

■ The New Military: From National Defence and Warfighting to International Intervention and Peacekeeping

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ABSTRACT

The role of the military is changing. From national defence and warfighting, the focus is increasingly shifting towards international intervention and peacekeeping. In this article, I contextualise this 'new military' historically through a brief analysis of Sweden's history of military and political engagements with the world. Rather than a progressive development in which Sweden has become increasingly internationalised, notions of and relations between 'Sweden', the 'world', and the role of the military have continuously shifted; and consequently, international engagements at different times have signified different things. The current interventionist role of the military, therefore, needs to be related to a set of emerging transformations, which I conceptualise as 'conflict preventionism'. This transnational cultural form, I argue, is bringing about a new relationship between the military and the political spheres; between the national and the international; and, ultimately, between the notions of war and peace.

Introduction

It was a warm spring day towards the end of April 2003 at the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre (SWEDINT), south of Stockholm. At the time, I was conducting anthropological fieldwork during the planning of the multinational Partnership for Peace exercise *Viking 03*. Initiated by the Swedish government and organised by the Swedish Armed Forces, it aimed at developing civil-military co-operation in international Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The project involved some eight hundred participants from twenty-six countries, including military officers, activists from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and representatives from international and governmental agencies. The exercise itself would be conducted during two weeks in December 2003. Preparations, however, were already well in progress. It was these

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preparatory arrangements that had brought me to SWEDINT. Together with Thomas and Magnus² – two Swedish officers working with the *Viking 03* project – I was about to attend an afternoon lecture at a Partnership for Peace Exercise Planners Course.

Before the lecture, we went to the officers' mess for coffee. Located on the second floor of a large brick building, the mess was surprisingly spacious and saturated with bourgeois style. The large room was divided into several smaller sections furnished with coffee tables, leather sofas, and armchairs; in one corner was a bar, and the walls were decorated with gold-framed oil paintings of former officers, medals from sports tournaments and, to top it all, a portrait of the Swedish royal family. Still somewhat unaccustomed to these kinds of military settings, to me the room looked conspicuously nationalistic and exaggeratedly stylised. Thomas and Magnus, however, seemed entirely at home within this milieu as we sat down around one of the tables.

To enter the educational part of the building after having had coffee in the officers' mess felt like leaving one world behind and crossing the threshold into another. With seminar rooms named Mozambique, Liberia, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, the focus had palpably shifted away from the national towards the international. The lecture took place in 'Nicaragua'. A power-point projector tangibly cleared away the old-fashioned military atmosphere and signalled a new high-tech orientation. The room also completely lacked any nationalistic appearance; instead, adorned by a United Nations flag and with a world map on one of the walls, it was decidedly internationalist. The officers' mess had been almost empty; the seminar room, on the contrary, was crowded. I counted to nineteen people, and among the participants were military officers from Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Sweden, and the U.S. Thomas and Magnus, I noted seemed effortlessly at home in this context too.

This difference in decoration and furnishing between the mess and the seminar room clearly illustrates the current reorientation of armed forces: from national defence and warfighting towards international intervention and peacekeeping; a transition which has led to far-reaching transformations of the military throughout much of the world (see, e.g., Burk 2002; Dandeker 1994; Moskos et al. 2000).³

In this article, based on anthropological fieldwork within the *Viking 03* project, I explore some integral aspects of this 'new military'. A description of *Viking 03* is followed by a brief historical contextualisation of the contemporary interventionist focus where I discuss Sweden's history of political and military engagements with the world. A transition is discernible here: from an emphasis on nationalism in the early twentieth century, via a focus on internationalism during much of the Cold War, and increasingly towards notions of cosmopolitanism since the 1990s. I argue that this has not been a progressive development in which Sweden has become increasingly internationalised. Instead, notions of and relations between 'Sweden', the 'world', and the role of the military have continuously shifted; and, consequently, internation-

2 These names are pseudonyms. While people on official positions, such as the *Viking 03* Exercise Director, are referred to by their real names, most informants have been given pseudonyms. Real names include surnames; pseudonyms do not.

al engagements at different times have signified and expressed different things. Finally, I relate the new interventionist role of the military, as conveyed through *Viking 03*, to a set of emerging transformations, which I conceptualise as ‘conflict preventionism’. My analysis is thus not limited to a strict military sphere. ‘Conflict preventionism’, I argue, is bringing about a new relationship between the military and the political spheres; between the national and the international; and, ultimately, between the notions of war and peace.

