invasion 'illegal' and Finland was also opposed. All five Nordics have however (up to now) been willing to support the UN-mandated, NATO-coordinated Western action in Afghanistan.

<sup>43</sup> Of the Nordic states, only Denmark has had to grapple with significant terrorist threats and none has faced significant internal conflict or group violence since Finland's civil war in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Migration and minority problems are also at a relatively low level, with the highest concern about non-European immigration again to be found in Denmark.

<sup>44</sup> As an illustration, according to the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (<http://milexdata.sipri.org/>), no Nordic country in the last decade has devoted more than 2.1% of its GDP to military expenditure and the current range is from 1.5 to 1.2% (see Figure Four in the text). More generally, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century strategies of all Nordic states have been analysed as reflecting a tendency to 'desecuritization', whereby as few phenomena as possible (even those involving Russia) are treated overtly as 'threats' or addressed primarily by military means. ('Desecuritization' is the opposite of 'securitization' on which see note 15 above.) During the recent development of European and Atlantic policies against transnational threats like terrorism, international crime, and cyber-offences, Nordic public debates have

By this showing the Nordic states ought to provide a good set of examples for testing some issues that emerge from the above analysis and especially from section 4:

- Do declared strategies exist at national level?
- How wide a range of security challenges and solutions do they cover?
- Do these states follow the options of aligning with/contributing to a 'larger' external strategy (regional, institutional, and/or linked with a great power) to help supply their own deficiencies and master their challenges?
- How do the declared strategies (national or multiple) correspond to what are known or assumed to be the 'deep' strategies or agendas of each state?
- How far can they be seen actually to solve or successfully manage the underlying problems of (a) external challenge and (b) internal disunity?

Given the *prima facie* similarities among these states, it will also be worth briefly reflecting on whether and why they diverge in their use, formulation, and implementation of strategies – an issue which should in turn shed light on the possibilities for variation within the whole 'small state' class.

**Figure Four: Size Comparison of the Five Nordic States**

	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Iceland</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Area in sq.km</b>	43,000	338,000	103,000	324,000	450,000
<b>Population (est.2009)</b>	5.5m.	5.2m.	0.3m.	4.7m.	9m.
<b>GDP in US\$ bn. (2008 estimate, Purchasing Power Parity)</b>	205	195.2	12.15	256	348.6
<b>Military expend- iture 2008 (US\$ m., constant prices)</b>	3,541	2,782	Nil	4,821	5,205
<b>- and as % of GDP</b>	1.3	1.2	Nil	1.5	1.4

Sources: CIA Factbook 2009 at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/sw.html>;  
 Facts in International Relations and Security Trends (FIRST) database at <http://first.sipri.org>

*Is there a declared national 'strategy'?*

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shown a particularly high level of popular concern over associated risks of eroding civil liberties and changing the longstanding features of national legal systems which protect them.

The practice of producing a *single, comprehensive* 'strategy' document is in fact not common in the Nordic region, where the word is more commonly used for statements on specific aspects of foreign, defence and security policy. Thus, Norway has published a 'strategy' for the High North (in February 2007), defining the issue as the single highest priority for national security.<sup>45</sup> One of the series of reports ('utredningen') from the Swedish Defence Commission in 2006 called itself a 'Strategy for Sweden's security', but the great bulk of its proposals were about internal administrative coordination to reflect a wider and more multi-functional approach to the concept.<sup>46</sup> Other Swedish documents using the word include the Government's 'National strategy for participation in peace-support and security-building operations',<sup>47</sup> and a 'Strategy to combat terrorism',<sup>48</sup> both from 2007. Perhaps the widest coverage of different dimensions of security in a recent official document with 'strategy' in the title is provided by Finland's 'Strategy for Securing the Functions vital to Society', published in November 2006,<sup>49</sup> but even this was conceived as a supplement to traditional (external) defence and thus did not discuss the primary role, size, etc of the armed forces. That task was fulfilled by a Ministry of Defence document of July the same year called 'Securely into the Future',<sup>50</sup> which described itself as the Ministry's own 'strategy' looking forward to 2025.

This fragmented picture with its dearth of truly comprehensive 'strategies' does not mean that the Nordics have failed to articulate their overall defence and security policies, or to make them available for parliamentary and public debate. Rather, the process is carried on through a combination of longer-term, underlying, defence and security *concepts*, and of periodic *policy reviews* whose results are conveyed in public documents called '*reports*' and –in Denmark's case – in a four-yearly '*defence agreement*' adopted by the Parliament.<sup>51</sup> These larger reports or agreements would be expected to subsume any preparatory or sectoral 'strategies', as seen e.g. in Finland's 2009 Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy

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<sup>45</sup> See <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Documents/Reports-programmes-of-action-and-plans/Action-plans-and-programmes/2006/strategy-for-the-high-north.html?id=448697>

<sup>46</sup> As explained below, the Defence Commission is also a deliberative rather than an official policy-making body; its purpose in this report was partly to highlight the new wider range of threats to Swedish society, partly to advocate new intra-governmental coordination links. The report is available in Swedish at <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/306/a/56226>.

<sup>47</sup> See <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10766/a/108095>

<sup>48</sup> Summary and text at <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/7960/a/97770>

<sup>49</sup> Summary and text at <http://www.defmin.fi/index.phtml?l=en&s=335>.

<sup>50</sup> Summary and text at <http://www.defmin.fi/index.phtml?l=en&s=318>.

<sup>51</sup> For an English summary of the agreement for 2005-2009, see <http://www.forsvaret.dk/FKO/eng/Defence%20Agreement/Pages/default.aspx>.

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which re-capitulated the earlier 'Vital Functions' strategy in some dozen of its 125 pages.<sup>52</sup> They have the important practical function of proposing – and in Denmark's case, giving binding form to – the multi-year guidelines for defence spending, together with any necessary structural change in defence and security services.

In all four of the Nordic nations possessing armed forces, the underlying *concept* during the Cold War was 'total defence' which implies the mobilization of all national resources under military command in an existential emergency.<sup>53</sup> This still provides the notional framework above all for these states' military planning, though Sweden and Norway have tempered it with the introduction of a broader 'societal security'<sup>54</sup> concept where civilian, including non-state, roles are becoming more central. Finland moved in its 2009 policy report (mentioned above) towards a concept of 'comprehensive security' that is quite close in content to the Swedish-Norwegian model, while still retaining a greater emphasis overall on military roles; while Denmark has an over-arching 'preparedness' concept where support for civil authorities in non-war emergencies has become one of the forces' two main tasks.<sup>55</sup> To produce the periodic *policy reports* that not only reflect doctrinal evolution but offer guidance for future resource allocations, Denmark, Sweden and Finland all use the device of a Defence Commission, where state servants (civilian and military) work together with parliamentarians and/or independent experts. The precise policy mandate and ground to be covered may vary from one iteration of this process to another, especially in Sweden,<sup>56</sup> but the results are invariably published and open to debate in parliament. In between such major exercises,

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<sup>52</sup> This report was published Jan. 2009 in Finnish and Feb. 2009 in English: latter version available at <http://www.defmin.fi/?l=en&s=443>.

<sup>53</sup> A definition from the Danish MOD website (at <http://www.fmn.dk/eng/Total%20Defence/Pages/The%20Ministry.aspx>): 'The Danish concept of Total Defence stems from the time of the Cold War where a credible defence was not seen as an isolated military matter. Total Defence was focused towards the coordinated employment of all resources in order to prevent war, defend the country, and protect the civilian population. After the end of the Cold War, the focus in connection with civilian preparedness planning has changed character.

