NORDIC STATES CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND SECURITY

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Acknowledgements
This paper has been presented at the Seventh International Conference on Baltic and Nordic Studies in Romania, Good governance in Romania and the Nordic and Baltic countries, hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies and Nicolae Iorga Institute of History of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 24-25 November, 2016.

Abstract:
Over the past years, the Nordic countries have gained a powerful voice on the stage of international affairs; in this context, this article will explore their contribution to peace and security in the sphere of the European Union.
In the past 20 years, the Nordic States (in this case I refer only to Sweden, Denmark and Finland) have gradually aligned to the collective EU foreign policy while at the same time investing in reinforcing their influence in international affairs. One of their core beliefs was that peace building involves a broad range of instruments (besides military) that encompasses crises prevention and civilian capabilities. In a world characterized by complex security issues that involve multiple aspects ranging from migration and poverty to climate change, development has started to go hand in hand with security.
The Nordic countries have proved several times that they have a powerful voice and can bring an added value on issues related to security and development. The paper will refer to their recent contributions and attempt to measure their influence and the consequences of their actions at international and EU level. Furthermore, the paper will also analyze contributions of the Nordic states to EU crisis management capabilities including the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations, emphasizing how these contributions align with their foreign policies as well as assess whether they had an impact.
Rezumat:
În ultimele decenii, statele nordice și-au consolidat prezența în sistemul internațional, articolul de față propunându-și să analizeze contribuția acestora la menținerea păcii și stabilizării în contextul Uniunii Europene.
În același interval de timp, statele nordice (în cazul acesta mă voi referi doar la Suedia, Danemarca și Finlanda) s-au aliniat politicii externe a Uniunii Europene, investind în același timp în creșterea influenței proprii în relațiile internaționale. Una dintre principalele viziuni a fost aceea conform căreia „peace building” implică o varietate de instrumente (pe lângă cele militare), exemple în acest sens fiind prevenirea crizelor și dezvoltarea capabilităților civile. Într-o lume dominată de probleme de securitate complexe cum ar fi migrația, sărăcia și schimbările climatice, conceptul de dezvoltare este strâns legat de cel de securitate.
Statele nordice au demonstrat de nenumărate ori că au o voce puternică pe scena internațională și pot aduce o valoare adăugată în domeniul securității și al dezvoltării. Acest articol va analiza contribuțiile recente, încercând să măsoare influența și consecințele acțiunilor lor la nivelul Uniunii Europene și la nivel internațional. De asemenea, lucrarea va analiza contribuțiile statelor nordice în cadrul capabilităților UE de gestionare a crizelor, subliniind modul în care aceste contribuții se aliniază cu politica lor externă și impactul avut la nivel international.

Keywords: international security, Nordic countries, regional cooperation, crisis management, foreign policy, comprehensive approach

Introduction
On the world stage of today, dominated by a multitude of challenges ranging from post conflict reconstruction, famine, development issues, unemployment, poverty, environmental disasters to civil wars and military clashes, states have tried to develop together new tools and instruments to address them. In this context, the Nordic countries stand out not only for showing a commitment to address the contemporaneous issues by pursuing active contributions but also for the fact that they employ a combination of tools known as the comprehensive approach. This paper aims to assess the role of the Nordic States, which are members of the European Union (i.e. Sweden, Finland, Denmark) and their contribution to maintaining peace and stability in order to prove that they have a powerful voice both on the level of discussion but also on the practical level of addressing the issues on the ground. The structure of the paper will be as follows: first section will deal with the case of Sweden highlighting its strategic view of international affairs and pointing out a few directions of
involvement, the second part will address the Finnish case which has many similarities with the Swedish one, both cases depicting the two Nordic countries as powerful voices on the international stage. It is important to mention that due to several factors, Finish and Swedish cases overlap in some instances (strategic interests and guidelines, reason for cooperation in the Common Security and Defence Policy – CSDP area, etc.) and therefore some arguments are presented together without repeating them in each part of the article. The last part will present the case of Denmark that is particularly interesting and different because of the defence opt-out that basically prevents the Danish government from getting involved on the military side of operations under the EU flag. Conclusions will stress upon a few main differences between the case studies while outlining once again the assumption that the Nordic countries are strong contributors to peace and security worldwide.