The Viking 03 project

Viking 03 was the third exercise in a series of international civil-military projects organised by the Swedish Armed Forces. Like its predecessors, conducted in 1999 and 2001 respectively, it was focused on civil-military co-operation in Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The eight hundred people participating in the 2003 project represented twenty-six countries.⁴ Apart from military officers, the participants also included representatives from NGOs, international organisations, and government agencies.⁵

The Partnership for Peace

The project was carried out in ‘the spirit of’ Partnership for Peace (PFP). Initiated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1994, the PFP currently comprises 30 countries, some of which recently have become members of the NATO. (All of

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- 3 In these times of extensive change, decoration and furnishing – what might perhaps look like unimportant details – play an important role in conveying what ‘the military’ means. But they do more than to simply convey. ‘Banal’ visual representations are also formative constituents of the notions they seem merely to represent (cf. Westermann 2005: ix; Billig 1995). Anthropologist Robert A. Rubinstein (2003: 16–17), for instance, shows how two U.S. military units – one focused on the effectiveness of warfighting and the other emphasizing sacrifice in peace support operations – use different sets of memorabilia to represent themselves and construct their respective ‘culture’. When I began fieldwork within the *Viking 03* project, I immediately noted this self-referential use of the culture concept among the military personnel. Military sociologists, too, have picked up the term ‘military culture’ as a tool for discussing on-going transformations of the armed forces (see, e.g., Callaghan and Kernic 2003a; Dandeker 1999; English 2004). Jean Callaghan and Franz Kernic (2003b: 17) argue that military sociologists ‘need to have an intimate knowledge of and understanding for the military and its culture.’ They also admit that this analytical focus on ‘microcosms’ poses a disciplinary dilemma: ‘researchers often lose track of the broader societal and theoretical contexts of the issue being studied [...] and begin instead to uncritically admire, identify with, and accept as natural and correct all behaviors and choices of those they are studying.’ Researchers and officers alike, it seems, are thus busying themselves in equally uncritical attempts to demarcate the shifting content of ‘military culture’ today.
 - 4 The following countries took part in *Viking 03*: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, and Uzbekistan.
 - 5 Amnesty International (AI); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC); Save the Children; Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR); Swedish Women’s Voluntary Defence Service; the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA); the National Association of Swedish Women’s Voluntary Motor Transport Corps; the Swedish Emergency Management Agency (SEMA); the Swedish Police; the Swedish Power Grid; the Swedish Red Cross; the Swedish Rescue Services Agency; and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

the countries participating in *Viking 03* were either NATO or PFP members.) According to the NATO web site, the overarching aim of the Partnership is to ‘reinforce stability and reduce the risk of conflict.’ This goal is to be achieved through the establishment of a dialogue between NATO and each participating country:

Joint activities and regular consultation improve transparency in national defence planning and budgeting, encourage democratic control of the armed forces and help nations equip and train to operate at the Alliance’s [i.e. NATO’s] side, generally furthering the democratic values at the heart of NATO’s partnership policy. [- -] By assisting participants with reforms, the PFP helps them build a solid democratic environment, maintain political stability and improve security.⁶

The Partnership centres primarily on defence related issues and military co-operation in order to enhance mutual understanding. In addition it also ‘facilitates consultation and an opportunity to work together on issues such as disaster relief and civil emergency control, search and rescue and humanitarian operations, armaments co-operation and Peace Support Operations.’⁷ The post-Cold War role of NATO – especially through the initiation of the PFP ‘security community’ – is also increasingly becoming oriented towards crisis management rather than collective defence (see, e.g., Gudmundson 2000: 12; 83-85; Hultdt 2003: 11ff).

The process of planning for *Viking 03* followed a standard schedule for NATO/PFP exercises. The SWEDINT course that I attended together with Thomas and Magnus was centred on how to properly carry out these preparations, which consisted of a pre-given number of workshops and planning conferences. For *Viking 03*, most of these were carried out at conference centres or military regiments in the Stockholm area. Although some workshops were exclusively military, most included representatives from participating civilian organisations as well. The number of participants on these occasions ranged from anything between ten or fifteen people at the smallest workshops, to several hundred at the largest conferences. Between these events, planning continuously proceeded at the Swedish Defence Wargaming Centre (SDWC), at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters in Stockholm.

The objective of the *Viking 03* project was to promote:

- Civil Military Co-Operation (CIMIC);
- Transparency between all parties;
- Multinationality;
- Contacts between the Nations and individuals;
- The development of the ability to work together; and
- Greater co-operation and dialogue among the wider defence and security communities in NATO and Partner nations.⁸

6 See <http://www.nato.int/issues/pfp/index.html> (accessed 2005-03-28).

7 From the Swedish Armed Forces website, <http://www.mil.se/viking03/article.php?id=8965> (accessed 2005-06-26).

8 See the *Viking 03* website, <http://www.mil.se/viking03/> (accessed 2005-06-26).

The aim of *Viking 03* thus echoed the policy of NATO, and the fact that Sweden is not a member of NATO was arguably one of the things that turned *Viking 03* into an attractive exercise for many of the participating countries. As the deputy Exercise Director, a Swiss officer, put it in an interview: 'to quite a number of countries [*Viking 03* is] a good opportunity. [For] those who, for whatever political reason, are a little bit more reluctant to join NATO/PFP Exercises that are NATO-led, this exercise offers an opportunity to share, in fact, the same know-how, but under Swedish command.'