The civilian preparedness planning no longer distinguishes between war and peace, but must cover all accidents and catastrophes, including acts of war.'

<sup>54</sup> 'Samhällssäkerhet' in Swedish and 'Samfunnssikkerhet' in Norwegian. This concept focuses on the preservation of society, its structures, liberties and values rather than merely on the state's power and territory. Policies to safeguard societal security typically focus on a wide range of threats and risks (the 'all hazards' approach), and seek to involve social groups and individuals in their own protection and preventive work. There is a large research literature on the topic but a useful introduction in English is Mark Rhinard and Arjen Boin, 'Building Societal Security in Europe: the EU's role in managing emergencies', European Policy Centre, Brussels 2007, text at <http://www.epc.eu/en/pb.asp?TYP=TEWN&LV=187&see=y&t=7&PG=TEWN/EN/detailpub&l=12&AI=846>

<sup>55</sup> The other being to contribute to peace missions.

<sup>56</sup> The Swedish Commission is not in permanent session but is periodically reappointed to produce one or more reports on specific questions.

public reporting continues usually through annual policy statements by the defence and/or foreign ministers (as well as the ad hoc, single-issue 'strategies' mentioned above).

Iceland, as so often, diverges from these common Nordic practices: not just because it has no military forces, but because of the historical conditions that allowed the newly created nation effectively to outsource its strategy-making to the US and NATO after World War Two. Iceland entrusted its military defence to stationed US forces with the Defence Agreement of 1951 and these forces also provided many civil security functions, such as search and rescue, right up to the moment of their unilateral withdrawal in 2006. Both NATO membership and the US presence were, however, opposed all along by a sizeable segment of Icelandic opinion, and this fundamental disagreement was put on ice rather than resolved in the post-war decades. Thus when the US withdrawal of 2006 presented both the opening and the need to re-build a national security policy *ab initio*, the process was complicated not just by lack of security information and experience but also by political disunity. Generally speaking, while the option of creating an army is still out of bounds, politicians of the right and centre have tended to look for ways of re-providing basic military cover (including air and sea deployments by friendly nations under a NATO aegis); while the left and extreme left ('Left Greens') would like to shift the spectrum – and public spending - wholesale towards 'softer' security concepts such as the protection of the Icelandic economy, natural resources, society and the environment.<sup>57</sup>

As one attempt to bridge this gap and seek common ground for the eventual building of a new national strategy, the right-left coalition under PM Geir Haarde in 2008 commissioned a 'risk assessment' exercise for Iceland from an independent panel of experts and political/social representatives. As it turned out, however, the report (belatedly) issued by this group in March 2009 mirrored both the split in opinions over military issues, and the new shock of the global economic crash in 2008-9 - which left Iceland virtually bankrupt not just in cash, but in reputation and foreign friendships.<sup>58</sup> Most recently the Icelandic internal debate has shifted to the issue of applying for EU membership, which is seen by at least some of its advocates as an all-round strategic shelter, but by opponents as violating a basic strategic principle of national autonomy. The implications of this continuing central void of strategic consensus, at

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<sup>57</sup> For more on the Icelandic background and opinions see Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, 'An Undefined Security Strategy: The case of Iceland and its developing security identity', paper Presented at the ECPR General Conference, Potsdam, September 10-12, 2009. and Alyson JK Bailes and Þróstur F Gylfason, 'Societal Security and Iceland', in *Stjórnmal og Stjórnsýsla* (web journal of the Institute of Public Administration, Reykjavik), Summer 2008 edition, at [http://www.stjornmalogstjornsysla.is/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=368](http://www.stjornmalogstjornsysla.is/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=368).

<sup>58</sup> The report which includes an English summary is available at <http://www.mfa.is/speeches-and-articles/nr/4823>.

a time when national decisions of existential importance are urgently needed, will be reverted to below.

Why have Nordic states not done as so many others in Europe and issued one or more public documents called ‘strategies’ with truly comprehensive coverage? The most likely explanations (not necessarily in order of importance) are:

- The words ‘strategy’ and ‘strategic’ in their languages still carry a certain military connotation: so at a time when all Nordic elites are trying to widen and diversify their security concepts beyond the old base of ‘total defence’, they may prefer a more neutral or ‘civilian’ denominator (policy, concept, principles etc) for national aims at the highest level;
- Three Nordic nations belong to the EU and are thus party to the EU’s Security Strategy first published in 2003; Sweden’s Foreign Minister Carl Bildt indeed sought quite a prominent role in the 2008 process of reviewing it.<sup>59</sup> Three Nordics are party to NATO’s Strategic Concept’ of 1999 (now scheduled for revision), while all five states are party to the OSCE’s 2003 ‘Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century’ (incidentally drafted under a Danish Chairmanship-in-Office).<sup>60</sup> Nordic elites may well feel that they have plenty of ‘strategic’ guidance and guidelines to comply with from these different – and not always easily compatible! – sources, without trying to build some ambitious conceptual alternative of their own;
- Conversely, because no Nordic state is currently trying actively to join the major institution (NATO or EU) that it does not yet belong to – with Iceland’s possible exception as noted – these states lack the incentive shared by many nations further South and East in Europe, who have prepared or are preparing model ‘strategies’ to advertise their adherence to specific institutional or wider Western values. Regime change, also a common reason for preparing a new strategy, is not a Nordic phenomenon;
- Resembling many others in the ‘old West’, Nordic elites (other than the Icelandic) have generally sought a maximum cross-party consensus on defence, which they like to present as a matter of national values and survival rather than of competing ideological or philosophical visions. So long as preserving this impression is seen as important, writing a complete strategy *ab initio* may be seen as redundant on the one

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<sup>59</sup> Sweden hosted, in September 2008, one of three major public seminars coordinated by the EU Institute of Security Studies to debate the issues involved.

<sup>60</sup> Full details of the documents mentioned here are in Figure One above.



hand (because everyone knows the answers), and too risky – in case cherished concepts and the supposed consensus are probed and found wanting in the process – on the other.<sup>61</sup>

- Finally, there could be differences of opinion within some of the states as to who has the right and responsibility to issue a ‘strategy’ binding upon all, military and civilian, departments of government. Only in Finland has the Prime Minister’s office made a clear bid to assume such coordinating authority (partly as a function of its gradual takeover of former Presidential powers),<sup>62</sup> and even here the key security policy texts are drafted and initially published by the Defence Ministry. The Swedish system has moved administratively in the same direction with the creation of a large emergency coordination office within the Prime Minister’s department in 2008, but it is not (yet) clear whether this also implies a lead role for that office in moulding overall strategic doctrine. In Norway, Denmark and Iceland, the reduction of direct military threat since 1990 and the broadening of national security agendas has involved some degree of shift of authority away from the Defence (and/or Foreign) Ministry and towards the Ministry of Justice, as a focal point for internal and non-military security; but these processes have not always been harmonious and have nowhere reached a clear final balance.<sup>63</sup>

If this analysis has merit, it means that all five Nordic states have declined to follow the more obvious tactics outlined earlier in this paper for making ‘instrumental’ use of a single *declared strategy* to gain external and/or internal advantages. It could be that the various national elites are seeking similar benefits by means of declared policies and actions that they choose not to call strategies; or that they have kept the freedom to send different strategic ‘messages’ to different audiences (and keep certain points deliberately ambiguous?) to serve a single ‘*deep*’ concept of national needs; or that they are in substance and inadvertently pursuing several different strategies at once. These hypotheses will be applied in more detail to individual countries in a later section.

