

FINNISH
DEFENCE
STUDIES



ÅLAND ISLANDS

A Strategic Survey

Anders Gardberg

Finnish Defence Studies is published under the auspices of the National Defence College, and the contributions reflect the fields of research and teaching of the College. *Finnish Defence Studies* will occasionally feature documentation on Finnish Security Policy.

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Published by

NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

P.O. Box 266

FIN - 00171 Helsinki

FINLAND

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Anders Gardberg



Translated from Swedish by
Kate Törnroos

ISBN 951-25-0754-4
ISSN 0788-5571

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Painatuskeskus Oy
Pasilan pikapaino
Helsinki 1995

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS 1809-1951 - THE BASIS IS LAID FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION AND NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ISLANDS	7
	2.1 The 1856 convention on the Åland Islands	7
	2.2 The Åland Issue in 1917-1921 and its Solution	8
	2.3 The New Åland Issue in the 1930's	11
	2.4 Åland during the Winter War and Continuation War	12
	2.5 Re-introduction of the Demilitarization	16
	2.6 Main Factors Influencing Åland's Strategic Significance - Conclusions and Problems	17
3	TRENDS AFFECTING THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF NORTHERN EUROPE AND THE BALTIC SEA	22
	3.1 Trends in Russia	22
	3.2 Trends in the European Security Order	27
4	ÅLAND'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE IN VARIOUS OPERATIONS	29
	4.1 Military Geographical Position of the Ålands Islands	29
	4.2 Åland as an Operational Area in view of the development of Military Technology	34
	4.3 Alternative Operations	37
5	THE CONVENTIONS CONCERNING THE ÅLANDS ISLANDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISLANDS	46
	5.1 The 1921 Convention relating to the Non-fortification and Neutralization of the Åland Islands	47
	5.2 The Treaty of 1940 between Finland and the Soviet Union concerning the Åland Islands	50
	5.3 Conventions on Passage through Ålandic Waters	50
	5.4 The Conventions and the Strategic Position of the Åland Islands	51
	5.5 Influence of Åland's Autonomy on the Islands' Strategic Position	55
6	ÅLAND'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR VARIOUS ACTORS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION	59
	6.1 Significance for Finland	59
	6.2 Significance for Sweden	63
	6.3 Significance for the WEU	65
	6.4 Significance for the CIS and Russia	66

6.5 Significance for NATO	67
6.6 Significance for the Strategic Situation in Northern Europe ..	69
NOTES	71
MAPS	
Map 1	
The Åland Islands and the Baltic Sea	82
Map 2	
Åland - The Main Islands	83
Map 3	
The Area of the Åland Islands, as presented in the Conventions	84
Map 4	
Boundaries in the Åland Constriction	85
APPENDIX	86
DOCUMENTATION	87
Convention 30 March 1856 on demilitarization of the Åland Islands (French) Transcription	87
Convention on non-fortification and neutralization of the Åland Islands 20 October 1921	
English translation	90
Treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union 11 October 1940 concerning Åland Islands	
English translation	95

1 INTRODUCTION

The strategic position of the Åland Islands has been discussed on several occasions since the islands were demilitarized in 1856. At regular intervals the islands and their strategic position have caused debate both in Finland and in international forums. During the last decade there has been a new kind of debate about Åland, mostly in the Ålandic and Finnish media. The debate is in some respects similar to the debate in the late 1930's, when there were Finnish and Swedish plans on reducing the demilitarization of the islands. This time the debate has mainly been initiated by the Ålandic media, which have questioned the visits of the Finnish navy in Ålandic waters. The first stage was the "gunboat debates" in 1988-1991, on whether the Finnish navy could and should move in Ålandic waters and whether their presence was necessary in the first place. Since 1991 the debates have taken a new turn and are now more concerned with the issue of the demilitarization of Åland. In this debate various parties have used strategic arguments, either trying to prove the need for a military presence or questioning this need. But if reference is made to "strategic reasons" without further clarification of what these really are, the result will be that the arguments become only emotional elements in the debate, without factual value.

"The strategic position of the Åland Islands" requires a detailed definition. The concept of strategy has been discussed ever since Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831). Often the definitions have been very obscure in their attempts to be comprehensive. One of the more concrete and understandable definitions is that of the American researcher Carl H. Builder: "A strategy is a concept for relating means to ends". A change in either ends or means, will also lead to a change in strategy. Thus the strategy may be dynamic or static, depending on the stability of the ends and the means. The strategy may change if new means become available or if different ends appear to be preferable.¹

This study is based on the work by major GSO Anders Gardberg in preparation for his diploma for the War College in Finland during 1989-1991, and it has been supplemented during his scholarship studies at the Armed Forces Staff and War College in Sweden in 1992-1994.

Even if it may seem tempting to try to analyze what is ends and what is means, Builder warns that this temptation probably ought to be resisted, as means and ends are relative concepts that may easily be confused. Means to Builder include devices, tools, power, forces, and pressures for achieving them. The strategy is the concept, or the "manuscript", the plan for using these means to achieve the end as efficiently, advantageously and safely as possible.²

According to this definition, an end or a means may influence the strategic position of the Åland Islands, either separately or concurrently. If Åland is *the end* of the strategy for one party, this will affect the islands' *strategic position*. Even if the islands were not an end in themselves, their strategic position will be affected, if *they are affected by the means* used to achieve an end. Thus "the strategic position of the Åland Islands" is as dynamic or as static as the ends and means affecting the islands.

The Finnish naval officer and strategist Kullervo Killinen in 1958 considered that the basic geostrategic factors were the area's physical (geography, location, etc.), economic (raw materials, industry etc.), and population factors.³ As Åland in these respects does not differ from its surroundings, it can be said that Åland does not in itself have any great geostrategic significance. The islands' strategic position must therefore be seen against the background of the strategic position of the Baltic Sea as a whole.

Åland cannot either be seen as a peaceful enclave, as the "Islands of Peace", that have lost their strategic significance thanks to their demilitarized position. Regional factors, e.g. the conventions, cannot alone change the strategic position of the Åland Islands. The strategic position always emanates from external factors, from strategic considerations within the Baltic Sea and the countries around it.

"From history we learn that man does not learn from history" (G.B. Shaw). True or not, but as historical facts are often used as arguments in the debate about Åland, which is entirely justified, it may be interesting to begin by finding out what conclusions may be drawn about Åland's strategic position in a historical perspective. Going on from there it will then be possible to establish what relevance the historical experiences might have today and to develop different future scenarios which might affect Åland.

2 STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS 1809-1951 - THE BASIS IS LAID FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION AND NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ISLANDS

2.1 *The 1856 Convention on the Åland Islands*

Russia conquered Finland, including the Åland Islands, during the war in 1808-09. The occupation of the islands constituted a direct military threat against Stockholm. During the peace negotiations in Hamina in 1809 Sweden's minimum demand was the return of Åland. This demand was not satisfied. Nor did Sweden have guarantees from Russia that the islands would not be used for military purposes.⁴

Russia considered Åland to be of vital importance for the defence of Finland, and construction of the Bomarsund fortress was initiated. The construction work caused alarm in England, where the fortress was regarded as a threat against the export of tar to England from the towns on the coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia and against free shipping in the Baltic Sea.⁵

During the Crimean War in 1853-56 England and France attacked the Finnish coasts. The countries tried to engage Sweden in the war by offering Åland as a reward. Sweden, where the foreign policy was led by king Oscar I, was much tempted, but held to its declaration of neutrality. Bomarsund was half finished and an attractive target for the English and French troops. The fortress was taken in August 1854 and blown to pieces. The following year Sweden through the so called November treaty offered to join the war on the English and French side. But shortly afterwards the belligerents began peace negotiations. At that stage the Swedish goal was to obtain the Åland Islands. If this could not be achieved, then an independent island state under the protection of the victor states was to be preferred. As a last resort Sweden saw the demilitarization of the islands. A demilitarization was also in the interest of England.⁶

Thus a convention was appended to the peace treaty, where His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia "in order to oblige the wish expressed by Their Majesties the Queen of Great Britain and the Emperor of the French" declared that "the Åland Islands will not be fortified ...". It is notable that the convention only concerns the fortification of the land areas, which are not exactly defined. Thus the sea area was not demilitarized.

2.2 *The Åland Issue in 1917-1921 and its Solution*

Åland remained demilitarized until World War I, with the exception of a Russian attempt to place a battalion on the islands.⁷ At the beginning of the war, a German landing was considered likely. As the German navy was active in the area, Russia began to build fortifications on the islands in spring 1915, having informed England, France and Sweden of its intentions. During two years ten coast artillery batteries were fortified. In addition several barracks and maintenance buildings were erected. The extent of the fortifications, together with Russia's refusal to honour the 1856 convention after the war, caused alarm in Sweden. The old threat perception of the "gun aimed at the heart of Sweden" was brought back to life.⁸

But the situation changed with the Russian revolutions in 1917. The situation in the Russian garrison of 7 000 or 8 000 men was a great cause for anxiety in the islands, which had a population of 20 000 at the utmost.⁹ Among the Ålanders at that stage awoke the idea of an annexation to Sweden. The situation was further complicated by the Finnish declaration of independence on December 6, 1917.

When the war of independence broke out in January 1918, a white corps, Uudenkaupungin Suojeluskunta (Uusikaupunki Civic Guard, UCG) was isolated in Uusikaupunki. The corps decided to make its way to Ostrobothnia using the only route available, over Åland and Sweden. When UCG came to Åland, it started fighting the Russian troops, with the intent of disarming them. The fights were intensified when the reds sent reinforcements to help the Russian troops.¹⁰

At the same time a deputation from Åland called upon the Swedish king with a plea for help and a wish to annex Åland to

Sweden. When news of the fighting in Åland reached Stockholm with highly exaggerated reports of genocide, Sweden intervened. A strong naval force landed on the islands on February 13, 1918. The opinions about the reasons for the Swedish intervention differ. In Finland it has been regarded as an attempt of occupation. In Sweden the humanitarian reasons have been underlined, and the action has been compared to later UN peace-keeping operations.¹¹ In that respect the operation was a success. The Swedish force succeeded in breaking off the fighting and an agreement was reached about the departure of both white and red troops from Åland.¹² Negotiations about removing the Russian troops were also initiated. A Russian retreat would have left the islands totally under Swedish control.¹³

The Swedish intervention caused the white government in Finland to direct a plea for help to Germany. A German naval force landed on March 5, 1918, and took the Russian troops prisoner when they were about to leave the islands. The Swedish troops remained passive. Within a week the German troops gave over the formal command of the islands to the representative of the white Finland. The German and Swedish troops departed in the summer of 1918, Finland, Sweden and Germany having started negotiations about destroying the fortifications. These negotiations resulted in an agreement that same autumn.¹⁴

The reasons for the German intervention must be seen against a wider background. It was partly intended to increase the pressure on Russia during the interrupted peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk. Another reason probably was a German attempt to have the white Finland as an ally. In addition, the Åland Islands were considered to be well placed as a base for the landing in Finland which took place one month later.¹⁵ By landing on Åland, Germany also increased the pressure on Sweden. Germany had earlier offered Åland to Sweden as a reward for its entering the war. When Sweden took the initiative in its own hands, Germany lost a means of bringing pressure to bear on Sweden. At that stage it was feared that Sweden would enter the war against Germany.¹⁶

The fortifications were destroyed during the summer of 1919 under supervision of a commission from Finland, Sweden and Germany. But this did not settle the Åland issue. Finland,

not having existed as an independent state when the convention was signed, refused to acknowledge it, despite having agreed to destroy the fortifications.¹⁷ Sweden, on its part, required a fulfillment of Åland's demands for a reunion. In a referendum 95 % of the Ålanders had voted for a reunion. In order to restrain the Ålanders' attempt at secession Finland enacted an Autonomy Act for the province in 1920, which was not, however, accepted by the Ålanders. At that stage the Ålanders' leaders were imprisoned, accused of high treason, at the same time as the Finnish troops on Åland were reinforced. The situation between Sweden and Finland became tense, and both countries increased their military preparedness. On the proposal of England the conflict was transferred to the League of Nations (LN).¹⁸

In the LN both countries considered the islands to be of great strategic value for their defence. The LN decided the issue of the sovereignty of the islands in Finland's favour in April 1921. Finland was obliged to guarantee the autonomy and minority status of the islands. However, the commission considered the islands to be of equal strategic importance to both countries.¹⁹ In order to solve the conflict, the LN summoned an international conference to confirm the 1856 convention. In 1921 a new convention relating to the non-fortification on the demilitarization and neutralization of the Åland Islands was signed in Geneva. It confirmed the demilitarization agreed on in 1856, but it was much more detailed. The area was not only demilitarized but also neutralized. The zone of the Åland Islands was exactly defined and included both land and sea areas. The convention also specified Finland's right to exceptional procedures during times of peace and war. Finland was obliged to ward off attacks against the islands until the LN and the signatories had had time to intervene. Thus the guarantees for the neutralization of the islands were rather complicated and a unanimous decision in the LN was needed for the decision to enter into force. At a 2/3 majority in the LN the signatories were entitled to intervene in case of a conflict. But the greatest drawback of the convention was that Soviet Russia was not permitted to take part in it. When the convention had been signed, Soviet Russia, which at that time was not a member of the LN, announced that as far as they were concerned, it did not exist.²⁰ Thus the convention was insufficient from the very beginning.

2.3 *The New Åland Issue in the 1930's*

The 1921 convention made it possible to normalize the relations between Finland and Sweden. Inofficial cooperation between Swedish and Finnish military circles for the defence of Åland began already in the middle of the decade.²¹

The strategic significance of the Åland Islands increased during the 1930's. As a result of Germany's strengthened position as a great power in the Baltic Sea area, the Soviet Union increased its military activity in the Baltic Sea. Both Sweden and Finland feared a race between the Soviet Union and Germany for the unfortified islands. By occupying the islands both could have brought pressure to bear on Sweden as well as on Finland. The German transports of ore from Northern Sweden through the Gulf of Bothnia could either be guaranteed or threatened, depending on who controlled the islands. Åland was situated between the power centres of the two great powers and could thus have constituted an advanced attack position for both parties. The confidence in the 1921 convention decreased concurrently with the diminishing authority of the LN. The Soviet Union had never acknowledged the convention and Germany left the LN in 1933.²²

Under these conditions Finland and Sweden started negotiations about a joint defence of the Åland Islands.²³ The negotiations resulted in the so called Stockholm Plan in January 1939. According to this plan Finland and Sweden would respect the 1921 convention to the extent that it was possible. But the islands were to be protected against a surprise attack. The two countries drew up a joint defence plan, permitting Finland to fortify the islands south of the southern tip of Lemland. These fortifications would have linked the Swedish and Finnish coast artillery positions, creating a network reaching from the Stockholm archipelago to Hanko.²⁴ The plan also included compulsory military service for the Ålanders, to be done on the islands only. The plan met with considerable opposition among the population on Åland. Despite the opposition, the plan was submitted to the LN for approval, as it was not in accordance with the 1921 convention. The signatories did not go against the plan, but the Soviet Union opposed the fortifications. Foreign

Minister Molotov claimed that the Soviet Union had greater interest in the islands than Sweden, and thus opposed that Sweden, but not the Soviet Union, should participate in the defence of the islands. Molotov considered that the worst alternative was that the fortified islands were to be occupied by an enemy power (i.e. Germany). As a result of the Soviet opposition Sweden decided to postpone the plan for the time being.²⁵

The reasons for the germinating defence co-operation has been the subject of lively debate. Finland had since 1935 proclaimed a Nordic trend in its foreign policy. It was of Finnish interest to have Sweden as a military ally. But such an alliance met with practical problems. In the late 1930's Sweden regarded Germany as the greatest threat, while Finland saw the threat coming from the Soviet Union. Under such conditions there would have been few points of common interest for a military alliance. Åland was, however, one such point. It is a general opinion that Finland was trying to bind Sweden to military co-operation and possibly to an alliance through the Åland issue.²⁶

The Soviet opinion on the fortification of the Åland Islands had become known during negotiations as early as in 1938. The Soviet Union had at that time declared that co-operation was a condition for its approval of the fortification works.²⁷ There are probably two reasons for the Soviet opposition. One is the reason given by the Russians themselves: fear that an outside power (Germany or England) might use the islands as a bridge-head in an attack against Leningrad. This does not exclude another theory, according to which the Soviet Union tried to establish its sphere of interest as early as 1938-39 by its acting in the Åland issue. By opposing a joint defence, the Soviet Union tried to isolate Finland.²⁸ The events before and during the Winter War give strength to this theory.

2.4 *Åland during the Winter War and Continuation War*

Åland was not discussed during the negotiations in Moscow in October 1939, possibly because of the islands' great importance for Sweden, too.²⁹ At the outbreak of the Winter War, the Soviet

Union declared the Finnish coasts to be under blockade, but left Åland outside the blockade.³⁰ Also these factors give strength to the theory that the Soviet Union was careful not to give Sweden a reason to enter the war.