Bogaland

In order to meet the exercise aims, a fictitious country called *Bogaland* was created as a training scenario for the exercise. Troubled by violent outbursts of ethnic conflict, *Bogaland* eventually became subjected to a NATO-led and UN-mandated intervention. No military troops participated in the field during the exercise. Instead, all activities were enacted with simulation technology. The activities in *Bogaland* were represented via computers, in written documents and through fictitious media (including TV and radio broadcasts, as well as international and local newspapers). Participants also took part in various kinds of face-to-face meetings.

The *Bogaland* scenario seemed on the face of it to consist of a number of typical conflict ingredients. Described as originating in the 'local culture,' these included ancient ethnic and religious hatreds and territorial disputes between different factions of the population. In addition, what appeared as cold-blooded greediness among local warlords made any prospect of a peaceful solution of the situation seem unlikely. When scrutinised closely, however, this exercise scenario completely lacked internal consistency.⁹ The construction of *Bogaland* was in other words characterised by what Gernot Grabher (2004: 1492) calls 'situative pragmatism', which implies that 'knowledge is valued according to its usefulness to solve the specific project task rather than to the authority of its disciplinary, institutional or departmental origin and status.' In the *Viking 03* fictitious intervention, the task was to 'prevent violence through the use of force', as the Exercise Director, Swedish Major General Tony Stigsson, put it somewhat bluntly. And faced with the chaotic and seemingly incomprehensible situation in *Bogaland*, a military intervention indeed looked like the only remaining alternative for the concerned members of the international community.

9 The *Bogaland* scenario was described as a 'local' conflict, caused by ancient ethnic hatreds. Such a characterisation of conflicts is thoroughly contested within anthropology. Ethnographic studies have shown that conflicts which on the face of it might seem 'local' often have global aspects and connections, which are critical to take into account for a proper understanding (see, e.g. Finnström 2005; Turton 2003). Ethnic differences tend to be seen not as causes of conflicts but rather as their results (see, e.g. Allen and Seaton 1997). And rather than created in the past, most anthropologists see ethnic conflicts as constitutive parts of the present (see, e.g. Eller 2002; cf. Kaldor 2001).

Institutionalising Interventionism

In April 2003 a four-day planning workshop took place at a conference centre located beautifully on the countryside just outside Stockholm. During the workshop I took part in meetings and listened in on discussions. It was still quite difficult for me to picture what the exercise would eventually look like, and I tried to concentrate on comprehending how everything would work and what *Viking 03* was about. As I look back now I think that this was in fact what most participants were up to at that stage. Everyone seemed busy trying to define roles for themselves and figuring out how these fitted into the larger project framework. Dinners, coffee breaks, and other recurrent social gatherings functioned as important occasions for participants to gradually forge a common approach towards the project and their respective roles in it. The *Viking 03* project had thus, to borrow a phrase from Robert Musil (1996: 141), become a tangible reality before anyone knew what it was.

Two things, however, were widely regarded as central to the project: internationalisation and civil-military co-operation. Albeit seldom defined in a more explicit manner, everybody seemed to agree that these issues were highly important. One evening after dinner, I was discussing the transformation of the military together with Thomas and another Swedish officer. They told me that many people who work within the Swedish military today feel that it is necessary and important for the armed forces to engage in international military co-operation, while politicians often emphasise instead civil-military co-operation as the most important aspect of the way ahead. *Viking 03* included both; and the project clearly meant different things to different participants.

Before the workshop I had been curious to learn how participants would discuss moral, ethical, and political issues related to the new role for the armed forces. What struck me while taking part, however, was that international military intervention seemed already to be completely taken-for-granted as both necessary and good. Since this was taken as a starting-point, what tended to be negotiated was mainly technological and organisational issues related to the execution of the *Viking 03* project. The focus seemed in other words to be on the nature of the preparations rather than on what was being prepared for and why.

During a coffee break towards the end of the workshop Magnus, the Swedish officer, told me that in 2002 he was suddenly transferred back to Sweden while serving in a military mission in Afghanistan. His new task in Sweden was to develop a fictitious exercise scenario. Exercises such as *Viking 03*, Magnus concluded half-jokingly, are thus apparently regarded as more important than real operations.

This workshop took place quite early in the planning phase. Civilian participation was reduced to one meeting, held in Stockholm with representatives from a number of organisations; and at this point, eight months prior to the exercise, it was not clear which organisations that, in the end, would take part. Amnesty International, for instance, was mentioned as one of the organisations, which apparently had not yet decided whether they would participate or not.