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<sup>61</sup> The issue of consensus, divided opinions and movements of opinion is more fully explored later in this section.

<sup>62</sup> The Finnish President is the nation’s supreme commander and traditionally seen as responsible for national unity and survival. In recent years the authority of the post has been diminished by the Prime Minister’s central role in EU policy and perhaps also by the ‘cohabitation’ of a left-leaning President with more pro-defence, centre-right governments.

<sup>63</sup> It is arguable that the only logical solution for these countries too is to move the level of strategic decision and emergency coordination up to the PM’s office. A recent Icelandic civil emergency law actually created a ministerial coordination committee that would have that effect – but it has never yet been activated. Denmark and Norway could also be seen as in a transitional stage with a multi-purpose emergency management agency in Denmark’s case coming currently under MOD control and in Norway, under the Ministry of Justice.

*What do Nordic (non-)strategies cover?*

Figure Five on the next page compares the issues highlighted in some recent Nordic official (or officially commissioned) policy statements that offer a reasonably full and varied account of national 'strategic' concerns and aims. Compiling such a set has been difficult precisely because of the problems in finding any single comprehensive document (see above), thus for most nations more than one source has had to be cited to arrive at a representative outcome. Readers should also be warned not to make too much – in comparative or absolute terms – of the apparent orders of priority reflected by each issue-set, as the presentational conventions of the different types of document concerned will have strongly influenced this. (Details of the documents used for each country are in the footnotes.)

With all due caveats and cautions, some intriguing common features can be found in these five Nordic strategic agendas. First, they are conceptually all up to date (even in Iceland's case!) in terms of the wide and comprehensive definition of security which they apply. Whether the foreign or defence ministry is the formulator of a given list, every statement contains a number of subjects for which neither of these ministries holds direct competence or has lead responsibility, even in dealing with outside partners. The approach is thus implicitly both a 'whole-spectrum' and a 'whole-government' one. Second, direct military threats to the homeland play no clear or prominent role even in the Defence Ministry-authored examples, and the Danish and Swedish documents include explicit statements that their respective nations do not face a direct military threat in the foreseeable future. (This is also the conclusion of the independent Icelandic Risk Assessment exercise of 2008-9.)<sup>64</sup> As might be expected, territorial concerns are closer to the surface in Norwegian and Finnish texts - both

***Figure Five: Challenges listed in typical Nordic national statements on defence, security and international policy***

**Denmark<sup>65</sup>**

**Finland<sup>66</sup>**

**Iceland<sup>67</sup>**

**Norway<sup>68</sup>**

**Sweden<sup>69</sup>**

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<sup>64</sup> Source ii) in note 66 above.

<sup>65</sup> Sources: i) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Annual Report 2008, at <http://www.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/301B5F0C-C11F-4683-B53E-C68623B01880/0/AnnualReport2008.pdf>; ii) Danish Defence Commission Report of 2008, 'Danish Defence, Global Engagement', summary in English (and other versions) at <http://www.fmn.dk/ENG/DEFENCE%20COMMISSION/Pages/Defence%20commission.aspx>.

<sup>66</sup> Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009, Government of Finland, English version published Feb. 2009 as report 13/2009 of the Prime Minister's office, text at <http://www.vnk.fi/julkaisukansio/2009/j11-turvallisuus-j12-sakerhets-j13-finnish/pdf/en.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Sources: i) Report of the Icelandic Foreign Minister to the 136<sup>th</sup> Session of the Alþingi, March 2009, text (in Icelandic) at [www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Raedur/Skyrsla\\_til\\_althingis\\_2009.pdf](http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Raedur/Skyrsla_til_althingis_2009.pdf); ii) English-language summary in 'A Risk Assessment for Iceland: Global, Societal and Military Factors'

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i) Globalization + power shifts Terrorism, other non-state actors, WMD Conflicts+weak states Arctic/climate change Marine safety Disasters+ accidents Cybersecurity	Globalization New technology Crises/conflicts Military force WMD+arms control Terrorism Human rights, rule of law Disease Climate change Energy shortage Demography Security of supply	i) Financial crisis Agric.+fish Maritime policy High North Mililit.coopn. Development Climate change Energy Disease Nordic coopn. Human rights Conflicts Refugees	i) Northern regions Crisis/conflict management Societal security ii) Financial crisis Globalization Trade obstacles Conflicts Human rights, rule of law Development Weak states Shipping safety High North Relations with Russia	i) Terrorism WMD Drugs Crime Environment Energy Comms.+IT High North, Baltic, relns. with Russia ii) Sustainable globalization Climate policy Human rights, democracy EU coopn. Baltic sec'ty Crisis management
ii) Conflicts Setbacks in EU integration Terror attacks Afghanistan Development Climate, energy Financial crisis	Baltic regional issues, Arctic Crime+smuggling Infrastructure, transport etc	ii) Fin'l crisis Military sec'ty High North Pandemics Natural dis- asters, climate Terrorism,WMD Crime/trafficking Cybersecurity Migration Transport Food sec'ty Energy, Infrastructure		

countries having direct borders with Russia. Nevertheless, the balance in all five cases is very strongly tilted towards non-military concerns for the nation, society, and the individual; towards the use of national armed forces (where applicable) for external missions of crisis management, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction; and towards 'civil-military cooperation' as a general good.

Other features more directly relevant to the present enquiry are (a) the stress placed in all cases on the impact of *globalization* on small, open states and economies such as the Nordics represent; (b) the free mixing of internal, national regional and global concerns in the way the

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(original title: 'Ahættumat fyrir Ísland: Hnatrænarir, samfélagslegir og hernaðarlegir Þættir', Ministry of Foreign Affairs March 2009, see also note 58 above.

<sup>68</sup> Sources: i) Norwegian Defence 2008, Ministry of Defence brochure, text in English at [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Fakta2008\\_eng.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Fakta2008_eng.pdf); ii) Norwegian Foreign Minister's address to the Storting, 10 Feb. 2009, text in English at [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about\\_mfa/minister-of-foreign-affairs-jonas-gahr-s/Speeches-and-articles/2009/address\\_storting0902.html?id=545344](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about_mfa/minister-of-foreign-affairs-jonas-gahr-s/Speeches-and-articles/2009/address_storting0902.html?id=545344).