**Sweden**

The main reason behind Sweden’s involvement in peace and crisis management operations is to promote peace and security and ultimately to support development in areas that require it urgently in order to avoid the so called “state failure”. Of course this stance based on values is also in line with the advancement of Sweden’s interests and foreign policy aims. Sweden’s development policy – that maps out the actions taken in military, civilian and other areas and which is viewed as part of one combined approach – represents the backbone of Swedish operations. In a security environment where threats transcend borders and regions, issues from other parts of the globe have the potential to also impact directly the Swedish state. Besides threats such as terrorism, weapons trafficking or civil wars, poverty and unemployment also have long lasting effects on the European and international security environments.¹

Membership of the EU and UN represent the two main pillars in the Swedish foreign policy. These are complemented by the enhanced cooperation with NATO on defence and security matters. The Swedish government views the EU as a platform to be influential in a greater area as

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well as to protect its interests. Through its commitment, contributions and solid views, Sweden has built a good reputation and promoted itself as an important player in the EU foreign policy. Its understanding is that crisis management and development go hand in hand and should aim to promote democratic principles, human rights, rule of law, and stability.  

The underlining principle on which all actions are based is the international law (including international humanitarian law), which must supersede everything in all peace keeping operations. Sweden furthermore manages to enhance its own capabilities and experience through its contributions to operations. According to the National Strategy for participation in peace missions, Sweden pledged and started to implement in accordance to the UN Resolution 1325, the decision to increase the number of women taking part in international peace support and peace keeping operations. In order for Sweden to take part in any operations and/or make use of force, there should be in place a mandate from the UNSC.

The current Swedish security policy characterized by a reduction of the defence budget and by eliminating the military conscription (which currently seems that it will be reinstated) has focused mainly on building capabilities for foreign missions. This was in line with the absence of conventional threats in Europe and has hindered the defence capabilities. This approach has put more emphasis on a closer cooperation with NATO, on a possible deepened cooperation with the other Nordic countries and on further efforts to develop capabilities at the EU level.  

The National Strategy reinforces the aim to develop the cooperation with NATO under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) which has heavily contributed to the development Swedish armed forces as well to the creation of the necessary capabilities for action in international operations. Being in line with NATO standards enables Sweden to participate in any operation no matter if it is under the UN, the EU or NATO jurisdiction.

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It is increasingly agreed that in countries going through the post conflict phase, security sector reform (SSR) is essential in the stabilization and development process. In order to implement SSR there is the need for a combined approach. Swedish SSR approach will encompass all the security threats faced by states and people and will be implemented in cooperation with local actors and international organizations. The local ownership of the process will be essential and all the solutions will be tailored to the local requirements, being adapted to the country/region in question. This falls into the bigger category of the comprehensive approach. As for concrete contributions, Sweden is very active in logistics and IT infrastructure as well as in the business sector and strongly supports increasing the number of women in civil operations.

**New strategic outlook**

In the post-Cold War international environment, Swedish national interests are centered on two main directions. On one hand, peace and stability in its neighborhood is very important in ensuring security of the state, therefore the regions comprising the Baltic States, Eastern Europe and Artic are of utmost importance. On the other hand, global economy based on free trade and free access to markets is strongly supported by Sweden, since it is part of this system on which it heavily relies on. One concrete example of this support is the Swedish engagement in EU/NATO counter piracy operations.