The military personnel, meanwhile, progressively continued to prepare for the exercise. But not only did the plan for the exercise interventionist solution become established before the civilian involvement in the project; it also preceded the develop-

ment of a problem that it could solve. Contrary to a rationalist perspective – according to which actors first correctly identify problems and then suggest proper solutions to them – it thus appeared in the *Viking 03* project almost to function the other way around. According to political scientist Johan Eriksson, this is not uncommon. In his recent analysis of Swedish security politics (Eriksson 2004: 155), he notes that once a solution has become institutionalised, it tends to be defended stubbornly among actors related to it. Bureaucratic responsibilities become allotted, routines set up, and budgets prepared; new organisations become established, personnel employed, and new areas of expertise emerge. The *Viking 03* project reflected that such a field, centred on international intervention as a specific militarised solution, is currently in the making.

Sweden's engagements with the world

In this section I approach the 'new military' and the contemporary focus on international intervention through a historical contextualisation. The meaning of 'thinking historically', however, is ambiguous. It might, as William Sewell (1999: 40) points out, mean to recognise more consciously and explicitly the 'pastness' of the past we think about. Or it might mean, instead, to place the issue in question in a temporal sequence of transformations.

During my fieldwork within *Viking 03*, I noted that the participants were themselves often situating the project in a historical context. While negotiating and discussing the new international role for the military, its relation to certain issues, and to the proposed interventionist solution, they were simultaneously inscribing these issues in a historical narrative. This resulted in a perspective, common in other contexts too, according to which the changing nature of the military, and of international intervention, appear as part of an 'evolutionary' process (see, e.g., Goulding 1993) in which armed forces and related civilian organisations, after having progressively 'adapted' to novel outer circumstances (see, e.g., Burk 2002), are currently on the brink of evolving into a 'culture of conflict prevention' (see, e.g., Mellbourn 2004).

This kind of rhetoric, of course, gives an aura of historical necessity and inevitability to the present. Such a perspective, which recounts a series of changes over time but fails to indicate the distance of the context being described from the present, could be labelled 'anachronistic'. That is, 'the historian's equivalent of the anthropologist's "ethnocentric"' (Sewell 1999: 41). In pointing this out, however, I am not suggesting that the participants in the *Viking 03* project were engaged in writing bad history, but rather that they were not writing history at all. They were making sense of the present.

In my own historical contextualisation, then, I do not trace historically a set of issues as they are currently conceptualised. Doing so would inevitably 'ontologise' and reify them. Instead, I discuss briefly Sweden's history of political and military engagements with the world during the twentieth century. This has not been a progressive development in which Sweden has become increasingly internationalised. Instead, notions of and relations between 'Sweden', the 'world', and the role of the military have shifted; and consequently, international engagements have signified and ex-

pressed different things. ‘What is found at the historical beginning of things,’ Michel Foucault (1998: 372) reminds us, ‘is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.’

Peace, Democracy, and International Co-operation

Within the *Viking 03* project, peace, democracy, and international co-operation were key words. These concepts, and their current interconnectedness, were seen among the participants as self-evidently and inherently good, and the *Viking 03* project was regarded as important among politicians, representatives from the armed forces, and within the NGO community. In the early twentieth century, however, few would have shared this enthusiasm.

War was at the beginning of the century often described as natural, necessary, and good. To wage war – at least prior to World War I – thus constituted one legitimate strategy among others for states to reach their respective goals.¹⁰ Democracy, as we know it today, did not represent the political norm anywhere in the world; instead, political and military sovereignty was emphasised as important at a time when adherence to nationalist ideologies was dominant. International co-operation, as a result, was widely regarded with suspiciousness. The apparent self-evident meaning and value of peace, democracy, and international co-operation – as well as the present interconnectedness of the terms and their allegedly promising direction – is in other words a historically recent conception. Words have not kept their meaning, desires have not pointed in a single direction, and ideas have not retained their logic. Rather than a leap forward in history, the *Viking 03* project was thus an expression of the contemporary situation.

In Sweden, democratisation occurred during World War I. In the inter-war era, preceded by an extensive parliamentary debate, Sweden joined the League of Nations and took also part in international operations under its auspices (see, e.g., E. Johansson 2001a). This could perhaps be seen as the beginning of a new period in the country’s foreign policy, characterised by an increasing outlook towards the international. The military, however, remained a largely nationalistic and politically conservative societal establishment. In response to the infamous shootings in Ådalen 1931, where during a demonstration a number of activists were killed by military personnel, a leg-

10 Wars, obviously, mirror to some extent the societal and historical contexts in which they occur. World War I, for instance, cannot be properly understood without taking into account its intimate relation to an imperial context; and the logics of imperialism, in turn, can be elucidated through a study of that war (see, e.g., Morrow 2004). As Kaveli J. Holsti (2004: 1) points out, ‘War defined as a contest of arms between sovereign states derives from the post-1648 European experience, as well as from the Cold War’. Attitudes towards war, however, have not retained the same meaning. For a discussion of changing attitudes towards war from the end of the nineteenth century – when war was understood as natural, necessary and good – to the middle of the twentieth century – when it was generally agreed that wars ought to be avoided at all costs – see A. Johansson (2003: 359-367); and see Oredsson (2001: 75ff) for Swedish perspectives. With the 1928 General Treaty for the Renunciation of War (Kellogg-Briand Pact), the League of Nations formally outlawed war as an instrument of policy, and signatories of the treaty were compelled to resolve their conflicts by peaceful means (Holsti 2004: 5).

isolation of strict regulations for domestic civil-military relations also created a palpable 'split' between the civilian and military spheres (see Oredsson 2001: 153-160).