<sup>69</sup> Sources: i) 'Svensk säkerhetspolitik' (Swedish security policy), section of Prime Minister's website, <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/19911/12436> (accessed Aug. 2009); ii) Foreign Minister's Foreign Policy statement to the Riksdag, 17 Feb.2009, in English at <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/12/07/58/ac82be40.pdf>.

agendas are constructed; and (c) the similar lack of clear segregation between geographical subjects (local regional security, specific crises and conflicts abroad) and generic or functional ones. For each country, at least one of the statements cited takes time to explain how a smaller country, its people and interests can be affected by trends of a global nature over which it has limited control. Typically, the argument is made for the nation to take an interest in, and contribute materially to, security challenges outside its shores (i) because of the direct or indirect impact these developments may have on its own circumstances, (ii) for the sake of the wider values it believes in including international peace, human welfare, democracy etc, and (iii) because of its collective responsibilities within institutional frameworks like the UN, EU and/or NATO (more on this last point in the next section).<sup>70</sup> The consequence is that many passages in the documents – though this is less true of the Finnish one and the Icelandic Risk Assessment – fail to distinguish and prioritize clearly between the general evils of the challenges they describe, and the nature of any direct impact these may have on the country and its people; or between the self-interested objectives and the altruistic ones of actions taken abroad. These features suggest, at first sight, that while no individual Nordic document plays the purely *instrumental and tactical* role of a 'strategy' designed to please others and/or win entry to an institution (see last section), none of these examples can easily be read either as the *direct expression of a true, 'deep' national strategy*. But if so, what are the various issue-lists actually reflecting?

*Alignment with/adoption of other powers' strategies (national, institutional)*

The first observation to be made here is that the stated agendas of all five nations are in line with those of *both* NATO and the EU (according to the latest current institutional strategies cited in Figure One above), as well as with OSCE strategy and with such United Nations *loci classici* as the Secretary-General's global security proposals ('In Larger Freedom') of March 2005.<sup>71</sup> It has already been suggested that at least for the larger Nordic states, the process of contributing to and implementing collective strategies has to some extent displaced or reduced the need for independent national strategy drafting. These states would no doubt argue that their role in EU/NATO strategy debates involves both give and take: they have helped to make sure that the collective documents reflect such deep-rooted Nordic values and concerns as individual rights and democracy, military restraint and altruistic intervention,

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<sup>70</sup> An interesting example will be found in the online article 'Därför strider svenska soldater i Afghanistan' (This is why Swedish soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan) dated 29 July 2009 by Defence Minister of Sweden Sten Tolgfors, at <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10171/a/130004>.

<sup>71</sup> Kofi Annan, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All," Report of the Secretary-General of the UN for decision by heads of state and government, 2005, Document A/59/2005, Para. 183. <<http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>>.

sustainable development, environmentalism, free trade, non-zero-sum regional cooperation and so forth. The lists given here also suggest, however, that the trade in the other direction has included Nordic take-up of issues like WMD proliferation, terrorism, crime, migration and refugeeism in positions of greater prominence than the actual impact of these hazards within Northern Europe would imply. More subtly (because it is hard to measure a negative), the published agendas of Norway and Finland in particular may be playing down and nuancing their respective Russia-related concerns so as not to diverge too obviously from the careful balance struck by both the EU and NATO in their collective approaches.<sup>72</sup> As for other influences, the recent closeness of the Danish Government to the George W. Bush Administration is not too obvious in the Danish sources cited, even though they were published in 2008 before Bush's election defeat. However, when looking at the Danish texts in more detail it is possible to see a relatively high and consistent stress on terrorism/extremism on the one hand, and a very strong downplaying of traditional territorial defence on the other hand, that are likely to reflect both US and UK influence - as well as Denmark's objectively higher exposure to extremist violence.<sup>73</sup>

What can be learned from the documents about Nordic awareness and use of institutions like the EU and NATO for strategic cover? Figure Six compares some short but characteristic statements taken from the range of documents so far cited.

**Figure Six: Nordic Formulations on the significance of the UN, EU and NATO**

	UN	NATO	EU
Denmark			A need is seen for an active Danish effort to enhance the multilateral cooperation, particularly in the international institutions that have the greatest significance for global security, namely the UN, NATO, the EU and OSCE. Due to the common values shared with the USA, the EU will have good opportunities to influence the USA in a multilateral direction. <sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> During the Cold War Finnish statements about Russia were similarly muted as part of the phenomenon called by outsiders 'Finlandization', but in the present author's view it would be wrong to see a direct line from that past to current practice. More striking is the parallelism between Finland's and Norway's current public stances on the issue, both of which balance prudence and readiness for territorial defence on the one hand with positive (especially economic) engagement with Russia on the other.

<sup>73</sup> Intriguingly, the Danish Foreign Minister's annual report cited as the first source in note 47 above is almost an exact structural copy of the corresponding British product.

<sup>74</sup> Danish Defence Commission Report 2008, source ii) in note 64 above. For more detailed references to the institutions see 'Official Denmark – International relations' (MFA website) at <http://www.um.dk/Publikationer/UM/English/Denmark/kap1/1-15.asp>.

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Finland	Finland emphasizes the role of the UN as the most comprehensive multilateral cooperation mechanism. <sup>75</sup>	Finland considers NATO's objectives in promoting international stability and security to be compatible with the foreign and security policy goals of Finland and the EU.	Membership of the EU is an integral element of Finland's security policy. EU membership has opened up new opportunities for Finland to influence the security environment in its immediate surroundings.
Iceland	Since the foundation of the Republic, multilateral cooperation has been the cornerstone of Iceland's foreign policy. Iceland became a member of the United Nations in 1946. <sup>76</sup>	Iceland has been a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since its foundation in 1949. Relations between NATO and the European Union (EU) have recently become one of the principal issues of the Organization. It is clear that the European states need to contribute more to their common security... Iceland has expressed its support for increased responsibility of the European states in security and defence cooperation, but at the same time emphasized the necessity of preserving the unity of the member states of NATO. <sup>77</sup>	
Norway	The UNO plays a key role as an anchor point for Norwegian security policy. <sup>78</sup>	...NATO provides the cornerstone of Norwegian security and defence Policy...NATO is important not least in providing a means of developing the transatlantic dialogue.	Norway is actively seeking to play a part in the EU's security and defence cooperation...It is of fundamental importance to Norway that cooperation between the EU and NATO should be constructive....
Sweden	Sweden continues to be a staunch supporter of the United Nations. The UN ...is in a unique position to unite the countries of the world behind sustainable solutions to the global challenges of our time. <sup>79</sup>	In the area of emergency management, close cooperation with NATO is of strategic importance to Sweden.	... the European Union provides the best platform for Sweden's foreign policy action.

It should first be admitted that at any given time, quotations could be found from each country which celebrate the importance of each institution in more absolute or ideal terms. However, what jumps out from all the recent examples given here is the implied *instrumental* reading of institutional roles and effects, more or less expressly linked to the self-interest of the small state concerned. This is least clear – not surprisingly – in the case of the Icelandic official statements; but any survey of that country's national debate since autumn 2008 would show keen awareness in many quarters both of the potential 'shelter' role of the EU, and of the

<sup>75</sup> Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009, as note 52 above.

<sup>76</sup> From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <http://www.mfa.is/international-relations/int-organizations>, accessed Aug. 2009

<sup>77</sup> MFA website, <http://www.mfa.is/foreign-policy/security>, accessed August 2009.

<sup>78</sup> All Norwegian quotations from 'Norwegian Defence 2008', source i) in note 67 above.