We can notice that Swedish main approach to the international system has changed over the past three decades. During the Cold War, Sweden asserted itself as neutral in the conflict, its aim being to distance itself from both parties. This position changed into nonalignment, for instance cooperating with NATO but with no intention to apply for joining the alliance and be part of the collective defence framework. What does nonalignment mean for Sweden? Basically, when Swedish interests converge with the NATO ones, the Swedish government opts to cooperate

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A main part of the new strategic outlook regards the openness to international cooperation on a broad range of issues, in particular the collaboration with the other Nordic countries that established itself in the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) and has been mainly marked by the Stoltenberg Report (2009).\footnote{Alessandro Marrone, “Sweden: An Active, Normative, Non-Aligned Country”, in National Visions of EU Defence Policy, ed. Federico Santopinto and Megan Price (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2013), 114.}

Secondly, another instance of cooperation is the participation in the PfP that translated into active participation in the NATO operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya and also in the NATO exercises as well as raising the Swedish capabilities to the NATO standards. Concrete examples: participation in the Kosovo Force (KFOR), Stabilization Force in BiH (SFOR), Operation Unified Protector and Resolute Support Mission.\footnote{For more details, please see: http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Nato/Sweden--PFP/Sweden-in-NATO-led-operations--sys/} Sweden’s participation in the PfP as one of the first partners was designed to take the cooperation to another level and to stay close to NATO. Membership was not seen as a goal in itself, Sweden opting for a deepened partnership even nowadays.

Sweden involvement in NATO operations started with participation in the SFOR, also in KFOR and joined the International Security Assistance Force ISAF in 2002 – participation in ISAF is motivated by reinforcing the transatlantic bond, support to the UN mandate and less focus on the NATO role. Swedish involvement in ISAF has been beneficial from the point of view that it helped modernize equipment, skills for operations, interoperability with NATO Forces, strengthening cooperation with NATO, etc.\footnote{Leo G. Michel, “Finland, Sweden, and NATO: From ‘Virtual’ to Formal Allies?”, INSS Strategic Forum, no. 265 (February 2011): 13-14, http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratforum/SF-265.pdf, accessed at 15.12.2016.}
The Swedish strategic posture has been influenced by the historical
neutrality position adopted in the 20th century. In spite of this, the powerful
voice on the international stage, the assistance offered, the support for
human rights and the democratic process have all shaped the Swedish
approach and participation in the CSDP, participation that amounted to
contributions to all CSDP missions up to 2012, outlining an active and
comprehensive approach to the EU crisis management.\(^{11}\)

Thirdly, a particular aspect of the Swedish foreign approach
consists in the assistance provided for development and humanitarian
crisis. According to the Government of Sweden, in 2016 Sweden has been
the 7th largest humanitarian donor in the world, with approximately € 500
mil. During 2017, the amount will be more than € 600 mil. It is important to
note that in the past 12 years, the amount destined has almost doubled
making Sweden an important international player in this area.\(^{12}\) Aid
recipients are usually the most affected countries or regions such as
Afghanistan, Syria, Sahel, Iraq, South Sudan, etc. Humanitarian aid
reinforces the stance taken towards maintaining peace and security in the
world. At a theoretical level, it is also worth noticing the funding offered by
the government towards the Stockholm International Peace Research
Institute SIPRI in support of research in the field.

On the other hand, as some experts have pointed out, Sweden has a
strong impact on the defence market by being an important producer of
equipment and aircrafts. The advancement of the defence industry has
created high level products which make Sweden the world’s 12th largest
arms exporter.\(^ {13}\) However, at some point this might come in direct
contradiction with Sweden’s principles of exporting democracy and
maintaining peace and security.

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12 For more, please see: http://www.government.se/articles/2017/02/new-strategy-for-humanitarian-aid/.

Common Security and Defence Policy

Sweden joined the EU in 1995 but has been very active in the development of CSDP, both at political level and operational level by participating in the missions implemented. Sweden has long advocated and sustained developing the crisis management capabilities of the EU in the framework of the former European Security and Defence Policy ESDP.

At the level of the EU and development of CSDP, both Sweden and Finland strongly voiced their support for the crisis management area instead of the EU territorial defence due to: i) the earlier mentioned strategic approach of nonalignment which implies that Sweden will not be part of any collective defence agreement; ii) public opinion stance against a military buildup of the EU, and iii) the view according to the new international system (after the Cold War) is no longer dominated only by conventional threats and it needs a combination of instruments in order to approach the new threats – the so called comprehensive approach, which Sweden strongly supports.