At the outbreak of World War II Sweden declared adherence to the policy of neutrality, which, although increasingly debated, has continued to this day. After the war, in a national survey from 1946, only 55% of the Swedish population thought that Sweden ought to become a member of an international organisation of all states, and take part in military operations for peace (Ferm 1995: 354). Nevertheless, Sweden became a member of the United Nations (UN) the same year, and took part in the first UN military observer group, United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), which in 1948 was set up in the Middle East, led by Folke Bernadotte (who was killed later the same year in Jerusalem during the course of the mission).

In 1950, a proposal within the UN suggested that member states, in order to make UN peace operations more efficient, should supply the organisation with military troops. This actualised for the first time the question of Swedish participation in military operations abroad. After an extensive parliamentary evaluation, however, the Swedish government concluded in 1952 that this would not be in compliance with national interests, and the proposal was turned down (see, e.g., Löden 1999: 339-340).

When in 1956 the UN decided to organise its first armed peacekeeping operation, however, the government came to a different conclusion, and decided to let Swedish forces take part in the First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I), deployed at the Suez Canal in Egypt. At the time, military co-operation with other states was very limited (Sköld 1995: 117), and this decision thus constituted a crucial step towards a more active Swedish foreign policy. The Swedish decision to send military personnel on this mission, under more or less unknown circumstances outside the national borders, cannot be explained exclusively from a security perspective. Political scientist Hans Löden (1999: 250-253) suggests that it was also related to an ideologically based support of the UN, and to the contemporary Swedish self-image as a loyal UN member and a consistent supporter of an international legal order.

Regarded as a success, the Swedish participation in UNEF rendered Sweden international prestige, and when during the summer of 1960 the UN organised its second peacekeeping operation – this time in the Congo – the Swedish government decided immediately and seemingly without hesitation to take part.¹¹

International Activism and National Defence

Extensive participation in UN military operations became widely regarded, in Sweden and abroad, as integral to the country's international role. Still, Sweden's engagements with the world throughout much of the Cold War remained largely separated from a traditional military sphere, and took the form, instead, of political activism (Agrell 2003: 172-173). At the time, writes Michael Steene,

11 In the international system of states, different countries tend to parade distinctive virtues (cf. Meyer et al. 1997: 164), and Sweden – together with a handful of states such as Canada and the other Nordic nations – increasingly took on the role as a super-power of peacekeeping. For a discussion of Swedish peacekeeping, see E. Johansson (2001b); for a comparison between the Nordic countries, see Salminen (2003).

Sweden embarked upon a major foreign aid policy to promote development in Third World countries and assumed a new role as champion of solidarity. In the 1960s, Sweden elected not to build a nuclear arsenal and instead became active in the promotion of arms control. Sweden – it may be said – assumed the role of a moral voice in the spirit of the activist UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld who died in the line of duty in 1961 (Steene 1989: 177).

Apart from military participation in UN missions, Swedish political activism thus ranged from questions of disarmament and international law, to trade policy, de-colonisation, and development aid.

Ideologically oriented rather than security based, international engagement was not regarded with univocal enthusiasm within the Swedish military (see, e.g., Sköld 1994: 186-191). On the contrary, many officers consistently opposed political decisions to participate in international military missions. For the Swedish government, however, supporting the UN increasingly became regarded as a matter-of-course, and decisions to send troops abroad were thus liable to be carried out irrespective of any military apprehensions.

The military scepticism towards international operations is clearly illustrated through an example from the UN operation in the Congo in the 1960s. Not only did military leaders only reluctantly provide the requested personnel (see Sköld 1994: 67; 110); when officers who had taken part in actual combat returned to Sweden, they also often found their international experiences being either simply ignored or brushed aside as unimportant by representatives from the military establishment. As one officer recalls:

Immediately after returning from the Congo, I started at the Military Academy where tactics and strategy were discussed [...]. When with great zest I tried to share some of my experiences from the Congo, they looked at me like something the cat had dragged in (cited in Agrell 2003: 190; my translation).