<sup>79</sup> All references are from the Foreign Minister's statement to the Riksdag, source ii) in note 68 above. Interestingly, the last quotation on the EU directly repeats a sentence in the Defence Commission's report Ds 2008.48, 'Försvar i Användning' (Defence in Use), text at <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10206/a/107277>.

extra burdens and existential changes it could exact from Iceland in return.<sup>80</sup> The quotations from Finland and Sweden are the most forthright on the strategic instrumentality of the EU and have some interesting parallels, explainable by the fact that both states are non-aligned and may thus feel logically impelled to relate the benefit of any given institution directly to the nation's own needs.<sup>81</sup> A corresponding common feature in the Norwegian and Danish statements is the clear hint that the benefits of NATO and/or the EU include the 'influencing' (or more broadly speaking, balancing) of the indispensable national power for Nordic security, the USA. Several countries refer to the interplay *between* organizations, hinting that the grounds for membership of or close relations with each group include the need for the nation concerned to influence them from the inside towards productive relations with each other.<sup>82</sup> Finally, it is interesting but not surprising to see 'multilateralism' and 'multilateral cooperation' referred to by several countries as self-evident goods. All these are nice illustrations of the way that small state studies suggest such countries *should* use multilateral institutions; even if it would be imprudent to draw the conclusion that the five nations' policies *do* consistently follow this logic and bring optimal results in real life.<sup>83</sup>

*Connections with 'deep' strategy*

All Nordic states are quite straightforward in defining self-regarding, defensive aims as the starting points of their published security policies, even if the definition of national survival has moved on from a purely territorial formulation. Here are some typical quotations:

*Denmark:* 'The goals of Danish Defence are the following: 1) to counter direct and indirect threats to the security of Denmark and allied countries, 2) to maintain Danish sovereignty and the protection of Danish citizens, 3) to work towards international peace and security in accordance with the principles

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<sup>80</sup> There is long-standing, parallel debate between right and left in Iceland over whether belonging to NATO imposes more risks and burdens on an unarmed small state than it offers net national benefits.

<sup>81</sup> The current Finnish and Swedish doctrine of non-allied status ('Alliansfrihet') applies in peacetime and is synonymous with non-membership of NATO. The Finnish Defence Report 2008 (note 40 above) discusses membership openly and concludes (p 81) 'From now on, strong grounds exist for considering Finland's membership of NATO. As regards a decision on possible membership, broad political consensus is essential...'. The Swedish debate is at an earlier stage and popular opinion more hostile, but Foreign Minister Carl Bildt in his speech quoted above (see note 55) promised that a governmental report on relations with NATO would be laid before parliament in Spring 2010.

<sup>82</sup> It is a typical feature of Nordic policies to seek good EU-NATO relations, essentially because it is in no Northern state's interest to be made to choose sides between the two institutions – or at a deeper level, between the Atlantic framework and Europe. See e.g. the chapters by Gunilla Herolf and Teija Tiilikäinen in Bailes, Herolf and Bengt Sundelius, 'The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy, as note 36 above. The point has been less well grasped in Iceland but will demand further attention as and when the country goes forward towards EU membership and full participation in ESDP.

<sup>83</sup> For a comparison of Nordic and Baltic responses to the new security agenda in the context of ESDP and elsewhere, see Clive Archer (ed.), 'New security issues in Northern Europe' (Routledge: London, 2008), as well as the work cited in note 41 above.

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of the UN Charter, specifically through conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian operations.<sup>84</sup>

*Finland*: 'Finland's most important foreign, security and defence policy goals are safeguarding the country's independence and territorial sovereignty, guaranteeing the basic values, security and well-being of the population and maintaining a functioning society'<sup>85</sup>

*Iceland*: 'The security policy of Iceland is founded on two principal pillars: membership of NATO and defence agreement with the United States from 1951.'<sup>86</sup>

*Norway*: 'The principal national security policy objectives are: to prevent war and the emergence of various kinds of threat to Norwegian and collective security; to contribute to peace, stability, and the further development of the international rule of law; to uphold Norwegian sovereignty, rights and interests...; to defend...Norway and NATO against assault and attack; to protect society against assault and attack by state and non-state actors'

*Sweden*: 'Sweden's security policy is aimed at preserving peace and independence for our country, contributing to stability and security in our neighbouring region, and strengthening international peace and security'.<sup>87</sup>

Again, Iceland stands out as having difficulty with conceptualization. Only Norway mentions possible 'attack' (though other passages in the Finnish policy corpus are forthright about the need to repel military aggression and use force against force if necessary); and Denmark, Norway and Sweden all blend quasi-altruistic international aims with national self-preservation in the manner already commented on. Even so, these statements do not give the impression of countries that have any qualms about asserting the nation itself as a good. As such, they echo and help explain the themes of national *independence, identity and singularity* that on the one hand have guided the Nordics in evading outright strategic takeover either by their large Eastern neighbour or large Western friend; and on the other, have made them more parsimonious than most Europeans in calculating how much binding institutional integration they want or need.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> From the Defence Agreement 2005-9 (unofficial translation by the US National Defense University, under 'Denmark' at <http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers.html>).

<sup>85</sup> Defence Report 2008, as note 65 above, p 10.

<sup>86</sup> Page on 'Iceland's Security Cooperation' at the website of the Icelandic delegation to NATO, see <http://www.iceland.org/nato/the-delegation/iceland-and-nato/security-policy/nr/2075>. Iceland's latest Civil Protection Act (Lög um Almannavarnir, 2008) has a more goal-oriented formulation, stating its purpose as to 'prevent and limit, to the greatest extent possible, the public from suffering physical or health related problems, damages to property or environment caused by natural disasters, human action, pandemics, military action or other reasons..' (unofficial translation by Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir), but it is symptomatic that this was drafted by a Minister of Justice rather than on behalf of the government as a whole.

<sup>87</sup> Author's translation, from the original: 'Sveriges Säkerhetspolitik syftar til att bevara fred och självständighet för vårt land, bidra til stabilitet och säkerhet i vårt närområde, samt stärka internationell fred och säkerhet'.. From the webpage 'Sveriges säkerhetspolitik', as source i) in note 68 above.

<sup>88</sup> The same features go far to explain the relative absence of 'hard' strategic cooperation within the group of five Nordics themselves. For more of the author's arguments on these points see e.g



Does this point to a rather simple duality, whereby preservation of the nation as a unique value in itself – even if now more often societally than territorially defined – represents the Nordic 'deep' strategy, and the complex jigsaw of public statements are used both to communicate and reinforce such secondary, instrumental choices as allegiance to other nations and institutions plus global do-gooding?<sup>89</sup> That would fit well with the model of generic small-state options outlined in Figure Three and elsewhere above. It would also seem to explain episodes in Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian modern history when elite decisions were made to take actions for national survival that could not be revealed to the country's own citizens – let alone the outside world – for fear of contradiction with 'declared' policies.<sup>90</sup> Thirdly, the hypothesized 'deep' strategy could explain cases when Nordic behaviour seems to outsiders to conflict with the countries' proclaimed high ideals, such as Sweden's large (and heavily state supported) defence industry,<sup>91</sup> and perhaps Norwegian and Icelandic commitment to whaling if the latter is seen as integral to national identity. The same goes for cases where the apparent conflict is with legality and constitutionality, such as Finland's and Sweden's stretching of 'non-allied' status to allow intimate association with NATO, or all Nordics' willingness to send forces to the original Kosovo mission in the absence of a completely watertight UN mandate.<sup>92</sup> Finally, the thesis of a simple survival-based underlying

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'Europeiske bølgeslag mot en nordisk kyst' in 'Motstrøms', Festschrift for Olav Riste, Cappelen: Oslo, 2003, and 'Is Norden a Region (in the security sense)?', Handlingar och Tidskrift No. 3/2007, Swedish Royal Academy of Military Science, Stockholm, text available at <http://www.kkrva.se/>.