Finland moved troops to Åland on December 1, 1939, after the outbreak of the Winter War. The acts of war against Åland were limited to a few air raids. After the arrival of the Finnish troops, a volunteer corps, Ålands Hemvärn (the Åland Home Guard), was set up to complete the defence. Enrolment in the corps was large, at most it had 1810 members. From the beginning of March 1940, the Åland Home Guard alone took over the land defence and thus Finnish troops could be disengaged and sent to the Karelian Isthmus.³¹

After the outbreak of the war, Finland once more tried to get military help from Sweden. Mannerheim among others in March 1940 suggested that Finland should offer the Soviet Union a base on Åland instead of Hanko, in order to bring pressure to bear on Sweden to contribute with military help. But the Soviets had anticipated this move by already in January offering Sweden advantages regarding Åland, as a prize for staying out of the war. In this way they wanted to make sure that Finland remained isolated. Sweden avoided negotiations with the Soviet Union about Åland. But the Soviet proposition eliminated Finland's last card for getting help. Thus the proposition had the intended effect.³²

After the Winter War the troops were not discharged from Åland. After the German attack against Norway and Denmark, a German invasion on Åland was feared, as this might have safeguarded the transports of ore from Sweden.³³ Troops from the Karelian Isthmus were moved to Åland instead of being disbanded. At the end of April the garrison on Åland was at its maximum strength since the outbreak of the war. The threat diminished due to the rapid fall of Norway. The high level of preparedness gave rise to protests among the local inhabitants, especially as the troops to a large extent consisted of volunteers from Åland. It has been suggested that the confirmation of the remilitarization was an attempt to quash the convention from 1921.³⁴

The military presence in Åland also gave rise to Soviet protests. The Soviet Union considered that the presence of the

troops was aimed against itself and in the summer of 1940 demanded do be allowed to participate in the defence of the islands. As an alternative a demilitarization of the islands could come into question. Also otherwise Finland was under heavy Soviet pressure, i.a. in the Petsamo issue. In military circles the threat against the islands was considered no longer to be imminent. At that stage it was decided to give in to the demands for demilitarization, though only after lengthy negotiations about the wording of the convention and its relation to the 1921 convention. In the end this relation was left undefined.³⁵ On October 22, 1940 a treaty on the demilitarization of the islands was signed in Moscow.

The treaty is fairly similar to the 1921 convention, but it only concerns the demilitarization of the islands, not their neutralization. The most important addition was a prohibition against putting the islands at the disposition of the armed forces of foreign states. This prohibition was a logical consequence of the Soviet isolation policy and it thwarted the most recent negotiations about a Swedish-Finnish defence of the islands.³⁶ In addition, the Soviet Union was permitted to set up a consulate in the islands to supervise the demilitarization.

After the demilitarization, Åland's position was threatened. The Soviet bases in Hanko and the Baltic countries made a surprise attack possible. The consulate in Mariehamn was seen as a camouflaged reconnaissance party for an invasion.³⁷ It was also feared that the Soviet Union would try to break off the Finnish trade connections to the west. When the relations between Finland and Germany improved in the winter of 1940-41 and the first joint military plans were made, also the defence of the Åland Islands was considered. During the negotiations, on January 30, 1941, General Heinrichs suggested that Germany might occupy Åland, so that Finland would have a valid reason to mobilize.³⁸

The Finnish fears of a Soviet invasion of Åland have proved to be well-founded in the light of recently discovered sources. According to detailed operative plans, found in the archives of the Baltic Fleet, the Soviet Union was preparing for an invasion in the autumn of 1940. The purpose of the operation was to strengthen the defence of Leningrad against a German occupation. The operation envisaged that Sweden would intervene in case of

a Soviet occupation. Consequently the attack would be launched with a landing on Eckerö, to prevent Swedish intervention.³⁹ As early as in spring 1939 Germany, too, had prepared similar plans of its own to occupy the islands, and these plans were maintained until the autumn of 1944.⁴⁰

The Finnish plan for the occupation of Åland in case of war was thus named "Sailing Race", which was hardly a concealing name. Also Sweden had its own plans for occupying the islands.⁴¹ When Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Operation "Sailing Race" was already under way and the detachment was awaiting confirmation of the outbreak of war at the provincial border. Overnight 5000 men with equipment and 69 cannons were transported to the islands on 23 vessels. With the exception of a Soviet air attack the operation went well. The timing clearly shows that there had been coordination of Finnish and German operations.⁴²

During the Continuation War the acts of war against Åland were limited. The main reason for this probably was that the Soviet navy at an early stage was locked into the innermost part of the Gulf of Finland. But during the autumn of 1941 Åland played an important part in the naval strategy in the Baltic Sea. The German supreme command counted on that the Soviet Baltic Fleet "Baltflot" would attempt to break through to neutral Sweden. The German strategy was to try to "smoke out" Baltflot into the Baltic Sea and to sink it there. For this task the largest squadron ever in Finnish waters was gathered in the Åland archipelago to lie in ambush. The German "Baltenflotte", as the squadron was called, in all comprised more than 20 vessels, among them the prides of the German navy, the battleships Tirpitz and Admiral Scheer. However, the German attempts at smoking out the Russian fleet were too efficient and had the opposite effect; Baltflot suffered so great losses that it could not with the best will put to sea. The German squadron sailed from Åland on September 25, having waited for two days.⁴³ The operation still shows that great strategic importance was attached to the Åland archipelago. The incident is not likely to pass unnoticed in the strategic planning of Russia today.

German interest in the Åland Islands did not cease with the confining of the Soviet fleet to the innermost part of the Baltic

Sea. The next time the islands were included in German plans the target was a different one: Sweden. In the spring of 1943 Operative Studie "Schweden" was drawn up, aiming at an occupation of Sweden.⁴⁴ The main attack would be launched from Norway against Östersund in the north, and against Stockholm over Falun in the south. The southern operation required landing with an armoured division from Finland over the southern part of the Kvarken straits in Öregrund, for an attack against Stockholm from the north. The operational plan gives further proof that the fears of Åland being "a loaded gun" aimed at Stockholm were well founded. Also the Soviet Union is said to have harboured plans of an attack against Sweden during the war, and also their plan involved Åland.⁴⁵

2.5 *Re-introduction of the Demilitarization*

When Finland and the Soviet Union negotiated about an armistice in September 1944, Mannerheim instructed the Finnish negotiators to offer Åland as a base instead of Porkkala. The Finns never put this suggestion forward, as they realized that Porkkala was an absolute demand.⁴⁶ According to the armistice agreement the 1940 treaty re-entered into force.

In case Finland should make a separate peace with Russia, Germany had in the autumn of 1943 made up the naval plan "Tanne" to safeguard its interests in the Baltic Sea. The plan was twofold: "Tanne Ost" to conquer Hogland and "Tanne West" to conquer Åland. In addition, there was a plan "Tanne I", involving the conquest of Åland by means of landing airborne troops. The two latter alternatives were considered to be the most important.⁴⁷ But when Finland made a separate peace with Russia, Germany gave up these plans, mainly from fear of countermeasures from Sweden.⁴⁸ Also, the Finnish defence on Åland had been reinforced and at the time of the armistice it was prepared for an attack. "Tanne Ost" was carried out in an improvised manner, but it failed, due to unexpected Finnish resistance. German naval forces were also sighted outside Åland, but the operation was mainly intended to protect German vessels leaving the Gulf of Bothnia.⁴⁹

The German plans still had the effect that the dismantling of the coast artillery forts was stopped. In December Mannerheim

proposed Finnish-Soviet co-operation for the coast defence in the Gulf of Finland.⁵⁰ The Swedish government was alarmed by the Finnish plan to offer Åland to the Soviet Union.⁵¹ The information about the suspension of demilitarization in turn alarmed the English War Office.⁵² England supposed that Finland belonged to the Soviet sphere of interest. Thus a fortified Åland in Russian hands would be extremely detrimental for the defence of Sweden and Scandinavia. The English War Office decided to try to counteract a remilitarization. It was, however, considered that "it would appear profitless to press for a policy of demilitarisation once it has become plain that Russia ... favours the reverse".⁵³ The events preceding the Peace Treaty in Paris are still partly unknown. But in the treaty it was stipulated that the Åland Islands would "...remain demilitarized in accordance with the situation as at present existing." In the light of these sources it seems likely that the demilitarization decision was made in the interest of the Western powers and Sweden.

At the end of the 1940's a revision of the Åland Autonomy Act was being considered. In this connection the so called Guarantee Act from 1922 was also to be amended. This act contained stipulations about mediation from the LN in disputes between Finland and Åland concerning the autonomy. As the LN no longer existed, there were plans for an international guarantee system, possibly based on the UN. The Soviet Union protested against these plans, insisting that Finland should be responsible for the sovereignty of its own territory. They claimed that the act would entitle foreign powers to interfere in internal Finnish affairs. The Autonomy Acts were passed in 1951 without international guarantees.⁵⁴

2.6 *Main Factors Influencing Åland's Strategic Significance - Conclusions and Problems*

The strategic significance of Åland has most often been a result of the islands' geographic position. From them it has been possible to block the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia, or to threaten shipping in the northern Baltic Sea. Due to the central position of the islands they have constituted a possible threat against both

Finland and Sweden - or a cornerstone in the defence of these countries.

Throughout history a pattern is visible: Naval units based at the Bomarsund fortifications could in the 19th century have prevented English trade with the towns on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and threatened free shipping in the northern Baltic Sea. A militarized Åland in enemy hands could have been a springboard in an attack against Sweden. From the islands it could during the Second World War have been possible to prevent German ore transports from northern Sweden, or to close Finland's only trade route by sea during the wars. The list could be longer, but the pattern is the same: the strategic significance of the islands has most often been due to a potential threat that one party would use the islands against somebody else. In order to estimate the islands' strategic significance it is therefore necessary first to find out what today's threat-perceptions are.

The demilitarization and neutralization decisions have been made on the basis of the same potential threat. In situations where the possession of the islands has been the cause of a conflict, or when the interests in the islands have diverged, demilitarization has been used as a means to stabilise the situation. The intention has been to prevent one party from taking advantage of the potential threatening position of the islands, and to avoid a situation where the possession of the islands might upset the military balance. Thereby a new factor for Åland's strategic position was created.

The basis for the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland was laid during the 19th century and during the first half of this century, to counteract the perceived threats of the periods. Since then many of the factors influencing the strategic position of the Baltic Sea have changed. Not least the factors involving weapons technology are entirely different today. Do the stipulations on demilitarization and neutralization still have the effect they were originally intended to have? Can the conventions today be considered to prevent anyone from threatening anyone else via Åland, or can the stipulations on the contrary increase the possibilities for this? Do the conventions limit today's weapons systems, or can the purposes for the restrictions concerning mobile weapons systems be circumvented? An entirely different question is, whether the Åland Islands have any strategic significance at

all, the weapons technology being what it is today.

During the Finnish independence Åland has had a twofold significance for Finland. Partly it has been a question of authority, partly of military security. The separatism in Åland was regarded as treason during and after the war of independence, despite the starting points being similar to those of Finnish independence.⁵⁵ The Åland issue became a question of authority both in Åland and in Finland. Thus the autonomy for the Åland islands was in many circles in Finland seen as a limitation to the sovereignty of the new state. The settling of the conflict between Finland and Sweden through the Geneva convention in 1921 was seen as a further limitation, while in Åland it was seen as a complement to the autonomy. This linking impeded the proposals to revise the convention in the 1930's, as the efforts were also seen as an attempt to strengthen Finnish sovereignty. But the main reason for the proposed revision was the fears held by Finnish (and Swedish) military authorities, considering the prospect of having to defend the islands against a surprise attack without advance preparations. The arguments used in the debates in the late 1930's are in many ways similar to those heard today. What is then the background of the debates today? Have the conventions become part of Åland's autonomy? In that case, how significant is the autonomy for the strategic position of the area? This question should also be asked from the Finnish point of view. Are the conventions considered to have a limiting effect and, if so, is this due to an implicit need to strengthen Finland's feeling of sovereignty or to a real need to make the defence of the islands more effective?

Åland has been very important to Sweden ever since Sweden lost the islands. Sweden's actions from 1809 onwards follow an interesting pattern. At least until 1921 it was considered that the best solution would be to reunite the islands with Sweden. Failing this, it was preferable if the islands were independent or under a friendly power that could guarantee that the islands were not used against Sweden. The third possibility was a demilitarization of the islands. The demilitarization decisions in 1856, 1921 and probably also 1947 were based on Swedish security claims. During the period 1918-1921 Sweden did not trust in Finland's capability to prevent attacks against Sweden via the islands. In 1947 it was presumed that Finland belonged to the

Soviet sphere of interest. Thus demilitarization was seen as a safer alternative than the Finnish-Soviet fortifications that could be feared. This line of reasoning leads to one interesting question: In the 1930's Sweden preferred to trust in Finland rather than in the neutralization convention. What then is Sweden's present attitude to the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland, considering the good relations between the countries?

As a result of Åland's importance for Sweden other powers have also bargained about the islands, in order to bring pressure to bear on Sweden. Before the Crimean War England and France offered Sweden the islands as a reward for its entrance in to the war. During the First World War Germany in its turn tried to do the same. Before and during the Winter War Finland tried to force Sweden into the war by offering the islands to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, on their side, probably tried to prevent Swedish entrance into the war by offering them the islands. But apart from the November treaty in 1855, Sweden has never let the islands influence its most important decisions.

The visible significance of the islands has most often been most important as a means of bringing pressure to bear on Finland, Sweden or a third party. One of the main reasons why the Soviet Union did not start hostilities against Åland during the Winter War probably was that they did not want to give Sweden a reason to enter the war on the Finnish side. It is equally likely that the Swedish interest helped to protect Åland from a German attack in the autumn of 1944. If these assumptions are true, it can be said that the Finnish and Swedish defence plans for the islands before the war had the intended effect, even though they were not carried out. An interesting question is, whether the interests of Sweden (or some other external power) might still protect the islands. An opposite question might be: Is there a risk that Åland could be drawn into a conflict because of the islands' importance to Sweden (or some external power)?

Åland has been of considerable importance to Russia/the Soviet Union. Both the Bomarsund fortifications and the fortifications during the First World War show that Åland was seen as flank threat against Russia's Baltic coast. Both in 1939 and in 1940 the Soviet Union maintained that it had greater interests in Åland than Sweden did. The Soviet attack plans against Åland

in the autumn of 1940 confirm this interest. If the attack had been carried out successfully, it might have changed the strategic positions in the entire Baltic Sea. Thus the attack was probably cancelled out of consideration for the interests of the German ally. But the German plans of an ambush against the Soviet Baltic Fleet from Åland in the autumn of 1941 prove that the fears of the islands being used against the Soviet Union were well-founded. As the strategic positions in the Baltic Sea now resemble those of the 1930's, the question is what influence this has on Åland's importance for Russia.

Åland's significance for the other states in the Baltic Sea area, mainly Germany, has varied, depending on the prevailing situation. Before the Second World War Germany estimated that it would be best if Finland itself could guarantee that the islands did not constitute a threat against German interests. To be on the safe side, an occupation plan was prepared, to enable Germany to take matters into its own hands, if necessary.⁵⁶ During the war the islands offered a sheltered base area for attacks against the Soviet Union and for safeguarding sea transports, i.a. transports of ore in the northern Baltic Sea. Åland's significance might have been greater unless first Germany and then the Soviet Union had had naval supremacy. In a more equal situation the islands might have become a battleground both in the summer of 1941 and in 1944. What role could the islands today play for Germany, NATO or its possible successor, if a conflict in the Baltic Sea were to arise?

In order to answer these questions we must on the one hand look at possible strategic developments in the areas close to Åland during a foreseeable future, and on the other analyze what significance Åland could in the future have in various possible military operations, considering the strategic and military technological development.

3 TRENDS AFFECTING THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF NORTHERN EUROPE AND THE BALTIC SEA

Strategically, Åland should always be seen within a larger context, Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea. Despite all demilitarization decisions, Åland cannot be evaluated as an exclusive zone, independent of the world surrounding it. Åland represents a small part of the strategic position of the Baltic Sea and Northern Europe. During the last ten years several of the factors involved have changed completely, changing the situation in Northern Europe. The strategic position of the Baltic Sea remained more or less constant from the late 1940's to the end of the 1980's. The focus was on the southern parts of the Baltic Sea and the straits of Denmark. This was considered to reduce Finland's strategic significance as a buffer state between the great powers.

As a result of the *détente*, the subsequent disarmament decisions and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the strategic situation in Northern Europe changed. This formed the basis for an entirely new strategic situation in the Baltic Sea. The consequences of this new situation cannot be fully established yet, but some development trends are discernible.

3.1 *Trends in Russia*

The dissolution of the Soviet Union further changed the strategic position of the Baltic Sea that had begun with the Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe. Thus Russia is now almost in the same position as the Soviet Union in the 1920's and 1930's, with the exception of the bases in Kaliningrad. In addition, Russian military activities are hampered by economic problems. Within many circles in Russia there is widespread dissatisfaction with the humiliation of the former great power. Thus it is likely that

Russia will take a more active part in foreign policy in the future. After the attempted coup in 1993 the Russian military is also said to have gained considerable influence over the foreign policy.⁵⁷ There are indications of this greater influence in the new Russian military doctrine, making explicit mention of Russian interests in the development in "near abroad" countries. The operations in Chechenya also showed that the use of military power to solve conflicts has not been ruled out.

The future of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), created to replace the Soviet Union, is uncertain. Several member states, among them Ukraine, has wanted to free itself of Russian dominance. The disputes between Russia and Ukraine about the Black Sea Fleet and the Crimea are early examples of risks of internal disputes within the Commonwealth, which may in the long term result in conflicts. But the years of Soviet planned economy makes it economically difficult for the former Soviet republics to go their own way. The question of joint armed forces has met with opposition among several member states. The plans for joint CIS military forces, including both conventional and nuclear arms forces, have not been carried out. The Russian talk of "near abroad" countries has been interpreted as an indication that Russia strives to re-establish a hegemony over the other CIS-states, similar to the Soviet rule. Using diplomacy, economic pressure and participation in military operations Russia has gained a dominant position over the other CIS-states.⁵⁸ The attempts to forcibly counteract the internal Russian disintegration can be regarded as a complement to this policy.