Representatives within the political and the military spheres thus came to different conclusions about Swedish international military engagement. The reason for their opposing views, however, was arguably their common adherence to an internationalist framework where the notion of the nation constituted a taken-for-granted starting point for all decision-making and the obvious end-goal for actions taken. Political and military decisions were thus equally motivated by and carried out in accordance with what was regarded as Swedish national interests. The Swedish minister of Foreign Affairs, Torsten Nilsson, even explicitly stated in 1965 that international co-operation was important because it was of *national* interest to Sweden (see, e.g., Lödén 1999: 286).

Seen from this perspective, the official Swedish critique of the Vietnam War was not only – or perhaps not even primarily – an act of solidarity with the Vietnamese people. It could also be understood as a principle defence of the right of small states to their national sovereignty, and thus ultimately as a struggle for Swedish interests (Lödén 1999: 195).

This interpretation seems to be supported by a speech given in August 1965 in which Torsten Nilsson elaborated the official Swedish position towards the war (see Möller 1992: 55-56). Nilsson initially described Swedish foreign policy as having become more active and that increasing partaking in UN operations had also engaged Sweden in politically sensitive international issues. He went on to comment upon the situation in Vietnam, describing the people of the country as innocent sufferers in a war caused by colliding superpower interests in a geo-politically strategic place. In his speech, Nilsson questioned the legitimacy of the conflict from an international law perspective. He stressed the importance of maintaining adherence to the principle of national sovereignty, and emphasised the Vietnamese people's right to national self-determination. By way of conclusion, he compared this Swedish position with the one taken in 1956, when the Soviet quelling of the Hungarian uprising was condemned. Apart from attempting to sustain a critical balance in the critique of the US and of the Soviet bloc, this comparison also conveyed the notion of Sweden as a politically and morally consistent actor in international matters.

While in an era of internationalism a focus on national interest thus resulted in Swedish international political activism and in a more active foreign policy, the same principle turned national defence into the most highly prioritised task for the armed forces. Interpretations of the same principle within the political and the military spheres respectively thus led to opposing ideas of what actions that ought to be taken. After several years of recurrent Swedish participation in UN missions, however, the initial military scepticism subsequently gave way to a more positive attitude towards international operations within the military too (Sköld 1995: 126).

Armed Forces after the Cold War

As is evident from this brief run-through, notions of the world and Sweden's role in it, as well as the relation between the military and the political spheres, have shifted. While during the era of internationalism adherence to the principle of national sovereignty was regarded as morally and politically important, sovereignty is today often regarded as standing in opposition to responsibility (see, e.g., Keren and Sylvan 2002). Rather than primarily centred on national defence, armed forces are also increasingly becoming oriented towards taking part in international operations. In Sweden this has been listed as one of main tasks of the armed forces since 1997. National defence, on the contrary, is mentioned by the Swedish military today almost in the passing: 'Apart from international operations, it is also the task of the Armed Forces to guard the Swedish territory, to detect and repel violations, and, in co-operation with other government agencies, to claim our integrity. Military personnel and equipment should also be ready for use in civilian crises' (Försvarsmakten 2005: 8; my translation). It is noteworthy that a statement like this not even includes the word 'sovereignty'.

Related to the decreased emphasis on national sovereignty and state interests, the contemporary trajectory for international engagements appears to be oriented increasingly towards a cosmopolitan outlook (cf. Hannerz, this volume). This focus, contrary to that of national interest during much of the Cold War, has led political

and military representatives to draw similar conclusions concerning the proper way ahead. That is, an emphasis of the importance of engaging in international cooperation, to developing civil-military relations, and to prepare for international interventions. What is new today, in other words, is not the orientation towards the international *per se*, but rather a particular interrelation between the notions of the national and the international on the one hand, and between the political and the military on the other.

Although hitherto I have mainly discussed this set of transitions from a Swedish perspective, it is by no means limited to Sweden. Armed forces throughout the Western world are going through similar changes (cf. Dandeker 1994); and the altered 'relationship between warfighting and the political, economic and cultural-ideological domains', according to Martin Shaw (2005: 55), even constitutes the core of a 'new Western way of war'.

'Conflict preventionism' and the new military

Military and civilian participants in the *Viking 03* project identified each other as partners in a mutual effort towards a common goal. The fact that this makes sense today signals a shift, which is not limited to the military sphere. On a broader level, it is also connected to the emergence of a new way of conceiving the world, relating to it, and acting within it. The participants in the project functioned as activators of this specific potentiality of reality, which I refer to as 'conflict preventionism' (Viktorin, forthcoming). In this final section I focus on the new interconnectedness of concepts and the current 'conceptual interconnections of problems' (Rabinow 2003: 68) related to 'conflict preventionism', as conveyed in the *Viking 03* project.