<sup>89</sup> See the next sub-section for more on this. No full justice can be done here to the question of Nordic global activism, its origins and true purpose(s): but a typology of European motives for participating in peace missions, which might also be adjusted to the Nordic states' cases, is suggested in Alyson JK Bailes, 'Motives for Overseas Missions: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' in *Crisis Management in Crisis?*, ed. Susanna Eskola, Research Report series 2 no. 40, National Defence University of Finland, Helsinki, Dec. 2008.

<sup>90</sup> Neumann and Heikka, in footnote 4 to the article cited in note 13 above, cite the historical work of Wilhelm Agrell (eg 'Alliansfrihet och atombomber : kontinuitet och förändring i den svenska försvarsdoktrinen från 1945 till 1982' (Non-allied status and atom bombs: continuity and change in Swedish defence doctrine 1945-1982) (Liber, Stockholm 1985)) and Ola Tunander (eg 1999. 'The Uneasy Imbrication of Nation-State and NATO: The Case of Sweden', *Cooperation & Conflict*, vol. 34, no. 2, June 1999, pp 169-203; and 'The Secret War Against Sweden – US and British Submarine Deception in the 1980s', Frank Cass: London & New York 2004) as highlighting such still controversial topics as secret Swedish-Norwegian and Swedish-US dealings and possible Allied infringements of Swedish neutrality during the Cold War. Finland's whole behaviour in the period of so-called 'Finlandization' was another case in point.

<sup>91</sup> According to Sam Perlo-Freeman and Elisabeth Sköns, 'Arms Production' in *SIPRI Yearbook 2008* (OUP 2008), table 6.A.2 pp 281-288, Sweden is the world's fifth largest arms exporter with a turnover in 2006 of 2.3 billion US dollars, accounting for 0.7% of total world arms trade.

<sup>92</sup> Nordic forces were attached to NATO's KFOR mission established in June 1999, which was authorized to use force against Serbia-Montenegro without a fully explicit UN international-legal mandate. Nordic constitutions typically provide that national forces may not be sent on missions using force abroad, other than in self-defence, except with a UN (and in some cases, OSCE) mandate. For more detail see Inger Österdahl, 'The neutral ally: the European Security and Defence Policy and the Swedish Constitution', *Nordic Journal of International Law*, vol. 78 no 1 2009, pp 95-132.

strategy could make sense of many of the observed differences in Nordic states' strategic choices and declared affiliations at the level of practical politics. *Pace* all the parallel elements in Nordic public statements – especially when it comes to international/global aims – it would not be logical to expect close correspondence in concrete solutions between a small state that has to survive in the mid-Atlantic with no armed forces, one that has a border of 1313 kilometres with Russia, and one (Denmark) whose fate has as often been bound up with continental politics and German nationalism as with any hazards further North.

Once geographical basics have been mentioned, however, it is hard to ignore the other kinds of factors that analysts have seen playing a more adventitious role in Nordic strategic cultures (= 'deep' strategy) and practical choices: notably historical experiences, economic and social drivers, regional interests and centre/province relations, parliamentary and party systems, military traditions and civil-military relations, and styles of political governance in general.<sup>93</sup> These are of great help in building a more realistic model of each country's policy dynamics, and also in explaining why Nordic behaviours and the success of those behaviours may diverge from *prima facie* aims. However, they badly complicate the definition of a 'deep' strategy and the distinction between this and the declared level, because they underline that in an advanced democracy many actors play a part in deciding both what the nation needs (indeed, what the nation is), and what range of actions are politically feasible and permissible in pursuit of those needs. In turn, politicians, interest groups and ordinary citizens alike will have assumptions about *both* the deep and declared levels of strategy that are swayed by subjective as well as objective, short-term and accidental as well as long-term factors: and the play of such factors may push either towards greater national consensus, or towards a two-way or multi-way division of opinion.<sup>94</sup> Facing up to such complexity raises once more the questions formulated above as to how far any Nordic nation truly has a single 'deep' strategy and knows what it is. As Iver B Neumann puts it, 'How conscious are elites about the distinction between the declaratory doctrine and the 'real' doctrine? How can we evaluate the causal relevance of strategic cultures, if the 'real' doctrines are not published?'<sup>95</sup> A final

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<sup>93</sup> See for example the chapters by Lee Miles and Cynthia Kite (on domestic political factors) and Pernille Rieker and Tarja Cronberg (Nordic parallels and contrasts) in Bailes, Herolf and Sundelius (2005), as note 41 above; as well as the articles cited in note 3.

<sup>94</sup> Howlett and Glenn (note 3 above) refer to several such internal divisions such as home-based realists and internationalist idealists in Norway, cosmopolitanism and defencism (Denmark), and supporters of hi-tech military forces versus believers in a citizens' army (Sweden). However, their article does not probe into whether such differences were about 'deep' strategy or about instrumental choices or both – see more below.

<sup>95</sup> Neumann and Heikka, 'Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence', as in note 13 above, p 8.

effort will be made to shed some light on this problem in the next and final section of this part.

*Coherence and functionality in Nordic strategies*

The generic model outlined in the first part of this paper (Figure Three) allowed for a nation's 'deep' strategy to be absent, confused or multiple, and pointed out that one way to overcome this problem is for the state concerned (or in practice, its elite) to adapt for its own use a strategic frame taken from some authoritative and/or supportive player outside. Further, these choices – and indeed, any 'instrumental' use of a declared strategy – have to be made and re-made in a setting of constant internal and external change. Internally, the balance may shift between different policy-making and –influencing constituencies, or people may simply change their minds (especially as generations succeed each other). Externally, concrete shifts take place in the availability, strength and intentions of different national/institutional partners; while new trends in strategic concepts, priorities, values and language may impinge especially strongly on smaller, dependent actors who are idea-'makers' only across a narrower front, if at all. It was stressed in the first part of this paper that such influences can play back upon even the 'deep' level, let alone the instrumental choices, of a nation's strategy and indeed they should, if it is to be kept relevant and up to date. Thus a 'deep' strategy predicated on something that sounds as simple as the national interest can be malleable and multiple to start with, if citizens have different views on what the national identity and interests are; and driven to evolve by both internal and external influences, of both the concrete and conceptual kind. Finally, the evolution at both the deep and the declared levels of strategy may be (too) fast or (too) slow depending on the flexibility of national minds, institutions and policy processes.

This more dynamic version of the model perhaps comes closer to something that could explain the common trends in relevant Nordic policies and the differences between them. It underlines that any one policy feature may be playing different roles for different people in different states, and is also likely to change its role over time. To take the well-known example of Nordic engagement in peace missions unrelated to national territorial security, this could be:

- something that all citizens understand as part of their identity (historic duty?), hence a solid part of deep strategy;
- something that one school of thought sees that way, but that others see as competing with and detracting from territorial security (division over deep strategy);

- something that all schools of thought can agree on even if they have other differences over national identity and interests (outside element brought in to improve deep strategic unity, and to distract from/paper over differences);
- a choice made by [part of?] the elite, not necessarily in line with the deeper consensus, for instrumental purposes such as honing troops' skills, gaining the approval of potentially protective powers or gaining status and influence within an institution.