The Russian withdrawal from the Baltic States was carried out according to plan, despite contradictory information and threats of discontinuing the withdrawal. But considerable risks of frictions remain in the relationship between Russia and the Baltic Republics. Statements about Russian interests in the "near abroad" countries have in the Baltic States been taken as a threat to their independence. The demand for a demilitarization of Kaliningrad⁵⁹ put forward by the Baltic States is not likely to improve the relationship between Russia and these states. In a study that attracted much attention the Russian Captain (Navy) A. Demtshenko predicted that a consequence of a Russian withdrawal would be an advance of NATO-bases into the Baltic

States.⁶⁰ Even if the scenario does not seem credible, it is an indication of the attitudes among the Russian officers, who do not rule out the possibility of a new cold war within 15 years.⁶¹

Thus it is possible that Russia might again attempt to regain its former position in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea. The success of the extremist politician Vladimir Zjirinovskij in the Russian parliamentary elections in December 1993 indicates that a democratic development in Russia will not necessarily reduce tension in the neighbouring areas. Even if the relations between Russia and the Baltic States do not deteriorate into an open conflict, Russia might use marine operations in the area to put pressure on the Baltic States, e.g. under the pretext of preventing illicit traffic.

Regardless of whether it is the CIS or Russia that will inherit the Soviet security interests in Northern Europe, it is evident that the Baltic Sea will play an important part in its security system. The present development in Russia will increase the significance of the Kola Peninsula considerably, as the nuclear forces are concentrated to the Northern Fleet. The significance of the nuclear weapons is likely to remain unchanged for the Russian security, and to constitute her ultimate deterrence. The new Russian doctrine has abandoned the restriction not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.⁶² It has been calculated that more than 50 % of the Russian strategic nuclear weapons will be based on the Kola Peninsula by 2003, all within the framework of the Start II agreement.⁶³ A likely result of this is the considerable increase in the number of units that have been moved from Eastern Europe to the vicinity of the Kola Peninsula - and Finland -, even if the purely practical reasons that have been given for the basing may have played a part. As a result of the increase of troops in the area, the flank limitations in the CFE treaty make it more difficult to station units in Russia's Northern (formerly Leningrad) Military District, as also the military districts in the Caucasus are included in the flank limitations. Thus unrest in Caucasia may indirectly influence the strategic situation in the neighbourhood of the Baltic Sea.⁶⁴ But a rewording of the CFE treaty, as proposed by Russia⁶⁵, would be detrimental to the security in Europe as a whole, as it might lead to further demands for amendments, and thus put the implementation of the entire treaty at risk.⁶⁶

Thus it is still in the Russian interest that the areas in Northern Europe will not be available to a third party in an attack against their most vital defence areas: the bases on the Kola Peninsula and St. Petersburg. These factors indicate that Fennoscandia's strategic significance will not diminish. As the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland reach deep into the heart of Russian territory, this may require installation of early warning systems in the area. At the same time there is a risk that the strategic significance of the Gulf of Finland and the Åland Islands may increase.

An important factor in the strategic position of the Baltic Sea is the Kaliningrad oblast and its future role in the Russian defence. The American researcher Phillip A. Petersen has noted that the militarization of Kaliningrad changed Finland's strategic position from "frontier state to flank".⁶⁷ Inversely, it might be said that a Russian retreat from or demilitarization of Kaliningrad would reverse the situation. The main part of the Baltic Fleet's dock capacity is already located in the Gulf of Finland. Today it is likely that Kaliningrad's significance will decrease due to the vulnerable position of the bases in a crisis. Thus it is likely that the Russian marine will increase its basing in the Gulf of Finland even further, even if the Kaliningrad bases are not given up. This would enhance the strategic significance of the Gulf of Finland and Åland.

Also the communications between St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad would be endangered in a crisis. The development of today's conventional weapons systems has given better performance and accuracy in firing. With increased accuracy the vital problem is not hitting the target, but finding it. This development will probably have as a result that a supremacy in numbers will instead signify greater vulnerability, making large mobile operations impossible in case of a conflict.⁶⁸ This increases the significance of the sheltered archipelago areas in the Baltic Sea, including Åland.

The withdrawal from Eastern Central Europe and the Baltic States has enhanced St. Petersburg's significance for Russia's economy and foreign trade. At the same time the northern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland become more important as a trade route. A threat against these connections would at the same time constitute a threat against vital Russian interests.

Also in other respects the Baltic Sea has changed in significance for Russia. Having been almost an "inner sea" it has

now become a potential front line. An indication of this is e.g. that NATO has extended its northwestern flank, AFNW (Allied Forces Northwest) as far as the Gulf of Finland. Although the threshold for a major power conflict in the area has been raised radically since the 1980's, this "threshold" is now considerably closer to Finland and the Åland Islands. As a result, the Russian military interest in the area is likely to remain. Despite the decline of the Russian Baltic Fleet today, there is much to indicate that in the long term Russia may regain a large part of its lost impetus in the Baltic Sea.⁶⁹

To summarize, the future Russian interest in the Baltic Sea might be:

- to make it impossible for a potential attacker to threaten Russian territory or vital interests (i.a. St. Petersburg and the Kola Peninsula, but possibly also operations in "near abroad" countries)

- to apply pressure on the Baltic States by means of an aggressive show of force in the Baltic Sea

- to demonstrate to the world at large that Russia is capable of protecting its connections with Kaliningrad

- to compensate the loss of the Baltic States with a ship-based anti-aircraft defence and marine surveillance

- to retain the possibility of using the Baltic Sea as a springboard in an attack in a westerly direction.

It is often said that the strategic focus in the Baltic Sea has moved northwards. This means not only that the significance of the northern Baltic Sea will increase, but also that to Russia it will remain very important to be able to operate in the *entire* Baltic Sea. The one overshadowing need for Russia is still to have free access to the Baltic Sea. Therefore the significance of the northern Baltic Sea has increased in comparison to the situation in the 1980's.⁷⁰

3.2 *Trends in the European Security System*

The political situation in Eastern Europe constitutes another uncertainty for the strategic position of the Baltic Sea. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact brought about a dissolution of a collective security system between the states in Eastern Europe. At the same time the military balance became more complicated compared to the time of clear groupings into blocs. The risk for minor conflicts may increase when an escalation between the blocs is no longer imminent. Also the ethnical problems and an aggravation of the nationality problems may result in limited conflicts.

The new freedom of action has resulted in an increased activity to create new security structures without a new bipartition of Europe. A number of organizations have been engaged in this development. The actors have included i.a. the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), its co-operation organization NACC, the European Union (EU) and its defence organization, the Western-European Union (WEU).

The OSCE has contributed to a *détente* in Europe. The agreement and the continued negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) has been one of the most concrete results. But it must be remembered that navy and landing exercises are not covered by the CSBM-provisions and that amphibious equipment and arctic special equipment and marine units are not covered by the CFE-treaty. In the present situation it seems unlikely that the agreements will be extended to include these marine aspects. The possible consequences of disarmament measures including marine units are also under debate.⁷¹ There have even been proposals for a demilitarization of the entire Baltic Sea.⁷² A proposal to that effect involves not only the principle of free shipping on international waters but also directly the small Baltic States, as Sweden, Russia, and the NATO members Germany and Denmark could reorganize their naval units outside the Baltic Sea, only to bring them back later, if necessary. Also, the uncertain situation in Eastern Europe does not invite the states involved to reduce their naval Forces to coast guard level. Thus a demilitarization decision would unilaterally restrict the defence measures.⁷³

An extension of NATO does not seem likely in the immediate future. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council NACC, which was established as a forum for a dialogue with the former members of the Warsaw Pact, has started to work, but has not been able to fulfill the expectations of the Eastern European states, which wanted concrete protection from NATO. The answer to the membership applications, the offer of Partnership for Peace (PfP), should be seen as an attempt by NATO to avoid new walls in Europe and to advance a peaceful development in Eastern Europe.

The future European security structure will have a great impact on the strategic position of the Baltic Sea and thus also of the Åland Islands. The most important question concerns Russia's standpoint in the future development. By and large it may be said that there are three alternatives: a continued disintegration in Russia, an increased risk of confrontation in the Baltic region and a peaceful division into interest spheres between the great powers, either formal or informal.

Finland's and Sweden's accession to the European Union (EU) may also influence the strategic position in the area. The question of the common defence policy of the EU is still open and will not be discussed until 1996. If the principles in the Maastricht treaty about a possible common defence policy is carried out, it would change the strategic position of Northern Europe. Finland⁷⁴ and Sweden have already become observers in the WEU. In the statutes of the Union it is stipulated that the member states are obliged to intervene to help a member state that has been attacked. The chances that e.g. Finland, even as a full member, would receive help if attacked should not be overrated, considering certain statements made by i.a. the Secretary General of the WEU.⁷⁵

It is an interesting question whether the integration in Europe, including defence co-operation, could bring the Åland conventions back into the limelight. If most of the signatory states Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden were members of e.g. the WEU, the convention from 1921 might again become topical in the sense that the WEU could become a common forum for the signatory states.

4 ÅLAND'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE IN VARIOUS OPERATIONS

Åland's strategic position has at various times built on the potential threat of the islands being used against another party in a conflict. To find out which might be Åland's strategic significance in various operations today and in the future, it is necessary to take an unbiased look at what is possible, considering the weapons technology and to connect this to various alternative operations, without taking a stand on the likelihood that these would arise. Thus, the operations presented here should not be seen as likely threat perceptions, but as a basis for a theoretical discussion about the role Åland might come to play in various operations.

4.1 Military Geographical Position of the Åland Islands

Infrastructure

The Province of Åland consists of 6554 islands, large and small. Today 80 of these are populated.⁷⁶ The so called mainland consists of the main island and the Eckerö, Lemland and Lumparland islands, connected to the main island by bridges. The total area is nearly 5000 km², of which the islands take up just over 1500 km². On 31 December 1992 the population was 24 993, living in the city of Mariehamn and fifteen other municipalities. Mariehamn had a population just exceeding 10 000. The smallest municipality was Sottunga, with 130 inhabitants. The population density is 16.4 persons per square kilometer.⁷⁷

Traditionally the most important industry in Åland has been shipping. Since the 1970's tourism has increased steadily, and today it is the largest branch of the economy. Farming is still important in Åland, as well as fishing and hunting. Of the nearly 25 000 inhabitants almost 4 000 had a valid hunting license, i.e. nearly 15 % of the total population. Thus there is considerable knowledge of weapons in the islands, despite the exemption

from military service.⁷⁸ The vehicle frequency is considerably higher than in the rest of Finland. The number of private cars per 1 000 inhabitants was 510 in 1992, as compared to 380 in the rest of Finland. The number of vehicles that could be used for military purposes is also large, over 3 000 tractors and almost 300 lorries.⁷⁹

The public telecommunications network is extensive. A comparison between the provinces in Finland shows that in 1992 the number of telephone extensions per 1 000 inhabitants was largest in Åland: 707 extensions as compared to 540 in the whole country, or 688 in Sweden.⁸⁰ In addition, Åland has been important for Finland's telephone connections abroad. As late as 1991 almost 60 % of all connections from Finland abroad, and more than 90 % of the connections westwards, went via Åland. This ratio has changed rapidly with the construction of new alternative connections during the last few years. Thus Åland's significance for telecommunications has decreased recently.⁸¹

Åland is dependant on Sweden for its supply of electricity. With the exception of a combined power and heating plant using diesel oil and other substitutive energy, all electric power is imported by sea cable from Sweden. In 1990 the imports amounted to 75.8 % of all purchased electric power.⁸² The low self-sufficiency rate impairs Åland's preparedness in a crisis.

Factors Concerning Land and Air Forces

The Åland mainland is at most 50 km long and 40 km wide (Map 2). In relation to the area, the road network is well developed, there are 906 km of public roads, of which 550 km permanented.⁸³ The roads are thus well suited for troop movements on land, and also for vehicle-based weapons systems. Although the road network is dense, the roads concentrate on Mariehamn and Jomala, and in Hammarland, Gölby and Godby. The Eckerö, Lemland and Lumparland islands are connected to the Åland mainland by bridges. By controlling these areas one could effectively prevent traffic between the various parts of the Åland mainland.

For landing heavy equipment ferry berths are required. There are ferry berths not only in Mariehamn but also in Eckerö, on Prästö in Sund, and in Långnäs on Lumparland. Transports

from the three ports outside Mariehamn require control of the Marsund, Färjsund and Lemström Channel bridges.

Typical landing areas are to be found only in Möckelö, 4 km west of Mariehamn and at Degersand, on the south point of Eckerö. Elsewhere the shores are stony, with dense forest growing almost down to the water. The shallow waters with plenty of reefs require special equipment, e.g. hovercraft, for landing. In southwestern Åland, e.g. at Hammarudda, the waters are deep right into the shore, but the rocky shores require beach terminals for landing equipment.

Operative airborne landings can be made directly at Mariehamn airport or on the large fields extending in a half circle from Gottby to Jomala church village, northwest and northeast of the airport. The runways at Mariehamn airport are of sufficient length also for larger carrier planes.⁸⁴

Thus a combined landing and airborne operation directly against Mariehamn is possible by means of landing at Möckelö and landing north or north west of the city. By controlling the main traffic junctions an attacker could also effectively isolate the central areas of the mainland, using relatively small units. By landing on Eckerö an attacker could secure the operation against an counterattack from the west and at the same time have control over the shipping through the southern Kvarken straits.⁸⁵ Especially in a rapidly arising crisis, where an effective defence has not yet been set up, the risk of a direct attack might increase.

Åland's geographical position offers a suitable area for air-warning service. The heights on northern Åland, surrounded by sea and fairly low-lying areas, offer a suitable area for radar picketing. It has been calculated that mobile radar stations from the area could reach a range of 110 km to 350 km, depending on the altitude of the target. A mobile radar system could be transferred to the islands at relatively short notice.⁸⁶ A radar station on Åland could thus complement the Finnish air-warning service and extend its range. For the superpowers' air-warning service the islands probably are of no significance, since the air-based radar systems have an even wider range.

Considering the range of the aircraft, an air base on Åland would hardly give any advantages that could not be obtained by bases in Finland, Sweden or the Baltic States. Also in this respect

the Russian withdrawal changes the situation. An air base on Åland would, however, be extremely vulnerable and require a strong air defence and fortified positions. An air defence could be set up in a relatively short time, but fortifying the area would take time.⁸⁷ In case of a strategic surprise attack⁸⁸ against Sweden or Finland the advantages of such a risk might however be greater than the disadvantages.

Factors Concerning Naval Forces

Of the Finnish foreign trade 85 % was transported by sea in 1993.⁸⁹ In a state of emergency the sea communications must be maintained, by using sheltered routes. One of these routes could go via Åland or across the Kvarken straits in shelter of the islands. The control of the Åland Islands is thus of vital importance when safeguarding the continuity of the foreign trade.

The Åland archipelago, with its numerous small islands, provides relatively good air and radar shelter for smaller vessels. Thus the area would be suitable as a base area for naval units. The waters are shallow and difficult to navigate without good knowledge of the area. Mining could be used to limit the traffic further. The Åland waters are well suited for mining, with the exception of the places where the depth exceeds 200 meters, southwest of the Åland mainland. The shallow waters also make submarine activities difficult although the experiences from Sweden prove that such activities are not out of the question.

Marine tactics have changed, putting more emphasis on mobile amphibious units that complement or replace the stationary coast artillery. In Sweden there are already a number of amphibious battalions in operative use. The battalions are equipped to move on their own, and armed with i.a. coastal robots, for combat in the archipelago.⁹⁰ Finland has a coast brigade, equipped so as to be able to operate i.a. in the archipelago in southwestern Finland.⁹¹ Also the Soviet, nowadays Russian, marine infantry brigade based in Kaliningrad⁹² is probably suited for combat in the archipelago. The increased emphasis on mobile amphibious units instead of stationary units decreases the need for stationary fortifications. Thus the demilitarization of Åland becomes less important in the future, as the need for stationary

structures decreases. But the need of intelligence, reconnaissance and exercises in the area increases if combat in the archipelago is to be effective.

The ice situation in the Ålandic waters varies, depending on the severity of the winter. During mild winters and in early spring the Åland Sea is free from ice, but the sea between Åland and the Finnish mainland is frozen.⁹³ Under such conditions the Finnish navy is dependent on icebreakers to be able to manoeuvre freely and to protect Åland, as the conventions only permit limited military presence in peacetime.

The fairway to the Gulf of Bothnia goes via Swedish territorial waters, west of Märket in the southern part of the Kvarken straits. To close the sound and cut off the Gulf of Bothnia entirely mines must be laid down in Finnish as well as in Swedish waters. By simultaneous mining of the southern part of the Kvarken straits and control of the Åland mainland and the Åland archipelago, Åland could still be used to barricade the Gulf of Bothnia.

Åland is centrally positioned in the northern Baltic Sea. The distances to the coasts are short: westwards across the southern part of the Kvarken straits to the Swedish coast 40 km, southwards to Hiiumaa 150 km and to the Estonian coast less than 200 km. As the ranges of the weapons systems and the speed of the ships increase, a naval unit in the Ålandic waters could constitute a threat against shipping in the northern Baltic Sea. Contrarily, a naval detachment could constitute a surprise threat against the islands, without even violating the Åland zone. To prevent the area from becoming the goal for a "sailing race" it would be in the interest of all parties to avoid a situation where the islands constitute a potential threat. Thus the basic intention of the Geneva convention from 1921 has not changed. The question remains whether a convention can be sufficient to prevent the area from being drawn into a crisis.