There are several reasons for using the label 'conflict preventionism' as a conceptualisation of the matters at issue. First, 'conflict preventionism' is a much broader and more wide-ranging concept analytically than, say, 'interventionism': while not excluding interventions, it can be employed to conceptualise a variety of other practices too. Second, as an *emic* term, *conflict prevention* has surfaced as an increasingly common conception, frequently invoked in a number of international contexts. Consider, for example, the following overview:

The United Nations' General Assembly and the Security Council have expressed commitment to pursue conflict prevention with all appropriate means. The European Union has adopted a European Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict, stating that the highest political priority will be given to improve external action in the field of conflict prevention. A vast number of non-governmental organizations, individuals and non-state actors have been promoting the idea of conflict prevention. Today, a near-universal agreement on the idea of conflict prevention is emerging [...] when it comes to dealing with violent conflicts (Björkdahl 2002: 15).

According to the 1998 Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, conflict prevention even constitutes "a way of thinking; a state of mind, perhaps even a culture that permeates the activities of all those engaged in the implementation of pre-

ventive policy – be they NGOs, states, or regional and global organizations” (Carment and Schnabel 2003: 12).

In order to understand ‘conflict preventionism’ analytically, it is critical to move beyond a conventional kind of critique which, somewhat routinely, tends to characterise interventions as a ‘new imperialism’ (Razack 2004) and civil-military co-operation in such operations as ‘military humanitarianism’ (Chandler 2001; Chomsky 1999). Many people who work with civil-military co-operation, rather than deliberately trying to conceal some ‘real’ interests behind forged humanitarian pretences, genuinely think that they are ‘doing good’. This was certainly the case within *Viking 03*; and to me, it is one of the most intriguing aspects of the current situation: that the military apparently is becoming included within the category of ‘do-gooders’ which has hitherto been reserved for NGOs; that ideas of intervention and the use of force have changed; and that a new ‘imaginary directionality’ (Wolf 2001: 318) for engagements with the world is emerging.

‘Conflict preventionism’ is thus opening up a new space for international action, where a set of novel issues, actor-alliances, and solutions are emerging. These are connected through their common focus on three interrelated issues: knowledge of ethnic conflicts; policy concerning prevention and intervention; and the institutionalisation of peace. Within ‘conflict preventionism’, in other words, it is presumed that violent conflicts constitute urgent issues of international concern; that such conflicts can and ought to be prevented or managed; and, importantly, that peace is a universal value which can be implemented through intervention. A range of miscellaneous actors – including governmental officials, military personnel, NGO activists, as well as representatives from international organisations – are becoming increasingly interconnected in mutual attempts to handle these issues. And progressively, new solutions are becoming institutionalised.

The *Viking 03* project exemplifies these processes. Tangibly reflected in the fictitious *Bogaland* scenario, the idea that ethnic conflicts constitute local problems of global concern was the central topic of the entire project. This issue was discussed, communicated, and negotiated among the participants; and different civilian and military actors gradually became increasingly interconnected through these collaborative efforts. This interaction also brought about new alliances – formal and informal; personal and organisational – as well as new trajectories for humanitarian action. The process of institutionalising peace after violence had been halted in *Bogaland* (the fictitious humanitarian intervention had, not surprisingly, accomplished its main objective successfully) was also discussed during the exercise – most notably, perhaps, by participating NGOs such as the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC).

Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

To some extent, ‘conflict preventionism’ could be characterised as an attempt at “top-down” cosmopolitanism, where international co-operation has emerged as a key word. The *Viking 03* project, with its aim to ‘promote multinationality’, exemplifies this. ‘[W]hat we’re trying to achieve [within *Viking 03*] is an international community that tries to work together,’ the Deputy Exercise Director told me in an inter-

view. 'Either the guy's doing a good job, an interesting one, or not; whether he's from this, this, or that country – you don't care.' This was the recurrent official rhetoric of the project: a downplaying of the importance of national belonging and a continuous emphasis instead on international co-operation.

Among many participants in the project, however, another interpretation of multi-nationalism seemed prevalent. It conveyed the idea that cultures ought to follow nation-state boundaries and that national belonging remains highly important. During a coffee break at one of the workshops, two Swedish officers were discussing cultural differences between countries in Europe, and during their conversation they continuously referred to their own experiences from taking part in multi-national military missions. Judging from their discussion, they seemed to hold that 'cultures' are different, that they are geographically organised, and that such 'cultural territories' are – or at least naturally ought to be – congruent with nation-state boundaries.

While an effort such as the *Viking 03* seems to be initiated with the explicit 'top-down' aim to promote multi-nationalism, in a cosmopolitan sense, the project might in practice affirm, instead, a 'nation-state logic'. According to Eyal Ben-Ari and Efrat Elron (2001), this is also often the case in UN military missions. Contrary to what is commonly assumed, they argue that during such operations a 'nation-state logic' is not only transcended but also strengthened and affirmed.

Viking 03 seemed also to constitute a possible growth point both for nationalist and cosmopolitan orientations towards the world; a context in which, to some extent, it was possible to reconcile cosmopolitanism and patriotism. Or at least a context in which patriotism could be expressed in a cosmopolitan language (cf. Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 11). The 'new military' is thus not so much 'either or' in terms of 'the nation state versus cosmopolitanism'. After all, as I noted in the introduction, Thomas and Magnus, the Swedish officers, seemed equally at home both in the 'national' officers' mess and in the 'international' seminar room.