Adding the dimension of change: if the outside world starts calling for more European inputs to peace missions and if this type of engagement starts to pay more obvious strategic 'returns' than before in terms of US and/or institutional approval, a Nordic nation that earlier engaged in such work for altruistic identity-linked reasons and/or for the sake of national consensus may start shifting towards the fourth of these scenarios. This will mean, however, that the choice of which operations to join is more externally dictated than before and their nature may become more risky, morally or legally questionable, and costly – in the process upsetting earlier balances between resources used (and structures designed) for this purpose and those meant for direct self-defence. Both to manage these tensions and confusions,<sup>96</sup> and in line with the dictates of underlying strategic culture, the elite is likely to formulate new 'declared' policies that justify the change of practice with some mixture of abiding normative principles, reference to the authority of institutions which themselves carry some normative clout, and more honest explanations of how such sacrifices are meant to serve a concrete national interest. Here the model fits back neatly into the observed current practices and discourse of Nordic countries, offering a good explanation of the sometimes disorderly mingling of international and national arguments, references to self-interest and principle, switching of local/regional and global frames that occurs in many of the statements quoted above on national defence and security today.<sup>97</sup> The following figure (Figure Seven) tries to capture

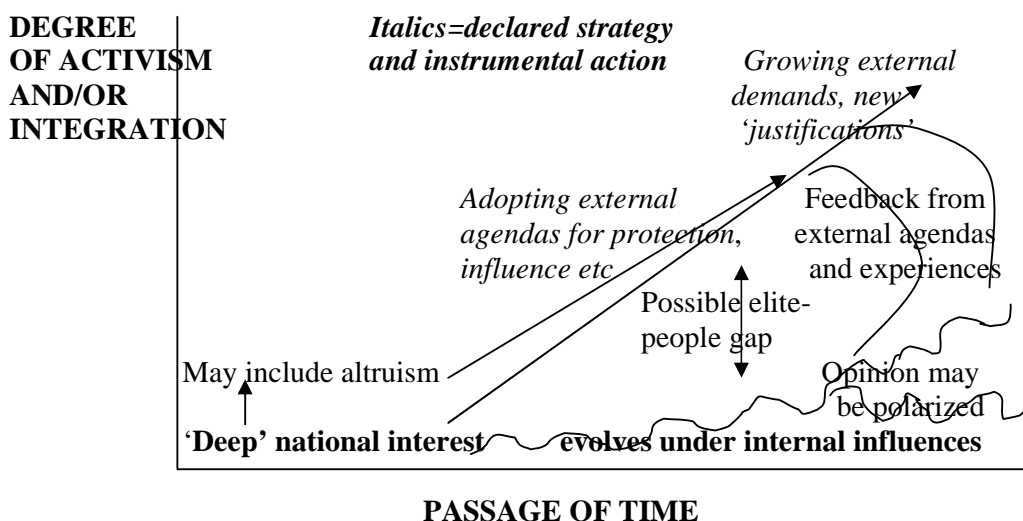
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<sup>96</sup> One indication of the challenge governments face here may be the finding in the 2008 report of the Swedish Psychological Defence Board (now subsumed into a new emergency management agency, report available at [http://www.psydef.se/templates/PublicationItem\\_382.aspx](http://www.psydef.se/templates/PublicationItem_382.aspx)), that fully 48% of Swedish respondents said 'Don't know' when asked whether the number of Swedish participations in peace missions should be higher or lower.

<sup>97</sup> Though space is lacking here, it should be possible to work through a similar set of strategic variants - and show the impact of recent environmental change on national practice - in regard to each Nordic state's behaviour and discourse on European integration. Broadly speaking, the raising of the EU's security profile and share of strategic responsibility in Europe should and does increase the pressure for each Nordic elite, both to work more closely with it across the security spectrum (including peace missions under an EU flag), and to explain this choice in terms of existential security interests rather than just profit in one sphere (economy) or the norms of multilateralism. The resulting conflict in this case is between the benefits of integration and the underlying dictates of independence, singularity, limited liability etc. Current national solutions are patently diverse with Finland opting for the deepest and most frankly self-interested integration, parts of the Icelandic elite trying to take a short-cut to the

some of these elements of strategy development over time in a simplified way that could in principle be tested against the choices of other small states trying to cope with local and global security challenges over time.

*Figure Seven: Elements for a dynamic model of strategy evolution in small states*



The question still remains whether each of the five Nordic nations really knows what it is doing in its own contemporary context and has made appropriate choices, including as regards the speed of change at both strategic levels. The quality of choices may, again, be measured both in terms of the material and non-material rewards gained in the international field, and in terms of success in maintaining/improving internal strategic unity, or at least widespread popular understanding and acceptance for elite policies and the costs they entail. On this last point, simple yardsticks such as opinion polls are not enough. A population may offer high approval rates for what it understands to be the establishment's policy – for instance, non-allied status in Sweden<sup>98</sup> – without being fully aware of or willing to acknowledge how complex the interpretation of this stance has become in practice (arms industry, cooperation with NATO, industrial and technological cooperation with the USA, etc). Gaps between the ostensibly agreed strategy and elite actions have hardly been rare in

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same solution, Sweden and Denmark forced by popular reservations to maintain opt-outs that the dominant elite may think strategically misplaced, and the Norwegian elite so far unable to overcome popular resistance.

<sup>98</sup> In the period 1997-2005 Swedish public support for staying outside NATO was regularly found to be around 63%, though it now seems more divided. The latest (2008) official findings are: 38% stay out of NATO, 26% don't know, 36% join now or sometime in the future. Figures from the Psychological Defence Board Report 2008 (as in note 96 above), pp 27-8, which also provides figures on Finnish opinion.

Nordic history,<sup>99</sup> but they carry an obvious risk of consensus collapsing and practice perhaps being pushed backwards if the contradiction is exposed. Conversely, as has often been argued about Finland, free citizens may express to pollsters their own scepticism about the EU<sup>100</sup> while accepting the national leadership's authority to choose the strategically correct level of integration. The Nordic countries, like any others, face the basic political dilemma as to how far an elite can and should induce changes in popular belief –including the views held on deep and declared strategy - and how far they should be led and restrained by it. Each Nordic polity in turn might offer different answers to that.<sup>101</sup>

The closing passage of foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre's address to the Norwegian parliament (Storting) on 10 February 2009 is so apposite in this context as to be worth quoting at some length:<sup>102</sup>

'Finally, I would like to add that in recent years we have had an increased focus on Norwegian interests in the formulation of our foreign policy. A sharper focus on interests makes it easier to distinguish what is important from what is not, and set priorities.

Norway's central interests remain unchanged. They are related to our role as a coastal state, our rich resources and our position in the High North, and they are closely tied to our ability and responsibility to show international solidarity.

... They are safeguarded through transatlantic solidarity and our close integration with the EU and our Nordic and European partners.

The EEA Agreement and our broad cooperation with the EU are important ties for Norway as we meet the forces of globalization.<sup>103</sup> One of Norway's foreign policy priorities is to safeguard these ties at a time when the EU is both changing and being enlarged.

A striking feature of globalization is the expansion of Norway's interests. We must look ahead to new points of contact that will influence Norwegian interests and entail new challenges, new responsibilities and new opportunities.'

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. note 90 above.

<sup>100</sup> As of autumn 2008 only 30% of Finns had a positive image of the EU (EU-wide average is 45%), with 52% considering the EU's image neutral and 19% considering it somewhat or very negative. See Eurobarometer edition 790, executive summary for Finland, at [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70\\_fi\\_exec.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_fi_exec.pdf).