Therefore, the main contributions to CSDP came in the area of crisis management operations: the idea of Civilian Response Team, promoting human rights, gender issues, committing troops to CSDP missions.

The rationale was also supported by the view that CSDP could make a change on the ground, portray Sweden in the eyes of the other member states/partners as a strong partner, ready to commit resources and thus exert influence. Specific reasons for contributing in some cases are as follows:

- CSDP missions in the Balkans = threats close to the EU;
- CSDP monitoring mission in Georgia = secure the neighborhood of the European Union;
- European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) Afghanistan – show solidarity for the partnership with the US/transatlantic bond;
- Operation Atalanta – free flow of goods, one of the two Swedish strategic priorities mentioned above;

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• European Union Training Mission (EUTM) Mali – military trainers and contribution to strengthening Malian forces in order to be able to keep peace in the country.

**Finland**

Non alignment has been a strong direction in both Sweden and Finland, but nevertheless the two Nordic actors sought to take part in international missions aimed at maintaining peace and stability under both the EU and NATO.

Due to their geostrategic location, Sweden and Finland, but especially Finland, need to take extra measures to ensure the security of the countries. In this sense, there is a trend implying that Sweden and Finland will reduce their contributions to international missions and grow their capabilities on home ground, including here a raise in military spending.\(^\text{16}\)

Finland – unlike its neighbor and close ally Sweden - has had a different path in framing its strategic interests given the fact that peace was not always maintained as in the case of Sweden.

International and regional cooperation is integral to Finnish foreign policy approach. NORDEFCO\(^\text{17}\) is a very good example of framing cooperation at regional level, encompassing a broad range of areas such as developing strategies, capabilities, trainings and exercises. Its main downside is that it is not viewed as a possible mutual defence against an external threat both by Finland and Sweden. As Michel states, a good example of cooperation is the air force joint exercises between Norway, Sweden and Finland\(^\text{18}\). Sweden – Finland cooperation includes the 2014 Action plan for Deepened Defence Cooperation which produced in 2015 a report that pointed out cooperation areas and possible implementation – reason for enhancing cooperation being non NATO members.\(^\text{19}\)

As it is the case of Sweden, Finland is committed to NORDEFCO. Its main goal is to build cooperation between members with the scope of


\(^{17}\) http://www.nordefco.org/


finding solutions to the security related problems the region faces; there are no over-reaching targets, the focus being rather on the current needs of the members. However, as the Finnish government also noticed, the resources at their disposal alone are not enough to offer solutions neither on short nor medium term.

Participation in peace operations has long been embedded in Finnish foreign policy so contributions to the UN, NATO and CSDP come as a natural consequence of this direction. The main reasons are: maintaining peace and stability worldwide, developing comprehensive defence capabilities, and enhancing its position and influence on the international stage.

In spite of not being a member of the Alliance, Finland has had a very active cooperation process with NATO that involved sending force to theaters of operation that has aligned the Finish army to the NATO norms, a highlight being the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that welcomes further reinforced cooperation with the Alliance.²⁰

Finland has had an important role in the cooperation with NATO, proving itself to be a significative partner:²¹
- NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia – 1996 to 2003;
- NATO KFOR since 1999;
- ISAF in Afghanistan.

On the involvement in CSDP area, Finland follows the same principles as Sweden (mentioned above). The following graph showcases Finnish current contributions in crisis management operations. On CSDP, main contributions are to: maritime missions (EU Naval Force Operation (EUNAVFOR) Atalanta, EU NAVFOR MED Sophia), comprehensive approach - EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) Nestor, EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia, Atalanta -, EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUPOL Afghanistan, EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) Kosovo, etc.

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Finland is also contributing by investing in centers that deliver trainings both at theoretical and practical levels to both to civilian and military personnel and that produce solid analysis of international affairs that contribute to the discussion on world issues and finding solutions. Examples in this sense are the Crisis Management Center (CMC), the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and the National Defence University.