Åland's position and the character of the islands give the defender one great advantage. An attack against the islands would be both costly and difficult.⁹⁴ The price goes up, the better organized the defence is. In addition, Finland does not have the resources to take Åland back if the islands fall into enemy hands in a surprise attack.⁹⁵ For a potential attacker it would thus be

most advantageous to attack at an early stage of a crisis, before Finland has had the time to set up an effective defence. This puts high demands on Finland's ability to react quickly on a threat against the area's integrity, when necessary. These high demands might, if it comes to the worst, lead to overreactions in a critical situation, and this could in turn aggravate the situation.

4.2 *Åland as an Operational Area in view of the Development of Military Technology*

Since the Second World War a considerable change has taken place in the naval strategic thinking in the Baltic Sea. Before the Second World War, navies were equipped in accordance with the ideas of the naval strategist Alfred Mahan (1840-1914) that naval superiority was achieved by means of great navies. Thus e.g. Finland built two armoured ships, the *Väinämöinen* and the *Ilmarinen*, in the 1930's, i.a. to be able to protect Åland. Along with the development of the weapons technology, naval tactics both in Finland and in Sweden has evolved into a defence strategy where small but fast naval units can be used to employ modern weapons with a long range and good precision and effect against a superior power. The areas most suited for such tactics are located in the almost unbroken archipelago extending from the eastern coast of Sweden on level with Öland across the Åland Islands and along the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland. The Åland archipelago is very suitable as a support area and would provide very good protection against discovery. A naval unit spread out over the area could constitute a flank threat against a fleet in the northern Baltic Sea, which does not provide similar cover.

The significance of the archipelago as a protective factor has been estimated to increase concurrently with the development of the arms technology. In order to protect of the ships more efficiently, so called stealth technology is used to impede discovery. In Sweden the development has already reached the prototype stage.⁹⁶ Another result of the development of precision weapons is that both Sweden and Finland are reorganizing their coastal artillery from stationary fortified units into units with a mobile structure.⁹⁷

The development of anti-ship missiles attracted attention in the Falkland war in 1982, when a single hit by an Exocet missile demolished the British destroyer HMS Sheffield. The characteristics of the missiles vary considerably, depending on the areas where they are to be used. RBS 15, used operatively both in Sweden and in Finland, has a range exceeding 70 km, but can only be used in open sea. This missile exists in an aircraft-, ship- and vehicle-based version, completing the stationary coastal artillery. The Russian vehicle-based missile SS-C-3 has a range of 90 km.⁹⁸ The next generation of missiles are estimated to have a range of 200 km and to obtain a speed of 2-3 mach. As a result of this development, the demilitarization of the Åland Islands no longer constitutes an obstacle, should the need arise to quickly prevent all traffic through the southern part of the Kvarken straits or the Åland archipelago to the Gulf of Bothnia. As both Finland and Sweden have RBS 15 missiles, these countries could prevent any advancement through the Åland constriction⁹⁹, which is no wider than 160 km from Grisslehamn in Sweden to Kustavi in Finland. Another result is that the entire demilitarized area can be covered by the range of the missiles, without necessitating firing within the area. This increases the possibilities to maintain a credible defence, despite the limitations set up in the conventions. Basing RBS 15 missiles on Åland would make it possible to close the entire Åland constriction.

The Åland archipelago has always been considered difficult to navigate. The stony shores and the limited harbour area require special equipment for landing. But the development of special surface effect ships (SES) has advanced rapidly, and in future the conditions on Åland cannot be considered an obstacle to minor landing operations even on difficult shores. Using SES technology the vessels obtain a speed of 60 - 90 knots. The largest vessels can load up to 100 tons.¹⁰⁰ With the development of transport aircraft with tilt-rotor engines it has been possible to combine the flying properties of the airplane with the lifting and landing properties of the helicopter.¹⁰¹ The development of fast amphibious units reduces the prewarning time for a coastal defender. The Soviet Union calculated that NATO's OTH (over the horizon) tactics reduced the prewarning time from weeks/days to hours.¹⁰² In the case of Åland the problem is accentuated, as the conventions

prohibit defence preparations in peacetime. Thus the islands are very vulnerable to surprise attacks at an early stage of a military crisis.¹⁰³

Navigation in difficult waters has since long been made easier by radio based navigation systems. The development of the satellite navigation systems increase the range and accuracy of the systems. The satellite navigation system GPS (Global Positioning System) gives a navigation accuracy of just over ten meters, and DGPS (Differential GPS) an accuracy of 1-3 meters.¹⁰⁴ A military application of laser beacons could also make the marking of fairways easier and faster.¹⁰⁵ Thus the possibility that an attacker might use the Ålandic waters cannot be entirely excluded.

The submarine hunts carried out in Sweden during the 1980's and 1990's, gave reason to believe that midget submarines had been operating in the Swedish archipelago. Although the hunts in Sweden have not yielded any results, the modern midget submarines are technically suitable for operations also in the shallow Ålandic waters. The submarines probably are resistant to depth charges and mines and have a long operating period. To obtain greater mobility, the submarines carry diving vessels.¹⁰⁶ The underwater monitoring systems have been greatly developed in the 1990's. This has resulted in low-noise propulsion systems for submarines and in methods of interference and deception devices. The development is expected to lead to a competition between measures and countermeasures.

The maximum depth at which bottom mines can be used against surface vessels is around 60 m. But the latest development goes in the direction of target-finding mines, that may be activated by a target even at a depth of 200 m. Such a development makes it possible to use mines even in the Ålandic waters, with the exception of the deepest area of the southern part of the Kvarken straits, where the water is 290 m deep.¹⁰⁷ The mines can also to an increasing extent be laid by submarines under water. Furthermore, there are now mine torpedoes, able to find their own way to the target area. Thus underwater operations using versatile weapons systems are technically possible also in the Ålandic waters, even if the archipelago limits the use of remote-controlled and submarine-laid mines.¹⁰⁸ These factors should be considered when assessing likely enemy operations against the islands.

4.3. *Alternative Operations*

Air Defence of Russia

The limitations introduced through the INF treaty and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), are expected to result in a restructuring of the nuclear arsenals. During the START negotiations less attention was paid to the capacity of the sea and air based nuclear weapons than to that of the ground based missiles. Thus the air and sea based cruise missiles will constitute the most effective strategic weapon against the northern regions of the CIS and Russia.¹⁰⁹

One reason why NATO and primarily the United States have concentrated on bombers was the mobile nuclear weapons system of the former Soviet Union, which could not be knocked out by pre-programmed ballistic missiles. Finding the missiles required bombers able to penetrate the Soviet air defence. Parallel to this, cruise missiles were developed, forcing the Soviet Union to make very costly investments in new air defence systems. One of the purposes of the cruise missiles was to put further strain on the already stretched Soviet economy. By saturating the Soviet air defence it would be easier for the bombers to penetrate into Soviet air territory.¹¹⁰

The Norwegian Sea was considered to be one of the United States' most important firing areas for cruise missiles. The shortest air routes to targets on the Kola Peninsula and in northwestern Russia go through Swedish and Finnish air space. To counter the threat from the cruise missiles, the Soviet Union deployed its air defence in the Baltic States, on the Kola and around Moscow. This increased the tension in the Baltic Sea, as this area was best suited for signal reconnaissance. The withdrawal from the Baltic States forced the Russian air defence into an entirely new situation. In the winter of 1994 Russia made an agreement with Latvia allowing it to keep for four years the radar reconnaissance station in Skrunda, which was part of the strategic early-warning system against ballistic missiles. Even when Russia has had time to build a new warning system, the demands on Finland's, including Åland's, air defence are likely to be maintained. A lacking confidence in Finland's air defence would increase the

speculations and could draw the country into the strategies of the great powers. To reduce tension in the area it might thus be necessary to intensify air reconnaissance in Åland in the beginning of a crisis. In this respect the modernization of the Finnish air force will improve the situation, as F/A-18 Hornet as the first Finnish fighter will have a "look down - shoot down" capacity, which is necessary for shooting down cruise missiles over land.

The Russian nuclear weapons programme is today considered to concentrate to strategic submarines in the Northern Fleet. The naval bases in Kola will thus be given top priority in the Russian air defence. The range of the American Tomahawk cruise missile with a conventional warhead is 1300 km, when fired from a submarine. The missile can also be provided with a nuclear warhead, extending the range to 2500 km. The Soviet cruise missile SS-N-21 has a range of 3000 km, but is less accurate, as it is planned for use with a nuclear warhead. A Russian counterpart to the Tomahawk was supposed to be under development already in 1991. Considering the most important targets in the area, the Gulf of Bothnia is the optimal firing area in Northern Europe. From here the cruise missiles' range is sufficient to reach all strategically important areas in Northern Europe: the Kola Peninsula and St. Petersburg in the east and Norway's Atlantic coast and the Danish straits in the west.¹¹¹

Air Defence of Finland

In a critical international situation the demands on Finland's ability to maintain her territorial integrity will increase. A credible surveillance and interception system will reduce the risks of the country becoming involved in a conflict. Åland is well situated for air-warning service. In a critical international situation Finland could thus increase the range and coverage of its air-warning service by deploying mobile air units on the islands, allowing the air defence longer warning times. In case of an attack against Finland it would be necessary to deploy anti-aircraft artillery on the islands to prevent enemy air operations. On the other hand, Finland would hardly gain much by deploying airborne units on the islands, as their warning times would be short and the bases would be subject to enemy attacks.

There are good possibilities to use Åland as a helicopter base in case of a coastal invasion against Finland. If an attacker can protect its bases and is far from alternative bases, Mariehamn could also be used as an air base. From Åland an attacker could support an operation against southwestern Finland. Particularly the defence of south-western Finland would be vulnerable. An enemy base in the area would also threaten to cut the sea and air connections between Finland and Sweden.

The strong Swedish air defence could to some extent be of use to Finland's air defence over Åland. The short distance from Stockholm - just over 100 km - means that Åland could lie in the "lee" of the Stockholm anti-aircraft system, from attacks directed over Swedish air space. Bases of attack and destroyer units on Åland would constitute a real threat also against Sweden. This in turn could result in Swedish military measures against an enemy base on the islands.

Air Defence of Sweden

For the Swedish air defence it is essential that Finland is capable of controlling its air space. This particularly goes for the air space over Åland. For the Swedish defence the Baltic Sea is the "English Channel" that enables the country to meet a coastal invasion on international waters or, at the latest, at the borders. If Finland could not defend its air space over Åland, it would reduce the depth of the Swedish air defence system from 200 km across the Baltic Sea to 40 km across the Åland Sea.

There are good possibilities to use Åland as a helicopter or air base in case of a coastal invasion against Sweden. From Åland an attacker could easily support an operation against Mälardalen and Roslagen with both attack and transport helicopters. By using Åland as a "transit port" to move troops to Swedish territory by helicopter, an attacker could increase the chances of its invasion. Basing attack and destroyer units on Åland would shorten flight times considerably and increase the pressure on the Swedish air defence, but require considerably greater anti-aircraft resources than a helicopter base.

Naval Defence of Russia

One of Russia's most important naval interests in the Baltic Sea is the possibility to prevent a potential attacker from threatening Russian territory or vital interests in the area, i.a. St. Petersburg and the Kola Peninsula, but possibly also operations in "near abroad" countries. A shifting of the focus in the Baltic Sea northwards and eastwards means that the Russian forward edge of battle area (FEBA) is brought closer to Finland. This means that also in the future Finland is expected to maintain a sufficient defence, to avoid a vacuum in the vicinity of Russia's vital areas. One question is how Åland's demilitarized status affects the Russian security system. Could the area constitute a gap in a forward defence system, if Finland is unable to protect the integrity of her territory? Against that background it is unlikely that a totally demilitarized Åland is compatible with Russian security interests, unless they themselves intend to take advantage of the demilitarization, if necessary. As the significance of the Gulf of Finland for the Russian defence may increase, it is not impossible that a future Russian regime, just as was the case in 1939, could demand bases in the Baltic Sea area to protect St. Petersburg, alternatively to guarantee the Baltic Fleet its own freedom of action. To avoid such a scenario it is important that Finland does not make its territory available for an attack against Russia. This goes for Åland, too. By maintaining a credible defence Finland reduces the risks of being drawn into a conflict.

It is probably vital for Russia to be able to demonstrate to the world at large that it can protect its communications with Kaliningrad. As Russia's defence zone in the Baltic Sea is now limited only to St. Petersburg and the Kaliningrad oblast, it may become of top priority for Russia to be able to secure its sea line of communication (SLOC) between the bases. A potential area for threatening the communications is the nearly unbroken archipelago extending from the Swedish east coast on the level of Öland over Åland to the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland. From these areas it would be possible to threaten the sea traffic in the northern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland. This may reduce the Russian interest in changing Åland's demilitarized status.

The Russian withdrawal does not automatically diminish the Baltic Fleet's need for bases in the Baltic Sea. As a result of the

dispute with Ukraine about the Black Sea Fleet it is possible that Russia will transfer part of the fleet to the Baltic Sea, which would further increase the need for bases.¹¹² Despite its strategically vulnerable position, Kaliningrad is likely to remain an important naval base, even if the focus is shifted to St. Petersburg. In addition, Kaliningrad is indirectly important for Finland and Åland, as a withdrawal from there would further underline the significance of the Gulf of Finland.¹¹³

It was generally feared that the Russian withdrawal from the Baltic States would be delayed or not come off due to disagreement about i.a. the treatment of the Russian minorities. After the withdrawal several disagreements remain, which may, in the long term, cause new crises. Thus it is likely that Russia will maintain its options to put pressure on the Baltic States, if necessary.

To further compensate the loss of anti-aircraft defence and naval reconnaissance suffered at the withdrawal from the Baltic States, it is likely that Russia will in the future have advanced naval based systems in the Baltic Sea. The head of the Soviet Military Information Agency, GRU, colonel general Vladlen M. Michailov, in May 1990 considered that intelligence will become more important in case of a withdrawal, to enable anticipation of surprise attacks.¹¹⁴ The latest development can only have increased the need for information in the Northern Baltic Sea. As the Baltic States decided to adopt the territorial line of 12 nautical miles established by the Soviet Union, the naval activities in the northern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland are likely to move closer to the Finnish border, as the Russian navy is now obliged to use a fairway further north. The Finnish decision to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, too, is likely to check the increasing traffic in the close vicinity and to direct the traffic in the Gulf of Finland to a narrow channel of international waters. The extension at the same time means that the international waters around Åland will be cut down, and Finland's undemilitarized territorial waters around Åland will grow.¹¹⁵

Invasion against Finland

In case of an invasion against Finland, Åland could come to play an important part, both in a border invasion and in a coastal invasion. Today the Gulf of Bothnia is a military inner sea to Sweden and Finland. As long as that situation remains unchanged, Finland can maintain a lower military preparedness in the area and concentrate its resources to the strategic core areas. Thus Åland is of great strategic importance to Finland, regardless of the direction of operations.

Should there be a coastal invasion against the Finnish coast along the Gulf of Bothnia, Åland would naturally play a decisive role, as total control of the area is an absolute requirement for the success of the operation. An invasion would therefore be preceded by an occupation of Åland, most likely at an early stage of a crisis, to forestall a concentration of Finnish troops to the islands. The goal of a coastal invasion could either be to isolate Finland in connection with a border invasion, or to occupy territory for aircraft or helicopter bases in support of operations west, east or north of the Gulf of Bothnia.

In case of a coastal invasion against southern Finland, Åland could be very important both to the Finnish defenders and to the attacker. The sheltered Åland archipelago together with the archipelago in the south-west of Finland provide a good base area for the Finnish naval forces. An attacker would thus be obliged to set aside protective forces to secure the area, which would require considerable resources.

Åland could also be of importance in case of a conflict in the Arctic area of the Scandinavian countries and the Kola peninsula. In case of an attack against northern Finland, the attacker would gain considerable advantages by attacking Åland, too. Finland could effectively be isolated from the west, and also be obliged to redeploy its ground forces to the Gulf of Bothnia. In combination with a ground offensive in Lapland, the defence of southern Finland could be ringed in and the country divided in two.

Independent of the manner or direction of the invasion, Åland's significance for Finland would be crucial, as an attack against Åland would also entail a risk of Finland's most important

trade routes being cut off. Even a threat against the islands would force Finland to set aside resources to be able to maintain its freedom of action.

Invasion against Sweden

As a result of the latest defence decision, Åland's strategic significance for Sweden may increase when the number of brigades has been reduced from 29 to 16 over a short period of time. After the reductions Sweden no longer counts on being able to meet attacks from several directions at the same time, but intends to concentrate all forces in one direction, either against a coastal invasion or against a border invasion.¹¹⁶ Thus great advantages are offered by control of Åland in an operation against Sweden. It would be difficult for Sweden to concentrate its forces in one direction when an attacker could direct an operative threat against Norrland via the Gulf of Bothnia. There are also good possibilities to support a continued ground offensive from Åland. In Sweden it has earlier been estimated that the Soviet Union has had operative plans against the Swedish east coast as an attack route to southern or northern Norway.¹¹⁷ Another goal of such an operation could be to support either a coastal invasion against eastern Central Sweden or a border invasion from the north.

The most likely direction of a coastal invasion is still eastern Central Sweden, with landings between Gävle and Norrköping. Here, too, Åland can be of great significance for Sweden and the well-worn image of Åland as a "gun aimed at Stockholm" could again be brought up to date. A helicopter base in the area could give an attacker superiority in an operation north of Lake Mälaren and also give an attacker a possibility to transfer reinforcements by helicopter instead of bringing them in on ships all the way to Swedish territory. An air base in the area would also provide range far into Swedish territory.