The Reification of War and Peace

'Conflict preventionism' is also related closely to a specific way of understanding war and peace. This was exemplified in the interventionist solution institutionalised through the *Viking 03* project, but is also clearly evident in many academic contexts. The academic and the policy positions on these transformations are thus far from clearly separated; they often convey the same kind of logic.

In her book on the war in Mozambique, *A Different Kind of War Story*, anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom (1997) argues that peace eventually became possible through a 'bottom-up' peace process, in which local people united in a successful attempt to stop the violence. Nordstrom emphasises the strategy to oppose the war itself, while refusing to take sides in it, as the key to success. Contrary to the common anthropological attempt to explain the unfamiliar, and what might at first sight look strange, Nordstrom abstains from asking why to some people the war seemed worth fighting. Instead, in her analysis the war remains incomprehensible and becomes implicitly reified as the 'enemy'. The same rhetoric concerning war and peace is expressed in a recent information leaflet from the Swedish Armed Forces. Outlining the contempo-

rary role of the military, it states that ‘all countries must work together in order to prevent all kinds of threats towards peace and security in the world’ (Försvarsmakten 2005: 10; my translation).

This way of understanding war and peace turns these concepts into reified entities, not contingent on local circumstances, but apparently stable and universally valid. Within the *Viking 03* project this logic was perhaps most clearly exemplified through the creation of the fictitious *Bogaland*: a de-territorialised and generalised scenario, conveying a logic which allegedly could be utilised in attempts to understand any future conflict. The participants in the exercise, in turn, learned how to use military force to create peace during the fictitious intervention in *Bogaland*. In order to succeed in such a mission, it is important to find in the local population people who, like those in Nordstrom’s book, oppose the conflict. Mary Kaldor (2001: 119-137; cf. also 2002), calls this strategy for managing violent conflicts ‘cosmopolitan law enforcement’. According to Kaldor, it is in every conflict situation possible to identify local advocates of cosmopolitanism: ‘people and places which refuse to accept the politics of war – islands of civility’ (Kaldor 2001: 120). The key to success for international interventions, Kaldor argues, is to consult such people and treat them as partners.

Conclusion

In a recent anthology on the emergence of global ethics (Eade and O’Byrne 2005), the contributors highlight some weaknesses of much cosmopolitan writings. One, as Darren O’Byrne points out in the introduction, is that the cosmopolitan tradition ‘tends to rely on an overly simplistic, polarised view of the world, reducible to a few dichotomies’, such as ‘cosmopolitanism versus the nation state’. Another is that concepts often become reified, which implies that a critical analysis of the structures and dynamics of these concepts fail (O’Byrne 2005: 2). These analytical weaknesses are especially evident among commentators who, like Kaldor, are explicitly normative in their writings.

Anthropologists, however, as Tanya Luhrmann (2001: 281) reminds us, ‘see not what moral judgement should be but how people in a particular time and place strive to be good people.’ Following this perspective I have in this article explored some integral aspects of the ‘new military’, as enacted in the *Viking 03* project. Rather than to answer a set of questions, I have thus attempted instead to develop a specific kind of inquiry.¹²

The ‘new military’ tends to be portrayed as part of a progressive development to promote peace, democracy, and international co-operation. The ‘new military’ thus

12 As recently pointed out by Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (2005: 17), ‘the fields of moral, ethical, or political valuation and activity are shifting,’ and ‘consequently, these fields should themselves be a central object of [anthropological] inquiry.’ Ulf Hannerz’ (2004) anthropological study of foreign correspondents constitutes a recent demonstration of the potentials of such an approach. Moving beyond a common media critical stance, Hannerz explores and explains the practices of foreign news reporting; and the resulting ethnography thus not only conveys a critical understanding of the world of foreign correspondents, it also opens up for a balanced critique of certain assumptions within much of contemporary media critique.

tends to be focused on the international rather than the national; to be considered cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic; and to be related to peace rather than war.

In this article, I have problematised these presumptions. I have argued that international engagements at different times have signified different things. Rather than the result of a historical process in which, finally, it has become possible to realise what has 'always' been the goal, the 'new military' needs to be understood in relation to a set of emerging transformations, which I conceptualise as 'conflict preventionism'. Tangibly exemplified in the *Viking 03* project, this transnational cultural form is centred on certain issues, actors, and solutions, which structure international engagements in a specific direction. In order to inquire analytically into these transformations, then, it is not the military *per se* but rather this new 'conflict preventionist' framework that has to be taken as the proper object of study; a framework which, I argue, is bringing about a new relationship between the military and the political spheres; between the national and the international; and, ultimately, between the notions of war and peace.

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