**Denmark**

The Danish Foreign policy has been framed after 1945 on four pillars – Nordic, UN, European and Atlantic; starting after the end of the
Cold War, the Atlantic pillar has started to gain momentum over the others becoming the most important direction, due to the United States becoming the sole superpower in the international system and the best vehicle to promote interests, which aligned in most part with the US ones.22

Alliances and international cooperation represent the two core features of Danish foreign policy. By becoming part of alliances and by cooperating with different actors, Denmark has managed to project power and influence in international affairs, at the same time portraying itself as a contributor to peace and stability in the world. Also, Denmark has rallied under the UN leadership and decisions to use military force.

Alliances and international cooperation translated for instance in the Danish involvement in the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the intervention in Libya where Denmark not only managed to strengthen the relation with its allies and deepened cooperation but also enabled military forces to gain experience and become integrated in the coalition. As concrete example, the Danish air force relied upon the US air refueling capacities to conduct missions during the intervention in Libya.23

By always playing a forefront role in international issues, Denmark is now considered to be a producer/exporter of security (and not a consumer as is the case of other states which benefit from advantages of being part of an alliance but do not contribute significantly). Committing troops under the UN and NATO flag in the Balkans, aircrafts and troops in Afghanistan, and Iraq under the US leadership and in support of NATO are just a few examples that reinforce the previously mentioned idea.24

When linking security to development, the development assistance offered by countries is of outmost importance. Denmark is one of the few countries which spend more than 0.7% from their Gross National Income (GNI) on this issue alone. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the

amount reached was $2.68 billion and it was focused on stabilization and protection, promotion of democracy and human rights, social progress and green development\textsuperscript{25}. The commitment is also illustrated by keeping its development contribution over the 0.7% landmark for over 30 years. The development assistance is based on core values for Danish foreign policy and society such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, rule of law, freedom, sustainable development and commitment to make a positive change where it intervenes through aid and other civilian instruments. In addition, coordination with other donors is essential in choosing and concentrating on key actors/partners.

The know-how in areas mentioned above represents the added value brought by the Danish approach as well as the experience coming from the processes in its own society which rest upon the aforementioned values. The development area is closely connected with the humanitarian one where the main objectives are protection of people from areas affected by armed conflict, climate change, and environmental hazards.

**Danish Security and Diplomacy Strategy**

Denmark rests upon NATO for the security of the European Continent as well as for involvement in crisis management and operations for maintaining peace and stability. NATO is the main instrument through which Denmark is involved militarily in international missions. Another strong point of the development approach will be, according to the Danish Diplomacy and Security Strategy, the focus on green development and sustainable urbanization thus enabling the combination between economic diplomacy and development.\textsuperscript{26} The strategy also mentions three areas of focus for Danish action in regard to development: “sustainable growth through partnerships, strengthened efforts in fragile states and prevention of refugee and migration flows”.

The comprehensive approach is becoming more and more relevant in today’s context and encompasses a multitude of instruments such as stabilization of affected areas, humanitarian and development aid,


cooperation between actors on the ground, commitment to sustainable development.

Regarding the issue of threats to the Danish state, on the military side there is a slim chance of a possible conventional attack being directed. However, once distant threats, some issues have become more and more concerning over the past years such as migration, terrorism, Russia’s provocative stance, etc. New threats have also emerged such as cyber-attacks, as well as threats from the other sectors of security such as environmental (climate change), political (possible weakening of the transatlantic bond), social, economic, etc.

Consequences of opt-outs

Denmark has been skeptical about the defence and security cooperation in the EU even before it was formally established through the Maastricht treaty. The rationale behind this was the fear that if the EU develops common military capabilities (that was a possibility at the time) that will come in contradiction with the role of NATO as a security guarantee therefore hurting the transatlantic bond. This attitude culminated with the Danish opt-outs from the treaty. Over time, the project for an EU army failed to come to fruition, while the defence and security cooperation was enhanced combining a large variety of instruments and being a possible good fit for Danish foreign policy. Unfortunately, the opt-outs limit Danish participation and its influence at European and global level.