Åland's significance in a coastal invasion against the Swedish coast of the Gulf of Bothnia is evidently also great. But it must be noted that an attack on Sweden also would result in an attack on Finland, as an operation would require control of Åland. Furthermore Swedish counter-offensives would be likely to involve Åland, as a continued power increase could most easily

be prevented in the Åland constriction. Thus an attack on Sweden would draw Finland into the conflict. Already the threat constituted by an occupation of Åland by a third power would be intolerable from a Swedish military point of view. Thus it is possible that Sweden would consider an occupation of Åland a hostile act against itself.

Consequently Åland is of great sea and ground strategic significance for both Finland and Sweden, as the islands isolate the Gulf of Bothnia from the rest of the Baltic Sea. As long as the Gulf of Bothnia remains an inner sea, the countries can keep a lower level of naval, coastal and ground defence in the area. From an air strategic point of view the islands could again become the "gun aimed at Stockholm" and constitute a threat against Swedish operations in eastern Central Sweden.

Operations in the Baltic States

Russia will probably seek to maintain a strong position in the Baltic Sea, regardless of the form of government. The relations between the Baltic States and Russia is a factor of uncertainty which will influence the strategic position of the entire Baltic Sea for a long time. A Russian invasion of the Baltic States would restore the military situation prevailing in the Soviet era, at the cost of a considerable security policy loss in the relations to the West. Should a Russian invasion nevertheless take place, it would increase military tension in the entire Baltic Sea and consequently also on Åland. An alternative low conflict scenario is that the antagonism between the Baltic States and Russia will result in Russian trade sanctions and attempts to isolate Baltic ports, for instance under the pretext of preventing illicit trafficking. Another possibility is that Russia will demand bases in the Baltic States as it did in 1939.

The risks of Åland becoming involved in a conflict depends on the measures taken by the rest of the world. In case of an intervention Åland could gain importance for all the parties involved, in order to secure air and sea control over the northern Baltic Sea and the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. In that situation it is likely that Russia would as long as possible invoke the demilitarization of Åland to reduce the threat or to conceal any offensive operations of its own against the islands. As in the

Barbarossa offensive in 1941, the party controlling both the Baltic coast and Åland could have control over the operations.

In Russian estimates it has been presumed that NATO would try to increase its influence in the Baltic States by establishing naval and air bases in the area as a first stage.¹¹⁸ In this case Russia would certainly increase its naval presence to defend its interests. This would markedly raise tension in the northern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland and also affect Finland's naval defence.

Peace-keeping Operations in the Baltic Sea

If the development in the former Soviet states gets out of hand entirely and results in either civil war or hostilities between the states, the results for the whole of Europe may be unexpected. Thus it is likely that various organisations would try to restrain the conflicts at an early stage - provided that an agreement with the parties involved is possible. It is likely that these measures would not be restricted to one single organisation, but that all conceivable organisations, UN, EU, WEU, OSCE and NATO would jointly attempt to solve the conflict.

Possible objectives of these operations could be to terminate a civil war, to prevent the hostilities from spreading, to prevent organized crime - both at sea and on land - and to give humanitarian aid. The methods for such operations could follow Secretary General Boutros-Ghali's 'Agenda for Peace', and range from preventive diplomacy to peace-enforcing measures.

If the Russian Baltic Fleet is split up between various parties in a civil war, an international operation could be required to secure free shipping in the Baltic Sea. Such an operation could extend from a monitoring operation, involving only monitoring of movements, to armed operations of a peace-keeping or peace-enforcing nature. As the operations require speedy measures by forces and sea rescue personnel, the Gotland, Åland and Öland islands could become important bases for such operations due to their central position. Also in case of a trade embargo on certain parts of the Baltic Sea - similar to the situation in the former Yugoslavia - the larger islands in the Baltic Sea could become important points of support for the forces employed in enforcing the embargo.

5 THE CONVENTIONS CONCERNING THE ÅLAND ISLANDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISLANDS

As has already been mentioned, the Finnish authorities' decisions on measures to be taken will have an effect on the strategic position of the Åland Islands in an evolving crisis. The measures to defend the area's integrity are bound to the conventions concerning the Åland Islands. As Finland has always endeavoured to honour any conventions entered into, these conventions indicate her probable course of action.

The conventions influencing Åland's strategic position and considered to be in force are the following: the 1921 Convention relating to the Non-fortification and Neutralization of the Åland Islands, signed by Finland and Germany, Denmark, Estonia, France, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Sweden, the Treaty of 1940 between Finland and the Soviet Union concerning the Åland Islands, and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty.¹¹⁹ The treaty on Finland's accession to the EU also guarantees status quo for Åland in international law. Also the UN convention on the territorial sea and the contiguous zone of 1958 and the UN convention on the Law of the Sea from 1982 (UNCLOS III) influence the stipulations about shipping through the Ålandic waters.

The purpose of the conventions has to a lesser extent been to protect the province of Åland. The main purpose has been to ascertain that Åland, in the hands of a potential enemy, could not threaten any other power in the Baltic Sea area. Thus the conventions have on the one hand limited the mother country's sovereignty over the area, and on the other hand obliged it to defend the islands when necessary. The conventions are thus fairly detailed, and on some points they even seem contradictory. The limitations and the defence obligations still characterize the area's strategic position.

5.1 *The 1921 Convention relating to the Non-fortification and Neutralization of the Åland Islands*

The convention was concluded with the purpose of continuing the demilitarization decision from 1856. In article 1 Finland confirms that it will comply with this convention, too.

The convention defines clear boundaries for both the land and sea area (article 2). The demilitarized sea area extends three nautical miles outside the islands, islets and reefs included in the zone. The limit of three nautical miles was established in accordance with the prevailing situation in 1921. As Finland later, in accordance with international practice, has extended its territorial sea to four nautical miles (with the exception of the waters around Bogskär), and now has decided to extend it further to twelve nautical miles¹²⁰, there will be a strip of Finnish territorial sea, nine nautical miles wide, that is not affected by the stipulations on non-fortification and neutralization. Thus Finland could start laying protective mining in this strip even before taking such exceptional measures as the convention allows.¹²¹ The Åland demilitarized zone is divided into two separate areas, on the one hand the Åland archipelago proper, on the other hand Bogskär. Between these areas there is international waters, which will be included in Finland's territorial sea when it is extended. This territorial sea will not be affected by the demilitarization.

Although only the land and sea areas are mentioned in the extension of the zone, also the air space is considered to be demilitarized and neutralized.¹²² Finland is still entitled to let its air force fly over the area, but in peacetime these can land only in an emergency (article 4(c)).¹²³

Article 3 in the convention prohibits the setting up of any establishment of a military character. Article 4 further prohibits any "military, naval or air force" from entering¹²⁴ or remaining in the zone. According to the Finnish interpretation, the frontier guard is not a military force, and its establishments are not military. As none of the signatory states has opposed this interpretation, they evidently embrace it.¹²⁵ The article also prohibits import, transport and re-export of arms and implements of war. The frontier guard's light armament has not been considered to be in conflict with these provisions, as long as it

equals the armament used by the frontier guard for similar tasks in the rest of Finland.¹²⁶

Article 4 also mentions peacetime exceptions to the limitations: Finland can, if "exceptional circumstances demand" send into the zone and keep there temporarily such armed forces that are "strictly necessary for the maintenance of order" (article 4(a)). Finland also reserves the right for one or two of its light warships¹²⁷ to visit the islands and anchor there.¹²⁸ In addition, Finland can "if important special circumstances demand" also send in other ships. Their total displacement must not exceed 6000 tons. Considering the Finnish naval force, this tonnage limit is of no consequence today, when the ships are relatively small. The wording of the convention "exceptional circumstances" or "important special circumstances" is rather vague. "Exceptional circumstances" can still be considered to be more serious than "important special circumstances". The "circumstances" must primarily be seen as threats against the islands' neutrality or possible internal unrest.¹²⁹

According to the peacetime exceptions mentioned in article 4, the Finnish government is entitled to allow "one warship of any other power" to enter the Åland Islands.¹³⁰

The convention of 1856 having only been concerned with the demilitarization of the area, the convention of 1921 goes further. Article 6 neutralizes the Åland Islands in times of war. The article still entitles Finland to lay mines and take "strictly necessary" measures of a maritime nature to safeguard the neutral zone, in the event of a war affecting the Baltic Sea (article 6.2). Thus Finland after consultation with Sweden mined the waters in the Åland Sea around Märket as early as September 1939, to protect Finland's sea communications westwards across the Åland Sea, the southern parts of the Kvarken straits and the Gulf of Bothnia.¹³¹

The entire article 4, prohibiting the use of military forces in Åland, is subject to the conditions mentioned in article 7. This contains provision about measures to defend the neutral zone. The first paragraph is concerned with guarantees and the measures the League of Nations and the signatory states might take in case of a threat against the neutrality of the islands. Since the dissolution of the League of Nations, the convention no

longer has any guarantor.¹³² Thus the signatory states can no longer be obliged to participate in the defence of Åland's neutrality. But according to the interpretation made by Björkholm-Rosas Finland could refer to the article to apply for military support from the signatory states. As long as the assistance is under Finnish control, it would not be in violation of the prohibition in the treaty from 1940 to put the islands at the disposal of the armed forces of alien states.¹³³

The fact that the League of Nations no longer can guarantee the observance of the convention, and that the other signatory states cannot be considered to be obliged to defend it, stresses the significance of article 7.II, containing provisions about Finnish defence measures. The article can thus still be seen as an immediate obligation to defend the islands.¹³⁴

When taking "necessary measures" according to article 7, Finland is not bound by article 4, restricting the military forces, the presence of warships or the landing of military aircraft on the islands. The restriction in article 6 about "strictly necessary" maritime measures is no longer applicable, either. The opinions about the validity of article 3 in this situation are divided.¹³⁵ From a purely military and practical point of view, a situation where a troop must defend an area without establishing any military or naval construction is intolerable. Thus a strictly legitimistic view must be regarded as only theoretical.

But article 7.II. cannot be applied until the islands have been attacked. The mere existence of a threat of attack against Åland only entitles Finland to take the exceptional measures mentioned in articles 4 and 6 (warships, troops for maintaining internal order and protective mining). The attack need not be aimed directly against the Åland mainland, a violation of Ålandic waters is sufficient.¹³⁶

Article 8 stipulates that the convention shall remain in force "in spite of any changes that may take place in the present status quo in the Baltic Sea". Although the League of Nations no longer exists, Finland has claimed that the convention is in force. Finland has also informed the other signatory states in matters that have been considered to concern the convention.¹³⁷ One of the weakest points in the convention was that the Soviet Union was not a party to it. But according to the 1947 Peace Treaty, the

Soviet Union could in some respects be considered to be a party to the convention. Also the application of the convention supports this, as the Soviet Union in practice accepted the military activity permitted by the convention, even though the treaty of 1940 does not permit it. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Finland and Russia have agreed that Russia takes the Soviet Union's place as a party to the convention.

5.2 *The Treaty of 1940 between Finland and the Soviet Union concerning the Åland Islands*

The Soviet Union having been dissolved, Finland and Russia have agreed that Russia has taken over the part of the Soviet Union. Thus the treaty is still in force. The treaty follows the provisions from 1921 fairly closely, though there are some clear differences. The treaty of 1940 only mentions non-fortification, not neutralization of the islands. The treaty does not mention the exceptional measures from the convention of 1921, although these are considered to be in force.¹³⁸ Still, Finland undertakes not to put the islands at the disposal of the armed forces of alien states. This prohibition probably does not categorically prevent assistance according to the convention of 1921. The prohibition can also be interpreted as yet another obligation to protect the islands against an attack.¹³⁹

The extent of the demilitarized zone is the same as in the convention of 1921. The treaty of 1940 gives the Soviet Union (Russia) the right to maintain a consulate in Åland, to monitor that the demilitarization is carried out. Should the consul observe anything that he considers to be in conflict with the treaty, a joint investigation shall be made.

5.3 *Conventions on Passage through Ålandic Waters*

According to article 5 in the convention of 1921, the prohibition for warships to enter or stay in the zone does not affect their right of innocent passage, according to international rules. The innocent passage is only concerned with the sea territory of the coast state, according to the 1958 UN convention on the territorial sea and the contiguous zone.¹⁴⁰ As Finland's

inner territorial waters extend as far as Märket, on the border to Sweden, alien warships cannot sail freely east of Märket.

The UN 1982 convention on the law of the sea (UNCLOS III) decided on free "transit passage" in international straits. The Kvarken straits could be considered an international strait. Transit passage is freer than innocent passage, and permits e.g. submarines to pass under surface. As the waters east of Märket have for long been inner territorial waters, transit passage cannot be applied there. Whether transit passage could be applied west of Märket, in Swedish sea territory, depends on the interpretation of the article on exceptions in the UNCLOS III. However, Finland and Sweden have announced that they do not consider that transit passage applies to the southern part of the Kvarken straits, and this interpretation has indirectly been accepted.¹⁴¹ In case transit passage would be applied, alien warships and submarines could sail freely through the Kvarken straits west of Märket into the Gulf of Bothnia, even under surface. This would considerably increase the demands on sea surveillance in both Finland and Sweden and make it more difficult.

5.4 The Conventions and the Strategic Position of the Åland Islands

Finland has always attempted to honour any international agreements entered into. Also in the case of the conventions concerning Åland it has always been a matter of principle to follow the provisions. Even in a future crisis, Finland is likely to observe the provisions in the conventions. Finland's course of action in a crisis could thus be foreseen through the conventions.

What do the conventions permit? In appendix 1 there is a compilation of the obligations and the possibilities to control and defend the islands, according to the conventions.¹⁴² On the whole it might be said that the conventions' exemption clauses are fairly flexible. The conventions provide no such obstacle to the control of the area, that they could be considered to increase the risk of violations against the islands.

One "special" or "exceptional circumstance" that could not be foreseen in 1921, but that in the present strategic situation would probably be a first-rate question, is the threat against the islands' air territory. A strengthening of the air surveillance and

defence in the area could in a growing crisis be one of the first measures to counter a threat against the area's neutrality.

Both the convention of 1921 and the treaty of 1940 still limit Finland's possibilities to prepare the islands' defence. Nevertheless it is presumed that in case of an attack Finland is able to defend the islands. Thus there is a certain paradox in the provisions. Björkholm-Rosas find that an attack must have taken place before Finland can take measures.¹⁴³ The question is, whether measures *after* an attack are sufficient to convince external powers that Finland is capable of defending the islands.

The crucial question may therefore be *when* the attack is considered to have taken place. The term "attack" has not been exactly defined in the conventions. The way crises develop and the general behaviour in a crisis have changed much since 1921. The Finnish Parliamentary Martial Law Committee in 1988 considered that an armed attack (generally, Åland is not mentioned particularly) does not necessarily require the use of weapons in the traditional sense. According to the Committee, a defender need not wait to let an aggressor increase its attack force, as waiting could reduce the effectiveness of the defence.¹⁴⁴ The principle must reasonably apply also in the case of Åland.

Today, when a drawn-out crisis is considered more probable than a straight-out war¹⁴⁵, the provisions make it more difficult to fulfill the defence obligations. In a crisis situation it is mainly the task of the Finnish authorities to estimate when the conventions' exemption clauses could and should be applied. If such a decision is delayed too long, there might be an increased risk of external powers questioning Finland's ability to defend the integrity of its own territory. In such a case the conventions might increase the risk of the islands being drawn into a military conflict. The Swedish defence planning estimates that the defence efforts should in the first hand be directed at a so called strategic surprise attack, which is made unexpectedly at an early stage of a crisis, using regular forces directly from their peacetime deployment.¹⁴⁶ In the case of Åland it could be said that an attack of this character would be the most likely alternative, once the aggressor has made its decision to attack Sweden or Finland. This is the case as the islands can at an early stage be occupied with a fraction of the troops needed to break down an organized defence. The islands'

geographic position offers an aggressor such advantages that it may very well take the chance - once it has made the decision on taking the considerably greater chance involved in an armed attack against Sweden or Finland. The fact that an attack against Åland always constitutes an attack on Finland could be a factor deterring a presumptive attacker, if the attack is directed against Sweden. Thus Åland could be spared an attack, if the aggressor wants to keep Finland out of the crisis at any cost.

Finland's new Emergency Act entered into force in September 1991. The powers granted in the law are enacted by decree when a state of emergency is considered to prevail. A state of emergency arises from i.a. an armed attack, a threat of war or a serious violation of the border, a war or a threat of war involving the neighbouring countries. Under these conditions the Government can increase the authorities of the defence forces in certain areas.¹⁴⁷ The Emergency Act makes the Åland question easier in the respect that it gives the Government a framework within the law for decisions on measures to defend Åland.

A transfer of troops to the islands could also increase the tension, if the operation is considered to disrupt the balance between the great powers in the area. In that respect the denunciation of the Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union gave Finland greater freedom of action, as a strengthening of Åland's defence cannot even formally be interpreted as a concession to the interests of an external power. The conventions allow assistance from external powers for the defence of the Åland Islands. The signatory powers to the convention of 1921 can give military assistance for the defence of Åland's neutrality, provided that the assistance is given under Finnish control.

A denunciation of the conventions does not seem likely, either, although there is much to indicate that the provisions are out of date. The conventions have been satisfactory in peacetime, and have not been an obstacle to Finland's ability to control the area. A change in the status quo often brings with it so many uncertainty factors that a denunciation of the conventions does not seem likely in peacetime. The Finnish defence command has proposed advance storage of defence equipment¹⁴⁸, which is not likely to disrupt the situation in the Baltic Sea as a whole, but

instead to make it considerably easier for Finland to prepare for a credible defence of the islands in a crisis.