<sup>101</sup> On these last points see again the sources in notes 3 and 93 above. Another *prima facie* measure of unity or disunity would be the voting patterns of parties in parliament on defence and security issues: but again, these could reflect short-term tactical play, trade-offs, attitudes to individuals etc – as well as lack of information and understanding - as much as they reflect seriously and consistently held views about either level of strategy.

<sup>102</sup> From the official English translation, see note 67 above.

<sup>103</sup> Re globalization, Støre since he became foreign minister has been conducting a study of its practical impact upon Norway and Norwegian policies ('Refleks project'), with results publicized at the Foreign Ministry website: see [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about\\_mfa/minister-of-foreign-affairs-jonas-gahr-s/Speeches-and-articles/2008/norwegian-interests-foreign-policy-for-a.html?id=522194](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about_mfa/minister-of-foreign-affairs-jonas-gahr-s/Speeches-and-articles/2008/norwegian-interests-foreign-policy-for-a.html?id=522194).

Støre here offers a clear answer, at least on his own behalf, to the questions raised earlier in this part of the paper about the coherence, and appropriate updating and expression, of Nordic state strategies. He chooses to start from the deepest level of self-interest, while using a definition of that 'deep' strategy that includes international activism: an element of long-term Norwegian consensus that it would be impolitic to discard, as well as a pillar on which to justify the evolving practice regarding operations. He then presents a series of explicitly instrumental choices, at the level of overt or declared strategy, that are linked to key changes in Norway's environment - the role of the EU/EEA, and globalization. One of the basic elements of interests that he cites as self-evident is, in fact, also an adaptation to change: namely the focus on the High North, which has fluctuated under different governments since 1990 but was reasserted as the single highest priority for national security in the present government's 'strategy' paper of 2007.<sup>104</sup> This mention in turn provides a coded reference to Russia as a primary and abiding focus of Norwegian strategy, and (in political terms) offers comfort to the school of thought favouring territorial defence at a time when the government has to press ahead with engagements abroad.

None of this tells us whether Norwegian strategy works. It does suggest, however, that the elite of that state are engaged in a conscious strategy-forming process that includes both implicit and explicit opinion-forming; that acknowledges and exposes the differences between primary ('deep') and instrumental ('declared') levels of strategy; and that aims for an ongoing adaptation to change. Given space, examples could be added from the range of national documents cited here that reflect similar processes going on in both Finland and Denmark, albeit with different policy mixes as the outcome: a large move away from territorialization and a more recent re-balancing from the USA towards Europe in Denmark's case,<sup>105</sup> and a very open 'strategizing' of EU membership (for existential protection against Russia) plus frank discussion of the possible instrumentality of NATO in the latest Finnish Defence Report.<sup>106</sup>

As already hinted, a verdict on the Swedish case would have to be more complex. The 'deep' strategy prevailing in Sweden since the Napoleonic wars is much more tilted than that of other Nordics towards ideal principles and the abnegation of national interest, at least in any

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<sup>104</sup> See note 45 above.

<sup>105</sup> The downgrading of traditional, military territorial defence has been clear ever since the defence commission report of 1998 leading to the defence agreement for 2005-9 (note 51 above), while the growing emphasis on the EU as a security framework and diplomatic platform can be found in the Defence Commission report of 2008 (source ii) in note 64 above) and links up partly with the growing salience of internal/societal and transnational threats.

<sup>106</sup> Notes 65 and 81 above.

aggressive or zero-sum form – and retains majority support as such under the name of non-allied status - while the contradictions between this and elite practice are both more numerous, and less obviously on the way to resolution, than in the three other states. The speech by foreign minister Carl Bildt cited in Figure Six above<sup>107</sup> might be read, *inter alia*, as an attempt to tackle the problem by offering more instrumental and up-to-date justifications for such traditional features as cooperation with the UN; but it still fails to expose clearly, let alone resolve, the basic issue of whether Swedish abdication from many normal forms of self-assertion (and from sharing the burden of collective defence at Nordic-regional or European level) is functional today.<sup>108</sup> Finally, Iceland offers the region's most extreme case where an agreed 'deep' strategy is lacking and internal divisions are rife both over what to put into one and how to pursue it. If Iceland does enter the EU (still very doubtful at the time of writing), this would offer the most obvious short-cut to filling the gap, and would then typify the scenario where a strategy is 'imported' from a larger player to overcome divisions and deficiencies (Figure Three above). As discussed before in relation to other recent EU entrants, however, the process of turning such a top-down solution into a broad internal consensus could be hard and slow, while the new mixture of strategy-building elements might even throw up new points to be divided over.

## **6. Conclusions and Suggestions**

Whether or not the models offered here have any lasting usefulness, they do seem to generate practical conclusions that are not belied by the Nordic cases studied in more detail:

- A small state in most conceivable circumstances does need a strategy, perhaps even more than most states do;
- This is the more so when it has to address a widening spectrum of internal and non-military as well as traditional security problems – creating new demands for internal coordination and prioritization - and/or when internal divisions (of any kind) exist;
- A small state is also inherently more likely to have to construct its strategy on adherence to some large power or grouping (or several such), at the price of importing strategic ideas and norms and probably specific obligations from these sources;
- That being so, the distinction between a 'deep' and a 'declared' strategy may particularly well describe a typical small-state scenario where the 'deep' needs of

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<sup>107</sup> Reference at note 79 above.

<sup>108</sup> Another aspect of the Swedish predicament is the very low level to which territorial forces, and conscription for them, has had to be reduced in consequence of general financial constraints, overseas mission costs, and the burden of a large defence industry – a problem that has drawn warnings from the high military command about no longer being able to guarantee defence of the nation's whole territory.



- self-preservation can only be met by ‘declaring’ – and implementing – policy choices that are essentially instrumental and perhaps remote from the state’s own traditions;
- Any such solutions will only be functional if continuously and realistically updated in response to change;
  - A small state is particularly exposed to the possibility that strategy elements introduced for instrumental purposes will ‘leak’ into and gradually transform the deep strategic level;
  - The biggest problems will be faced by states that have unclear, divided, or outdated ‘deep’ strategies or that get confused over the relationship (and priority) between these and the ‘declared’ elements;
  - A situation where the elite know and understand the ‘declared’ strategy better than the people do, and/or where it creates increasing tension with ‘deep’ prescriptions, may work for a while but carries its own risks;
  - So does the device of importing an externally-defined strategy to deal with internal gaps and divisions, even if this is sometimes a necessity.

In terms of further research, there would be several obvious ways to test these ideas and, in particular, the robustness of the deep/declared model. They could be applied in more detail to the Nordic examples, for instance by looking at each nation’s strategy-forming actors and processes, at the interplay of new policy elements generated externally and internally, at the nature and logic of deep/declared interactions in other specific examples beyond the case of peace operations spelled out above, and so on. Extending the comparison to some non-Nordic European small states should help cast more light upon any distinctive elements in Nordic ‘deep’ strategies, as well as on the factors that make different elites choose differently amid the full range of possible instrumental solutions - given a broadly similar set of continent-wide challenges. Last but not least, it would be healthy to expose the model to some non-European case studies and to comparisons between these and the lessons drawn from the Nordic states’ – far from globally typical – experiences in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.