Another consequence of the opt-outs is that Denmark focused on NATO (the UN and the US as well) on military issues, constructing a policy echoed by considerable contributions to peace and security worldwide. If Denmark was present at all level in CSDP, it would probably have the chance to make an even more lasting contribution and fulfill its interests better. In spite of this, the Danish government is able to take part in the civilian aspects of CSDP, more specifically in the EU civilian missions and has active contributions to most of them up to date. To illustrate better, a few examples of the defence opt-out are the following: EUTM Somalia,

Athena mechanism, European Defence Agency (EDA), EUTM Mali and EU Force (EUFOR) RCA.

The Report from the Danish Institute for International Studies argues that after the Lisbon Treaty, on the medium to long term, the Danish opt-outs will have negative impact mainly in three areas: EU’s comprehensive approach, developing defence capabilities and further development of the EDA.28

The comprehensive approach comprises of a combination of instruments from both the civil and military areas that together aim at making a long lasting impact on the ground. The advancements in this strategy might push Denmark away from the development of CSDP, having a say in less and less aspects. This is somehow contradictory with Danish foreign policy goals that put emphasis on a comprehensive approach strategy and promote this exact approach in the sphere of the EU, and CSDP in particular. A straightforward example is mentioned in the Report: the strategy for countering piracy in the Horn of Africa where multiple tools are embodied in the comprehensive approach (EU NAVFOR Atalanta, EUCAP Nestor and EUTM Somalia) and where Denmark participates only in EUCAP, the civilian mission and not in the counter-piracy operations per se. This is in total discrepancy with the Danish state strategic interest of countering piracy which should be fast-tracked Denmark in any international mission of such kind. This can be confusing at international level, between other EU member states and can have negative impacts such as loss of Danish credibility for not being able to sustain its own strategy.

The EDA has become a main forum in the EU for designing and developing military equipment and capabilities and it is on an ascending trend, gaining more importance and at the same time having more negative impact on Denmark as it cannot take part in its work or enjoy the benefits of these projects.

Furthermore not being part of EDA also impacts Danish participation in the European Defence industry which again is in contradiction with Danish strategic interests. Therefore, the examples illustrate the negative impact of the defence opt-out and its far reaching consequences that seem to deepen over the years.

Following the logic of the defence opt-out one can argue why all the other EU member states that also belonged to NATO were fully involved in the development of CSDP. We have seen before how the opt-out prevents following some basic strategic interests that lead to a reduction of Danish capacities to influence at international level and a reduced capability of making a difference with its own comprehensive approach.

Conclusions

This article intended to give a glimpse on the issue of the Nordic countries which are also EU members and on their international contributions to maintaining peace and stability. The case studies presented highlighted and strengthened the idea that Sweden, Finland and Denmark are strong contributors in the international arena, having solid reputations, and being involved in crisis management, development and post-conflict reconstruction. This is embedded in their strategic thinking and without a doubt in a way that increases visibility and influence in the EU, NATO, and the UN.

There are multiple similar aspects in all of the cases – assistance for development and humanitarian aid, strong contributions to NATO (even as partners as in the case of Sweden and Finland), active participation in EU civilian missions.

The study has also highlighted the main differences between the Danish case and the others. Given its defence opt-out, Denmark cannot participate in EU operations that involve a military component, its commitment on this side going mainly to NATO. This aspect has nevertheless reduced the Danish capabilities to influence and be fully involved in EU CSDP as well as in aspects related to European defence. In a complex international environment, where intervention requires a combination of instruments from both civilian and military sectors (the so called comprehensive approach), it would have been essential for Denmark to be able to fully participate (taking part in civilian operation is certainly a plus as pointed out, however does not count much when the comprehensive approach is applied) and furthermore to be fully able to pursue its strategic objectives.

All in all, the Nordic countries will continue to be a pillar and have a powerful voice on the international stage in all aspects related to development, conflicts and humanitarian aspects.
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