One interesting question is how the parties involved in a crisis would respect Åland's neutrality in case of war. There are two kinds of experiences from the Second World War. An opinion that has often been expressed is that the conventions spared Åland from major actions of war.¹⁴⁹ This view hardly corresponds to the picture that history has given of Hitler's and Stalin's aptitude to observe international law or adopted conventions, but should rather be seen as an attempt to overstress the significance of the conventions in retrospect. In strategic evaluations the strategic advantages are most often given priority over principles of international law. The question whether somebody might consider violating these principles depends on what strategic advantages are to be gained, and whether these advantages surpass the disadvantages of violating the agreements. From a strategic point of view a legalistic treatment of the subject is not decisive, as it is unlikely that the parties involved in a crisis would put legal principles before cold strategic facts. To quote the advice given by J.K. Paasikivi to the Finnish Government during the Åland negotiations in autumn 1940: "Please avoid unnecessary legal finesse, the Kremlin is no rural district court".¹⁵⁰ Characteristic of Finland's trust in the neutrality of the islands on the brink of the Continuation War in 1941 was that Finland transferred troops to Åland only three days before the war officially broke out, giving as an explanation that there was a war affecting the Baltic Sea.¹⁵¹ There were no protests from the signatory states.

The most effective protection the conventions provide probably is the fact that through the conventions the islands are indirectly protected by a large number of signatory states. A violation of the conventions would involve the signatory states and give them a formal reason to intervene in a conflict to help Finland. An interesting question is thus what risk an aggressor is prepared to take in relation to the other signatory states. An unwillingness to violate the "droit de regard" of another signatory state might raise the threshold for an attack.

5.5 *Influence of Åland's Autonomy on the Islands' Strategic Position*

Åland's autonomy, or at least the Ålandic separatism, have been of strategic significance on several occasions. The Åland issue in 1918-21 had its origins in Åland's attempts to be annexed to Sweden. The local resistance against the Stockholm Plan in 1939 resulted in a failure of the attempts to introduce military service on Åland in connection with the defence of Åland.¹⁵² Thus Åland's autonomy became of strategic significance when the actions taken by the autonomy authorities influenced the attempts to change Åland's military status. The debates in recent years also touched upon the role of the autonomy in relation to the conventions.

The Autonomy Act for Åland was enacted in 1921 and renewed in 1951 and again in 1993. The purpose of the Autonomy Acts has been - and still is - to guarantee the protection of the Ålandic minority against the rest of Finland. The Autonomy Act has been passed by Parliament with application of the procedure prescribed for acts with constitutional status. An amendment of the Act must also be accepted by the Åland Parliament in order to enter into force. Thus the protection for the Ålandic minority is strong.

The Autonomy Act gives the Åland Parliament the right to decide about internal Åland matters, such as health care, internal traffic, education and police matters and about the maintenance of order and public safety, with the exception of matters concerning the security of the nation. In addition, conventions with external powers touching upon the provisions in the Autonomy Act, must be ratified by the Åland Parliament in order to enter into force in the province. During the negotiations in the winter of 1994 about Finland's membership in the EU, Åland and Finland thus reached all their most important goals about special treatment for the province, as Åland could have chosen to remain outside the EU even though Finland became a member. The Autonomy Act further stipulates that the foreign and defence administration and the maintenance of national security is handled by the national authorities. On the other hand, persons having obtained regional citizenship are exempt

from military service.¹⁵³ There are, however, conscripts on Åland, who have moved to the islands, and there have been military refresher courses with purely "Ålandic".¹⁵⁴

The autonomy authorities have on their own accord taken an active part in questions considered to be related to Åland's demilitarized status. Although the conventions do not mention the autonomy authorities among the authorities responsible for monitoring the demilitarization, these have since the end of the 1980's considered that the monitoring is part of their area of responsibility.¹⁵⁵ This is underlined, as the League of Nations can no longer guarantee the convention. Also in other matters concerned with the promotion of peace in the neighbouring areas, the autonomy authorities on Åland have been active. For instance, several Russian politicians have been given information about possible solutions of minority problems, and of Åland's experiences.¹⁵⁶

During the last years the Finnish military activities have been the subject of much discussion. Between 1986 and 1991 the current issues have included the air force's flights over the islands, the navy's visits, and the coast guard's use of warning fire against unknown under-water objects. Between 1991 and 1994 the debate has been more concerned with Åland's demilitarized position as a whole.¹⁵⁷

One reason for the debates has been an attempt to underline Åland's sovereignty.¹⁵⁸ A visible military presence is not considered to be consistent with the "autonomous islands state" generally aimed at. Another reason probably is the fear of an increased influence of the Finnish language. Finland and the Finnish language are seen as a bigger concrete threat against Åland's autonomy than external military threats, which are difficult to define.¹⁵⁹ Thus a visible military presence is regarded more as a moral threat against Åland's autonomy than as a protection against an outside threat. As the conventions limit the Finnish military presence, they are from the Ålandic point of view seen as a complement to the autonomy. The debaters on Åland in several contributions have equated the conventions with Åland's autonomy. To the same extent they express a fear that the intention of an increased military presence would be to reduce the autonomy.¹⁶⁰ In the same way the conventions have

also been used as a weapon against the Ålanders in anti-Åland contributions to the debate in Finland.¹⁶¹ In the light of these attacks, the Ålanders' concern for the conventions becomes more understandable.

The debate has also been influenced by the peace movement in the 1980's. The still much-used term "the Islands of Peace" was coined more or less at the same time as the Soviet Union launched its propaganda campaign about "the Sea of Peace" in the early 1980's, as an attempt to create a "Mare Clausum" and thereby a military hegemony in the Baltic Sea. The proximity both in terms and in time can hardly have been a coincidence. The fact that the term is still much used is probably more due to the fact that the arguments serve the purposes of the autonomy than to a large Ålandic support for the peace movement, more or less extinct elsewhere. A positive, or at least interested attitude to the defence issue was also evident during the visit of the gunboat Turunmaa in 1988.¹⁶² The pro-defence opinion is more widespread than what might be believed in the light of the media. One of four Ålanders answering an inquiry in 1987 thought that military service for Ålanders would increase security while 35 % thought that an Ålandic complement to the defence could partly increase security. Finland's possibilities to defend Åland were considered to be bad by 46 %, and good by only 25 %. As many as 93 % found the demilitarization to be a positive thing, but only 24 % thought that it reduces the risk of Åland being drawn into a military conflict. An interesting question is how the discussions during recent years have influenced the opinions.

From a legal point of view the conventions have nothing to do with the autonomy. Strategically, the autonomy should be of no significance either. But if the autonomy authorities acquire real influence over the conventions and influence Finnish military decisions, the actions of these authorities can become strategically significant.¹⁶³ An amendment of the conventions does not seem likely in the present situation. Should an amendment become current, there would probably be much local opposition in Åland. Thus the autonomy authorities could again become strategically important, as was the case in 1939.

The relations between the Finnish defence command and the autonomy authorities have been good, even if they have been

strained by the discussions and differences on interpretations during recent years. Information channels have been established between the defence authorities and the autonomy authorities. In order to keep up the good relations, the defence forces have endeavoured to give the autonomy authorities advance information of training flights and naval movements.

The Autonomy Act stipulates that laws and decrees concerning the declaration of a state of war are to be issued by the national legislative authorities. But the Emergency Act and the Act on State of Defence treat Åland on the same basis as the rest of Finland, and permit restrictions in the rights of the local authorities.¹⁶⁴ As these acts are only applicable in a crisis and in separately defined areas, where exceptional measures are strictly necessary, such a measure would hardly be a violation of the demilitarization conventions, if the measures are taken to protect the neutrality of the Åland zone.

As a result of the increased autonomy, the opinion in Åland is no longer for an annexation to Sweden or for total independence for Åland.¹⁶⁵ Greater autonomy probably does not increase or diminish Åland's strategic position, as long as it cannot be considered to reduce Finland's possibilities to defend the islands.

6 ÅLAND'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR VARIOUS ACTORS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

6.1 *Significance for Finland*

The purpose of the Finnish security policy is to prevent the country from being drawn into a conflict or a conflict from being extended to Finnish territory. From a military point of view the decisive thing is that Finland is expected to be able to control and defend its territory.¹⁶⁶

During the last decades Lapland, southern Finland and the entire air space have been the strategically most important areas to Finland. The present strategic development does not change this state of affairs, although the focus has recently somewhat shifted towards the south of Finland. In 1990 Åland was for the first time mentioned as a fourth, separate core area.¹⁶⁷ The shifting of the strategic focus in the Baltic Sea also increases external interest in Åland. This may increase the demands on Finland to maintain a credible control and defence capability. If the capability is not credible, this can easily lead to speculations about the control of the area. This again may have as a consequence that several parties include Åland in their own military plans – offensive or defensive – or for preventive purposes.

In this respect Åland's significance for Finland could be compared to that of Lapland. Although Åland – just as Lapland – is not in itself crucial to the defence of Finland, there is great risk that Finland could be drawn into a conflict for reasons involving the area in question. Throughout history Åland's strategic significance has depended on a potential threat that the islands might be used against a third party. It is in the Finnish interest to guarantee that such a threat does not arise, as it would draw Finland, too, into the conflict.

The conventions on the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland have been a means of preventing the islands from being

used against a third party. The problem is that the conventions in the present situation hold no guarantees, except the hope that the parties concerned will follow the stipulations. In peacetime the problem is not likely to arise, as the conventions do not limit Finland's ability to control the area.

In a crisis, however, the stipulations in the conventions may not be in balance with the threat-perceptions arising from the present strategic position and military technological development. The measures in the face of a crisis must be flexible and correspond to the prevailing threat-perception, without over- or underreactions, that might aggravate the situation. Thus it is crucial that Finland already in peacetime demonstrates its willingness and ability to control and, if need be, defend the islands. A drawn-out legal argument of what the conventions allow and what they prohibit in a crisis is irrelevant, as it is unlikely that the conventions would go before vital national interests, should there be a conflict between these. Any probable action in a crisis must therefore be evaluated on strategic principles rather than legal ones.

When estimating Finland's possibilities to defend Åland it must be noted that today's arms technology no longer requires time-consuming fortifications. An effective defence can also be based on mobile, accurate and long-range weapons systems that can function independently of the limitations set up in the conventions. However, a defence of this character requires detailed planning, training and knowledge of the area. For full effect advance stocks of key materials would be needed to guarantee rapid and undisturbed execution in a surprise situation. The need for preparation is accentuated by the fact that Finland does not have military capacity to take the islands back if an attacker gets there first. This weakness may in itself increase the risk for a surprise attack.

In one respect the conventions could protect Åland, despite the lack of external guarantees. It is in the interest of the other signatory states that the conventions are followed, and this could have a deterring effect on an attacker. Also the risk that one of the signatory states could use a violation of the conventions as a reason to intervene in a conflict in the Baltic Sea area could deter from an attack, if the usefulness of the islands is considered less

than the harm an escalation could cause an attacker.

Finland's actions in relation to the conventions could, in case of a crisis between the superpowers, increase tension in the area, if any measures taken or not taken could be interpreted as concessions to either party. Thus it is important that Finland can be expected to defend the area alone, without help from an outside party. In an evolving crisis an outside power could also test Finland's standpoint to the conventions e.g. by using some pretext to demand access to the islands for one or more warships or military aircraft. In such a situation only a strict reference to the obligations according to the conventions in respect of foreign military forces could prevent Finland from being drawn into the crisis.

A visible presence, even within the limitations of the conventions, can curb any speculations about the defence of the islands in a crisis. In that respect it could be said that the so-called gunboat debates and "revelations" about "the secret defence of Åland"¹⁶⁸ favour Finland's cause, as attention is drawn to the presence. This providing that the debates are not considered to limit Finland's freedom of action. But so far the debates have not changed the military pattern of action, except increasing the information to the local authorities.

The conventions have also been seen as a means of strengthening Åland's autonomy. Linking the conventions to the autonomy is infelicitous in the respect that the debate about Åland's autonomy on the one hand and Åland's strategic significance to Finland on the other can easily be confused. This can have undesirable consequences both for Åland and for Finland as a whole. Partly the distrust of the autonomy may increase in the rest of Finland, and partly the debates may raise doubts about Finland's possibilities to defend the area, as they have often given a restricted view of the means to defend Åland permitted by the conventions.

Beside the fact that Finland could be drawn into a crisis because of Åland, the area also has strategic significance for Finland's total defence. Our foreign trade depends on shipping to 85 %. During a crisis it is likely that the dependence on shipping would become even greater. At the same time Åland's significance would increase, as the character of inner sea would

have to be maintained for keeping up shipping on the sheltered routes to Sweden.

Åland also has great strategic significance for the military defence of Finland. The Gulf of Bothnia is today a military inner sea to Sweden and Finland. As long as that state of affairs remains unchanged, Finland can keep the military preparedness in the area at a lower level and concentrate its resources to the strategic core areas.

Finnish and Swedish participation in European integration can in the future result in a common security and defence policy within the framework of the EU and WEU. This could lead to intensified security and defence co-operation in the Baltic Sea and also provide a basis for defence co-operation between Finland and Sweden in questions of mutual interest. Such an interest could be the defence of the Åland constriction. Both countries could co-ordinate their defence efforts in order to be able to carry out the defence of the Åland constriction and the safeguarding of Åland's neutrality, should the need arise. The development in arms technology can offer new possibilities for Finland and Sweden to make the defence of the islands more effective, each in its own territory, independent of the limitations stipulated in the conventions. With the present (and future) long-range weapons systems a co-ordinated defence, similar to the Stockholm Plan of 1939, could be achievable, even without modifications in the present conventions. The defence could be complemented with the development of amphibious units, similar to the Swedish amphibious battalions, which have a capacity to deny an attacker access to Åland even if the islands were occupied despite all.

Åland could also provide a base area for the naval forces when warding off naval attacks against southern Finland. The archipelago in Åland and south-western Finland is suitable for small naval units which, using today's arms technology and sheltered by the archipelago, could constitute a considerable threat against an aggressor. Åland is also well situated to complement the Finnish air-warning service. If mobile air-warning radar is deployed in the area, the range of the surveillance could be extended.

6.2 *Significance for Sweden*

Åland has been a defence problem for Sweden since 1808. During the Second World War the islands were included in both German and Russian attack plans against eastern Sweden. It is characteristic of the islands' strategic significance for Sweden that this probably protected Åland from a German attack in 1944 and led the victors to decide to carry on the demilitarization of Åland in 1947. Since 1951, when the dispute about the Åland Guarantee Act was a current topic, there have been few Swedish standpoints on Åland, with the exception of a few contributions during recent years.¹⁶⁹

The question of the conventions' significance for Sweden is interesting, considering that they mainly resulted from Swedish interests. There were hardly any Swedish comments on the Åland "gunboat debates". The few remarks offered supported the Finnish military presence in the area¹⁷⁰, but as a rule the proposals made by admiral Visa on a revision of the conventions were rejected, with the somewhat cryptical addition that it was presumed that Finland would be able to defend the islands despite this.¹⁷¹ It is in Swedish interest that Finland can guarantee the area's integrity. In this respect a restricted interpretation, limiting Finnish military activities, would no longer be compatible with Swedish interests.¹⁷²

The denunciation of the Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance has also had effect on Åland's significance for Sweden. A strengthening of the defence of Åland, in combination with negotiations about military assistance according to the treaty would hardly have been compatible with Swedish interests. Sweden's interest in the language minority in Åland is also said to have diminished.¹⁷³ The denunciation of the treaty should thus have put an end to the last doubts in connection with a possible strengthening of the defence of Åland.

The long-lasting Swedish silence in matters concerning Åland was probably due to consideration for Finland's situation. As Finland has now gained more scope for its security policy, an increasing interest in the issue might be expected in Sweden. This does not mean that Sweden would necessarily favour a revision of the conventions, as such a measure would probably

be difficult to implement.¹⁷⁴ It is satisfied as long as Finland is considered to be able to guarantee Åland's integrity with the present procedures. In an aggravated situation it is in the Swedish interest that Finland can defend the area and prevent it from becoming a threat against Sweden. Thus it is likely that Sweden would also accept, or even require that Finnish defence measures be set up in time.

In order to evaluate Åland's strategic significance for Sweden we must start out from the potential threat that the islands could constitute against Sweden. In 1943 Åland was included in attack plans against Sweden. After the war the Soviet Union presumably had attack plans against Sweden. In that case Åland could still be the "gun" that already in the 19th century was considered to be aimed at Sweden. The Gulf of Bothnia is not a military focus area for Sweden, nor is it for Finland. If this situation is to remain unchanged Åland is of crucial importance for both Sweden and Finland.

The Swedish defence decision in 1992 amounted to a considerable reduction in the number of army brigades. The Swedish military historian Bertil Stjernfelt points at a similar situation in 1925, when Sweden reduced the number of troops the previous time. Fewer troops required a tactic which stresses the control of key areas. Åland can definitely be considered to be a key area for the defence of Sweden. Therefore it is probable that arms reductions in Sweden increase the Swedish interest in Åland. The defence decision in 1925 indirectly resulted in the Åland plan in the 1930's, which would have implied military co-operation between Finland and Sweden.¹⁷⁵

In connection with submarine violations on the Swedish coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, the media in Sweden claimed that alien submarines had used the Ålandic waters to make their way into the Gulf of Bothnia. For the Swedish defence it is crucial that the Ålandic waters do not constitute an uncontrolled and undefended region. This makes great demands on Finland to secure the area's integrity, as a failure would imply a threat not only against Finland but also against Sweden.

Also the air space over Åland is of great significance for Sweden. According to the Swedish doctrine the air force should

cause an attacker losses as far from Swedish territory as possible.¹⁷⁶ To Sweden the Baltic Sea is a protective zone 200 km deep. Should Åland fall into the hands of a power hostile to Sweden, the protective zone will be reduced to 40 km. If Finland could not protect the air space over Åland and prevent it from being used for attacks against Sweden, it is likely that the Swedish air force would extend its air defence to include the islands. The vicinity to Stockholm, 100 km, seems to imply that the islands could be in "lee" of the Swedish air defence even in a normal situation. Regardless of this it is important that Finland as a neutral and independent state can guarantee that its air territory does not constitute a threat against a third party.

6.3 *Significance for the WEU*

Finland's observer status in the WEU is the first step towards security policy co-operation with western Europe. In case of full membership both Finland and the WEU would be facing a new situation, and give the WEU 1400 kilometers of land border against Russia and a naval contact area in the Baltic Sea.

It is an interesting question whether a development of the WEU could give the conventions, particularly the convention of 1921, new currency. If most of the signatory powers Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Sweden were members of the WEU, the Union could guarantee the neutralization of the Åland zone according to Article 7.I in the convention. In an aggravated international situation in the Baltic area an aggressor would then be unlikely to give the signatory powers/the WEU a reason to intervene in the conflict by attacking Åland.

During the civil war in the former Yugoslavia the WEU together with NATO and the UN has helped to lead peace-keeping operations and to set up trade embargos in the Adriatic Sea. Should the development in the former Soviet Union degenerate into an armed conflict, the WEU could have similar tasks also in the Baltic Sea. In such a situation Åland's central position in the Baltic area could become very important for the implementation of an operation.

6.4 *Significance for the CIS and Russia*

Åland has played an important part in the strategy of Russia and the Soviet Union. During the Tsar era the islands played the role of furthest outpost in "the sea fort of Peter the Great" during two separate periods. At that stage the islands mainly had significance for naval strategy, as a flank protection against attacks on St. Petersburg. During the Second World War Åland might during the first stage of the German attack have constituted a threat against the Soviet Baltic Fleet. In practice Åland's significance for the Soviet Union was mainly limited to a political weapon to isolate Finland from Sweden.¹⁷⁷

Even so, the Russian-Soviet interest in Åland cannot be bypassed as merely political, as indicated by the recently discovered Soviet attack plans. The Soviet Union on several occasions claimed that it had greater interest in the islands than Sweden. During the 1940's and 50's the Soviet interest in the islands decreased as the strategic focus in the area was located further south, by the straits of Denmark. In the present situation, after the Russian withdrawal from Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, the character of the Baltic Sea has changed from almost being a Soviet inner sea to a potential military front-line. Thus we are nearly back at the strategic situation of the 1930's, with a Russian superpower confined to the innermost part of the Gulf of Finland, with the exception of the bases in Kaliningrad. Russia traditionally fears that the Baltic Sea could be used as an attack route against St. Petersburg. Thus the significance of the northern Baltic Sea is likely to increase in Russian military planning. From a Russian point of view it is important that southern Finland, including Åland, does not constitute a threat against vital Russian interests.

The main difference in Russia's strategic interests as compared to the 1970's is the growing significance of the arctic area of the Scandinavian countries and the Kola peninsula. The bases on the Kola peninsula play an growing central part in Russia's security systems and at the same time they are a guarantee for Russia's continued status as a superpower. The Gulf of Bothnia demarcates the flank of the area. Åland's significance as a protection for this flank can increase in an

aggravated situation, not least for Russia.

The former Soviet Union saw the cruise missiles as a great threat. Highly placed Soviet military sources pointed out that they were not going to wait for the missiles to enter their air territory, but that they could be warded off in neutral air space, in case these countries were not able to ward them off. Both Finland and Sweden took these statements seriously and strived to build credible air defences to reduce the risk of being drawn into a crisis between the superpowers. As the air space over Åland cannot be considered to be an exception, the same demands have been made on the area's air defence.

The Soviet Union took a controversial view on the conventions. Russia has been seen as the Soviet Union's successor where the conventions are concerned. The Soviet Union never officially recognized the convention of 1921¹⁷⁸, although in practice the exceptional procedures, which are not mentioned in the treaty of 1940, were accepted. In the present situation there is much to indicate that Russia is not interested in an revision of the conventions, even though it should be in Russian interest that Finland is capable of securing that the islands do not constitute a threat.¹⁷⁹ The disinterest in a revision probably mainly concerns the treaty of 1940, where Finland guarantees that the islands will not be given into the possession of an alien power. Considering the altered situation in the Baltic Sea this guarantee could gain new topicality, for instance if Finland becomes a member of the WEU. In that case it would benefit the stability in the area if the guarantee remained. From a Russian point of view, a demilitarized Åland can be preferable in that situation, as the islands would then be a "open card".

6.5 *Significance for NATO*

The question of NATO's future has been discussed, i.a. in the context of a future European security system. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union even some members of the CIS have stated that they would be prepared to apply for membership in the NATO. But there are still so many uncertainties that the development is not likely to be rapid. For that reason NATO is still seen as a counterpart to the CIS and Russia.

After the Second World War Åland has been of little significance to NATO, as the superpower strategies and weapons technology were concentrated on intercontinental weapons systems. During the 1980's NATO became more active in the Baltic Sea, which has also been considered to increase the area's significance as an intelligence zone. Despite this there is little proof that Åland might be of strategic importance for NATO. Possession of the area does not offer NATO any advantages that could not be achieved by alternative means. The Russian withdrawal from the Baltic States has increased the theoretical possibilities of using the islands as a point of support.

From NATO's point of view the conventions concerning Åland could be seen as part of the "Nordic balance". The conventions were concluded in 1947 with attention to the interests of the Western powers. Amendments in the existing conventions while the Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between Finland and the Soviet Union was still in force could within NATO have been interpreted as a risk of increased Soviet influence in the area in case of a crisis. In that respect the denunciation of the treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union can have given Finland greater freedom of action to make the defence of Åland more effective, when necessary.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union NATO has renewed its organization in northwestern Europe. The most significant change, involving the setting up of the new command structure Allied Forces Northwest (AFNW), was that the Baltic Sea was included in the AFNW's operations area. It can also be regarded as an advancement of the positions in the Baltic Sea, although NATO has played down the significance of the change.

In a crisis it will probably be in NATO's interest that Finland can safeguard her territorial integrity. But if Åland is drawn into speculations about the superpower's strategic interests the situation might become more complicated and Finland's freedom of action could be limited. On the other hand defence preparations of sufficient credibility could reduce the risk for such a development.

Åland and its strategic significance has not been much discussed in Western sources. The Gulf of Bothnia has been supposed to have strategic significance for Soviet operations

against Norway through Sweden.¹⁸⁰ During the last few years Western interest seems to have grown somewhat. The reflexion made by Thomas Ries that the Gulf of Bothnia could be an optimal firing area shows that the Gulf of Bothnia could also have strategic significance for NATO.¹⁸¹ In 1989 the *International Defence Review* underlined Åland's significance as a "Gibraltar of the North", which could isolate the Gulf of Bothnia in case Finland, Sweden, or an attacker should fortify the islands.¹⁸² The possibility of using Åland as an advanced Soviet air base against Norway was mentioned in a Norwegian report on the air strategic situation in northern Europe.¹⁸³ Although these suppositions may seem imaginative, the growing interest in Åland and the Gulf of Bothnia could also be interpreted as a signal from NATO to Finland and Sweden to enhance the area's defence.

Of the NATO member countries Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Italy and France are also signatories to the convention of 1921. If Åland was attacked in a conflict NATO or its member states could claim their "droit de regard" to intervene in the conflict. This could deter an aggressor from attacking the islands, if the aggressor judged that the advantages of an occupation would not exceed the drawbacks resulting from an intervention by NATO or its member countries in the conflict.

6.6. *Significance for the Strategic Situation in Northern Europe*

Since the Second World War, international tension has been relatively low in northern Europe. The two neutrals, Sweden and Finland, have acted as a buffer zone between NATO and the Soviet Union. As a result of the "Nordic balance" the area has not been a source of tension between the superpowers. The neutralization and demilitarization of Åland can be seen as a part of this balance between the superpowers, as these were confirmed in 1947, mainly due to the Western powers' interest in Sweden's position. Finland's assurance of the defence of the area, should its neutrality be endangered, is a vital part of that balance.

The strategic environment in the Baltic Sea has now changed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Russian

withdrawal from the Baltic States, but many uncertainties still cloud the strategic future of the region. In a situation like this it is important not to add to the uncertainty by upsetting the prevailing conditions. The development in weapons technology may, however, to some extent change Åland's strategic position, regardless of the wishes of the various parties. The improvement of the weapons systems' performance and accuracy may have the result that the main problem is not to hit a target but to locate it. The protective archipelago in the Baltic Sea could then provide cover for long-range mobile weapons systems. This could underline the significance of the archipelago - including Åland - in the future. At the same time Finland's responsibility to safeguard the area's integrity is underlined, if the uncertainty factors in the Baltic area are not to increase. A guarantee to the effect that Åland neither constitutes a threat nor is threatened can therefore be considered in the interest of all parties.

In the present situation it is possible that the superpowers, mainly Russia and NATO, also have other reasons for their lack of interest in amending the conventions. Due to the conventions Åland is today an "open card". In a potential crisis the superpowers can make their own evaluation of the threat that the islands might constitute and prepare to meet that threat themselves. From Finland's point of view it is thus even more important that we are able to prove to the world that we can defend Åland ourselves.

The conventions concerning Åland do not limit Finland's possibilities to control the area. But if Finland cannot be expected to defend the islands, this might add to the uncertainty in the area. Thus it is of utmost importance for all parties concerned that Finland really can defend the area in a crisis, and prevent it from being drawn into a crisis. This is the best guarantee that Åland will not in the future threaten anybody - Finland, a third party, or the stability of the region.

NOTES

Introduction

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Chapter 2

- 4 UM:n julkaisemia diplomaattisia asiakirjoja: *Ahvenanmaan kysymys (Helsinki 1921)* p. 2,
J Barros: *The Åland Island Question (New Haven 1968)* p. 2.
- 5 M Borodkin: *Kriget vid Finlands kuster (Helsingfors 1905)* pp. 47-48, CF Palmstierna: *Sverige, Ryssland och England 1833-1855 (Stockholm 1932)* p. 25 ff, M Isaksson: *Kring Bomarsund (Ekenäs 1981)* p. 66 ff.
- 6 Palmstierna (1932) p. 36.
- 7 Barros pp. 13-14.
- 8 Barros p. 27, M Isaksson: *Ryska positionen Ålandskaja (Ekenäs 1983)* p. 48 ff, 105 ff.
- 9 Anna Bondestam: *Åland vintern 1918 (Mariehamn 1972)* p. 50.
- 10 Bondestam (1972) pp. 119-152.
- 11 Cf. Bertil Stjernfelt: *Åland 1918 - säregen föregångare till nutida FN-operationer, Kungliga krigsvetenskapsakademiens handlingar och tidskrift 3/1981* and CF Palmstierna: *Ålandsfrågan 1918-1951 (Stockholm 1951)* p. 8.
- 12 The events in connection with the negotiations strained the relations between Finland and Sweden for a long period ahead. The only communication from the white side to UCG was a telegraphic connection via Sweden. The Swedish government refused to convey Mannerheim's telegram urging the corps to go on fighting. Instead the Swedes let it be understood that Mannerheim favoured a retreat from Åland (Bondestam (1972) pp. 154-159).
- 13 Bondestam (1972) pp. 153-172, Stig Jägerskiöld: *Gustaf Mannerheim 1918 (Helsingfors 1967)* pp. 163-171, Barros pp. 84-86.
- 14 Barros (1968) pp. 84-86, Bondestam (1972) pp. 189-204.
- 15 Barros (1968) pp. 84-86.
- 16 Barros (1968) p. 240, Palmstierna (1951) p. 12.
- 17 In 1919-20 a Swedish attack against Åland and the rest of Finland was feared. To meet the threat a mobilization plan "Koncentration Sverige" was prepared. At that stage it was natural that on the Finnish side there was unwillingness to reduce the possibilities of defending Åland even

- further, which would have been the consequence of a recognition of the 1856 convention. Jarl Kronlund: Suomen puolustuslaitos 1918-1939 pp. 115-117, (Porvoo 1988).
- 18 Barros (1968) pp. 240, 254-255.
 - 19 Ahvenanmaan kysymys (1921) p. 61, WM Carlgren: Varken eller, reflexioner över Sveriges Ålandspolitik 1938-39 (Uddevalla 1977) p. 11.
 - 20 J.O. Söderhjelm: Démilitarisation et neutralisation des Iles d'Åland en 1856 et 1921. (Helsingfors 1928) p. 185.
 - 21 As early as 1923 there was a proposal for military co-operation between Sweden and Finland. Axel Rappe in his book "Sveriges läge, en krigspolitisk studie" pointed out that the Soviet Union was both Finland's and Sweden's worst enemy. To meet the threat Sweden should send troops to help Finland. Åland should be occupied jointly by both countries. Co-operation between general headquarters in both countries began. According to the Swedish mobilization plan from 1927 Sweden was to contribute to the defence of Åland in case of a Soviet attack. The plans had not been approved by the political leadership, but they bear witness of the worry for Åland's situation felt within military circles. Axel Rappe: Sveriges läge, en krigspolitisk studie (Stockholm 1923), Martti Turtola: Tornionjoelta Rajajoelle (Porvoo 1984) pp. 38-44, 95-96, WM Carlgren (1977) pp. 15-19, Bo Hugemark (ed.): Neutralitet och försvar (1986) pp. 102-108.
 - 22 The worry that Åland might serve as an attack route or an air base in an attack against Sweden or Finland is well illustrated in the following works: SH Ericson: Försvarsproblemen kring Åland (Stockholm 1939) and LJ Sauramo: Ahvenanmaan linnoittaminen ja vuoden 1921 sopimus (Helsinki 1938).
 - 23 The events during the Munich crisis intensified the planning. A Russian naval unit was then threateningly approaching Åland. Finland had already concentrated troops to Turku for transport to Åland. The transport was delayed due to fog. When the agreement was reached in Munich and the naval unit changed its course the preparations were discontinued. But the Swedish government had already reported its approval of troop transports to the islands. Sweden, too, increased its preparedness. Kari Selén: Syyskuun kriisi 1938 (Joensuu 1978) p. 153, Jarl Kronlund (1988) p. 546.
 - 24 S Tunebro: Ålandsfrågan (Stockholm 1939) pp. 12-13.
 - 25 J.K. Paasikivi: Toimintani Moskovassa ja Suomessa 1939-41, II Väli rauhan aika (Porvoo 1958), pp. 90-93, S Jägerskiöld: Mannerheim mellan världskrigen (Helsingfors 1972) pp. 270-271, K Wahlbäck: Finlandsfrågan i Sveriges politik 1937-1940 (Stockholm 1964) pp. 147-148, Erik Tudeer: Ålands Hemvärn 1939-1940, Sotahistoriallinen aikakauskirja 9, (Helsinki 1990).
 - 26 The question of defence co-operation between Sweden and Finland and of possible promises of help from Sweden has been treated by Martti Turtola in his book Tornionjoelta Rajajoelle and opposed by Krister Wahlbäck in Sveik Sverige Finland hösten 1939? Historisk tidskrift för Finland 1989 pp. 245-276.

- 27 S Jägerskiöld: (1972) p, 271.
- 28 Cf. Ö Berner: Sovjet och Norden (Stockholm 1985) pp. 29-30.
- 29 The Swedish military attaché in Moscow reported that for the negotiations he had received information from "sources close to the foreign commissariat" that the Soviet Union was going to claim a naval base on Åland. When he had made it known that this would draw Sweden into the conflict, the answer had been that the Soviet Union, facing the Swedish opposition, could focus on Hanko instead. (Rapport Vrang 4 okt 1939; Fst/underrättelseavd,E I:15, vol 1;KrA) Bo Hugemark (ed.): Stormvarning (1989) p. 84.
- 30 P-O Ekman: Vinterkriget till sjöss. Finland i krig 1939-1945, I (Borgå 1968) p. 184.
- 31 Tudeer (1990)
- 32 A Päärülä: Kun Ahvenanmaasta käytiin kauppaa talvisodan aikana. Helsingin Sanomat 12.12.1982
- 33 S Jägerskiöld: Fältmarskalken (Helsingfors 1975) p. 204-205.
- 34 See also: Juha Repo Ahvenanmaa Talvisodassa - Remilitarisointi saariryhmän itsehallinnon uhkana. Graduation thesis/pol hist, Helsingin Yliopisto 1988.
- 35 Paasikivi (1958) pp. 93-105, Jägerskiöld: (1975) p. 213.
- 36 Jägerskiöld (1975) p. 214.
- 37 Ibid. p. 214.
- 38 Mauno Jokipii: Jatkosodan synty, (Keuruu 1987), pp. 158-159.
- 39 Ohto Manninen: Kilpapurjehdus Ahvenanmaalle? Sotilasaikakauslehti (SAL) 5/1992.
- 40 Ohto Manninen: "Operaatio Tanne" Ahvenanmaan uhkana, SAL 11/94.
- 41 WM Carlgren (1977) p. 204.
- 42 Jokipii (1987), pp. 557-562, P Väyrynen (1968) p. 5.
- 43 P.O. Ekman: Sjöfront. Sjökrigshändelser i Norra Östersjöområdet 1941-44, (1981), pp. 101-105.
- 44 The operations plan is found on microfilm in the Finnish Military Archives. SA F 43/1061.
- 45 Colonel Robert P. McQuail: Khrushchev's right flank. Military Review, January 1964 pp. 7-16.
- 46 S Jägerskiöld: Från krig till fred, Gustaf Mannerheim 1944-1951 (Keuruu 1981) pp. 51-52.
- 47 Ursula von Gersdorf: Der Operationsplan "Tanne" in Operationsgebiet Östliche Ostsee, (Stuttgart 1961) pp. 149-151.
- 48 v Gersdorf (1961) p. 158.
- 49 Suomen Rannikkotyöstö 1918-1958 (Helsinki 1959) pp. 295-296.
- 50 P Visuri: Totaalisesta sodasta kriisinhallintaan (Keuruu 1989), p. 175, REJ Penttilä: Puolustuslinjat (Keuruu 1988) p. 23.
- 51 Jägerskiöld (1981) p. 53.
- 52 Visuri (1989) p. 175, WO 193/770, PM The War Office, 29 Aug. 1945.
- 53 WO 193/770, PM The War Office, 29 Aug. 1945. Further about Finland's position in the peace negotiations in Tuomo Polvinen: Between East and

- West, Finland in international politics 1944-47 (ed. DG Kirby) (1986).
- 54 Tore Modeen: De folkrättsliga garantierna för bevarandet av Ålandsöarnas nationella karaktär (Ekenäs 1973) p. 73.
- 55 To quote Johannes Salminen: "When a group of 30 000 is seeking its way, they superciliously call it separatism, when three million do the same thing, they play the Finlandia." Johannes Salminen: Ålandskungen (Mariehamn 1979), p. 89.
- 56 Ohto Manninen: "Operaatio Tanne" Ahvenanmaan uhkana, SAL 11/94.

Chapter 3

- 57 Stephen Foye: Confrontation in Moscow: The Army Backs Yeltsin, for Now. RFE/RL Research Report vol 2, no. 42, 22 October 1993, Michael Winiarski: Den nya ryska utrikespolitiken, Dagens Nyheter 14-16 Feb. 1994.
- 58 Michael Winiarski: Ryssland håller greppet om sina grannar, Dagens Nyheter 14 Feb. 1994, Kevin Fedarko: Back to the USSR? Time 30/94, 25 Jul. 1994.
- 59 Hufvudstadsbladet 17 Nov. 1994: Rysk kritik mot baltisk resolution
- 60 A. Demtshenko: NATO in the Baltic. Nothing Special? Krasnaja Zvezda 5 Mar. 1992.
- 61 Erkki Nordberg: The Baltic Republics. A Strategic Surevey (National Defence College, Helsinki) 1994 p. 92.
- 62 The significance of this statement should not be overrated. Finds in the archives in the GDR indicate that the Soviet promises not to be the first to use nuclear weapons were only expressing propaganda and did not correspond to the operative planning. Jukka Knuutti: Venäjän sotilasdoktriini on kaiken kattava "raamattu". Helsingin Sanomat 19 Nov. 1993.
- 63 Stefan Forss: Entisen Neuvostoliiton ydinaseet, Sotilasaikakauslehti 12/94, 1 Dec. 1994.
- 64 Douglas L. Clarke: The Russian Military and the CFE treaty. RFE/RL Research Report vol 2, no. 42, 22 october 1993.
- 65 Helsingin Sanomat/Itar Tass 29 Dec. 1994.
- 66 See e.g. Carl Bildt: Svensk säkerhetspolitik i förändringarnas Europa. Årsberättelse 1993 i avd VI säkerhetspolitik 7 Dec. 1993.
- 67 Phillip A Petersen and Shane C Petersen: The Kaliningrad Garrison State. Jane's Intelligence Review, February 1993.
- 68 Anders Boserup: "Approaches to Defensive Defence" and Gerald Holden: "Alternative Defence and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation" in M. Randle, P. Rogers: Alternatives in European Securities (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 21-27, 71-85.
- 69 Europe and Naval Arms Control in the Gorbachev Era, pp. 165-166. Ed. A Furst et al., SIPRI (1992).
- 70 Interview with researchers Robert Dahlsjö, Bo Hugemark and Niklas Granholm, Swedish National Defence Research Establishment (FOA) 30

Mar. 1994.

- 71 See e.g. Robert Dahlsjö, Johan Tunberger, Hans Zettermark: Navies, Arms Control and the Nordic Region, FOA pre-print D-10283, May 1993, where it is considered that disarmament measures in naval units could counteract their purpose and risk to threaten free shipping in the Baltic.
- 72 Robin Ranger and David G. Wiencek: "Watching the old Enemy", USNI proceedings, April 1992, p. 52. Also Secretary General Peter Lindbäck on Åland in an interview in *Nya Åland* 26 Sep. 1992 proposes political discussions about demilitarization of the entire Baltic Sea following the pattern for Åland.
- 73 See e.g. Robert Dahlsjö, Johan Tunberger, Hans Zettermark: Navies, Arms Control and the Nordic Region, FOA pre-print D-10283, May 1993 pp. 5-7.
- 74 Prime Minister Esko Aho in an address to the Defence Course in Helsinki 11 Oct. 1994.
- 75 In an interview in *Svenska Dagbladet* 16 Nov. 1992 the Secretary General of the WEU, Mr. van Eeckelen from Holland said that he had rather thought of the opposite way, that the Nordic countries would contribute to the defence of the states in Central Europe.

Chapter 4

- 76 Åland demilitariserat örrike (ed. Marianne Öhberg) (Mariehamn 1994) p.6.
- 77 Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1994 (SVT), (Helsingfors 1994) pp. 50-53. Statistisk årsbok för Åland 1994, (SÅÅ) (Mariehamn 1994) pp. 23-25.
- 78 SÅÅ (1994) pp. 63-64, 81-88.
- 79 SÅÅ (1994) p. 91.
- 80 SÅÅ (1994) p. 94.
- 81 Information from Tele long-distance net service 1991 and 1994.
- 82 Ålands Kraftverksaktiebolag 1990 (Mariehamn 1991), p.8, Nordel årsberetning 1989, pp. 78, 84, (Oslo, 1989)
- 83 SÅÅ (1994) p. 93.
- 84 Suomen lentokentät (Helsinki 1994).
- 85 See also the article by Phillip A. Petersen in IDR 7/1989: The Aland Islands - once and future Gibraltar of the north? Also the German and Soviet plans for the occupation of the islands during the Second World War built on the same concept. See i.a. Ohto Manninen (92,94)
- 86 Cf. Tor Sandli: Den luftmilitære situasjon i Nordvest-Europa, Norsk utenrikspolitisk institutt (Oslo 1990) p. 61.
- 87 Cf. Sandli (1990) who thinks that the area could be a good air base for the Soviet Union in an attack against Norway, if Sweden were to allow Soviet aircraft to use Swedish air territory. This speculation is of little interest, as the likelihood of such a situation can be considered minimal.
- 88 As a strategic surprise attack is understood an attack made from a peacetime deployment, with permanent forces, with the purpose being to rapidly paralyse the government and quench organized opposition.

- 89 Merenkulkulaitos 1993 (Helsinki 1994).
- 90 Amfibiebataljon. Taktisk handbok, Commander of the Navy 1993.
- 91 Finnish National Defence (1993) p. 14.
- 92 The Commander-in-Chief, handout at a press conference in Stockholm, Sweden 23 Mar. 1993.
- 93 Merentutkimuslaitos: Climatological Ice Atlas, (Norrköping 1982) pp. 19-36, Merenkulkulaitos 1989, p. 10
- 94 Cf. Petersen IDR 7/1989.
- 95 Interview with the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish defence forces, general Gustav Hägglund, Kylkirauta 4/94.
- 96 Sotatekninen arvio ja ennuste 1994 II, puolustusjärjestelmien kehitys (STAE-94 II) (Jyväskylä 1994) pp. 266, 270. The test vessel "Smyge" is an attempt to reduce the revealing signals drastically, and at the same time experiments with sidekeel hover technique are made (Surface Effect Ship (SES)-technology).
- 97 Plan for the Swedish Defence Forces, 1994, p. 62, Finnish National Defence (1993) p. 24.
- 98 Guy de Bakker: Anti-ship missiles, IDR 2/1990, pp. 153-159, Ruotuväki 10-11/1990, p. 10, Jane's Defence Weekly 14/1990/12 p. 498.
- 99 In Operativ Handbok (Militärhögskolan, Stockholm 1993) the Åland Constriction is defined as the area demarcated by the towns of Öregrund and Norrtälje in Sweden and Uusikaupunki and Hanko in Finland. This includes both the Roslagen archipelago and the archipelago in south-western Finland in the Åland Constriction.
- 100 The largest Soviet hovercraft, Pomornik, has a top speed of 50 knots and a loading capacity of 100 tons, e.g. one company with equipment (Jane's Defence Weekly 9/1989, p. 364, STAE-94 II p. 270).
- 101 Bell/Boeing V-22 Osprey can lift vertically with a load of 21 tons and reach a top speed of 630 km/h. Jane's World Combat Aircraft, (Surrey, 1988), p. 279.
- 102 The OTH tactics are based on using the high speed of the vessels and deploying for attack far behind the defender's radar horizon. When the target is kept secret the defender is obliged to spread out his defence capacity over a wide area. "Soviets expand coastal and anti-landing defence". IDR 7/1990, pp. 731-735.
- 103 See Mikko Taavitsainen: Ahvenanmaa - suurempien ja pienempien intressien ristiriita. Sotilaisaikakauslehti 8/1993 pp. 472-481.
- 104 STAE-94 II pp. 308, 342.
- 105 Helsingin Sanomat 16 Dec. 1990.
- 106 Agrell-Larsson Z nr. 2/1990 pp. 31-32, Richard Compton-Hall: Submarine versus submarine, the tactics and technology of underwater confrontation, (London 1988).
- 107 The Baltic Sea Area, Barymetric map, Scale 1:1 700 000, Geological Survey of Finland.
- 108 STAE-94 II p. 298.
- 109 Tomas Ries: Sovjetiska militärstrategiska intressen i nordväst, SAL 6-7/1991.

- 110 Tomas Ries: Kryssermissiler. Strategiske konsekvenser for nordregionen. Forsvarsstudier 9/1990, (Oslo 1990), p. 97.
- 111 Ries (1990) pp. 12-18, 106-108.
- 112 Bo Österlund, Mikko Viitasalo: Toteutuuko ydinvapaa Itämeri? Sotilasaikakauslehti 1/1994, p. 24.
- 113 Erkki Nordberg: (1994) p. 86, Phillip A Petersen and Shane C Petersen: The Kaliningrad Garrison State, Jane's Intelligence Review; February 1993 p.59.
- 114 Schofield, Carey: Interview with Colonel General Mikhailov, Head of the GRU, Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review, vol 2, no 5/1990.
- 115 Finnish Government Bill 114/94 to Parliament 10 Jun. 1994. See also Section 5.1.
- 116 Plan for the Swedish Defence Forces 1994. p. 14.
- 117 Stefan Forss: "Östersjön är ett underrättelsehav", HBL 14 Oct. 1990, Steve Lindberg: "Tillräckligt försvar" för Soviet - otillräckligt för Finland? Finsk Tidskrift 4/1990, p. 255.
- 118 A. Demtshenko: NATO in the Baltic. Nothing special? Krasnaja Zvezda 5 Mar. 1992.

Chapter 5

- 119 Vieraiden valtioiden kanssa solmitut sopimukset, Ulkoasiainministeriö (Helsinki 1994). Finland and Russia have in 1992 agreed that Russia has inherited the Soviet Union's role as party to treaties.
- 120 Finnish Government Bill 114/94 to Parliament 10 Jun. 1994.
- 121 However, Björkholm-Rosas: Ålandsöarnas demilitarisering och neutralisering, (Åbo 1990) p. 54 consider that such action would be contrary to the spirit of the conventions.
- 122 Söderhjelm (1928) p. 214, Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 55.
- 123 The limitation does not prevent rescue helicopters from landing. Finland's interpretation was reported to the parties to the treaty in 1969.
- 124 The French origin uses the word "pénètre", which would better be translated as "penetrate". According to that wording a visit by unarmed militaries could not be considered as a violation of the treaty.
- 125 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 63-64.
- 126 Söderhjelm (1928) p. 237, Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 64-65.
- 127 The interpretation has been that light warships may include cruisers. The limitation "light" thus is not significant in the present situation. Söderhjelm (1928) p. 244, Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 68.
- 128 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 69 do not share the view held by the Ålandic autonomy authorities that the term "anchor" (Fr. "mouiller") does not include wharfing.
- 129 Söderhjelm (1928) pp. 300-301, Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 70.
- 130 The interpretations of whether one single vessel or one vessel per nation is intended vary, just as the interpretations of whether unarmed warships

- participating in sailing races (e.g. the Tall Ships Race) are to be considered to be subject to the restrictions. Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 71-72, 111.
- 131 P-O Ekman: *Vinterkriget till sjöss, Finland i krig 1939-1945 I*, p. 172.
- 132 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 101 embrace this interpretation and also oppose the interpretation that the UN could be considered to have inherited the role of the League of Nations.
- 133 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 100-101.
- 134 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 97-98.
- 135 Söderhjelm (1928) p. 307 did not consider Finland to be bound by this article, while Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 99 say that the prohibition against fortifications is still valid.
- 136 Söderhjelm (1928) p. 306-307.
- 137 Thus Finland reported the troop transports to the islands before the Continuation War. The silence kept by the signatory powers was taken as acceptance. In the 1980's the signatory powers were informed about the adjustment of the border by Märket and of the right for unarmed warships to visit during the Tall Ships Race. Also according to international law the convention should be in force. Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 26-43.
- 138 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 66.
- 139 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 99-100, 101.
- 140 Finland's territorial sea extends four nautical miles outside the territorial waters. At present an extension of the territorial sea to twelve nautical miles is being prepared. Finnish Government Bill 114/94.
- 141 Sweden and Finland claimed that article 35c in the convention, stating that "Nothing in this Part affects: the legal régime in straits in which passage is regulated in whole or **in part** by long-standing international conventions ...", implied that transit passage could not be applied in the strait, which was a view not shared by the USA. See also Cay Holmberg: *Problems of arms control in the Baltic - Legal aspects* (1993).
- 142 This compilation differs from the corresponding compilation in Björkholm-Rosas (1990) pp. 106-107, to the extent indicated by the references made previously in the text. Björkholm-Rosas do not discuss Finland's obligation to defend the islands.
- 143 Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 102.
- 144 Report by the Finnish Parliamentary Committee on the application of the Act on State of War, No. 1988:40, pp. 26-27. However, the committee underlines that preventive use of weapons is not part of Finland's military and political doctrine. A transfer of Finnish troops to Åland can in no case be interpreted as use of weapons.
- 145 *Ibid.* p. 11.
- 146 Plan for the Swedish Defence Forces 94.
- 147 Finnish Act on Preparedness (No. 1080/91), Chapter 1, Section 2, Chapter 4, Section 33.
- 148 See e.g. interview with the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish defence forces, general Gustav Hägglund in *Kylkirauta* 4/94.
- 149 See e.g. Holger Rotkirch: *The Demilitarisation and Neutralisation of the*

- Åland Islands: A Regime "in European interests" Withstanding Changing Circumstances. *Journal of Peace Research* 1986 p. 373, Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 113.
- 150 J.K. Paasikivi: *Toimintani Moskovassa ja Suomessa 1939-41*, vol II (Porvoo 1958), p. 104.
- 151 Mauno Jokipii: *Jatkosodan synty*, (Keuruu 1987), pp. 158-159.
- 152 Cf. e.g. Matts Dreijer: *Genom livets snårskog*, (Ekenäs 1984).
- 153 Regional citizenship is granted to all native Ålanders living in Åland. Anyone moving to Åland can apply for regional citizenship after five years. A requirement is knowledge of Swedish. The Autonomy Act stipulates i.a. that only persons having obtained regional citizenship can own real estate in Åland. Male persons registered as having their domicile in Åland before the age of twelve are exempt from military service. According to the law the military service shall be compensated by service with the pilot or customs authorities, as stipulated by decree, but no such decree has ever been issued. In connection with the attempts to talk the Åland "landsting" (Parliament) into accepting military service for Åland in 1938, the government mentioned the possibility of issuing such a decree if the landsting did not accept military service. The threat was not carried out. (Dreijer (1984) p. 197).
- 154 Nya Åland 26 Nov. 1988, 29 Sep. 1992. The wide-spread interest in hunting mentioned earlier, 15 % of the population hold a hunting license, can partly be considered to compensate the exemption from military service. During the Winter War a home guard could be set up in a short time, taking some of the load off the Finnish troops.
- 155 Barbro Sundback: *Från folkspillra till folkrättsligt subjekt*, from Åland demilitariserat örike (Mariehamn 1994) pp. 76-78.
- 156 See e.g. Åland 9 Jul. 1993 "Många republiker i Ryssland liknar Åland". Many potential conflicts, e.g. the dispute about the Crimea or the crisis in Chechnia are in many ways reminiscent of the Åland issue in 1918-21, and thus it is considered that the model might be used e.g. to solve minority issues in Russia or within the framework of the CSCE.
- 157 The debate got going again in September 1992 when the Commander of the Finnish naval forces, Admiral Sakari Visa had proposed that Finland should take certain military measures to prevent the islands from being occupied in a surprise attack. The discussion went on for almost a year until summer 1993, ebbing out slowly. Visa's proposals won support i.a. in military circles and scattered political circles, but both President Koivisto and Mrs. Rehn, the Minister of Defence, toned down the issue. In Åland the proposal met with very sharp and concentrated criticism.
- 158 Sundback (1994) pp. 76-78.
- 159 In an inquiry in 1987 43 % of the Ålanders to whom the question was put said that military service for the Ålanders would bring more the Finnish influence. Nina Söderlund: *Ålands demilitarisering - trygghet eller hot* (Graduation thesis, Åbo Akademi 1988), pp. 30, 50. Cf. also de Geer-Hancock: *Åländskhet, nationsbygget på "Fredens Öar"*, (1986). The fact

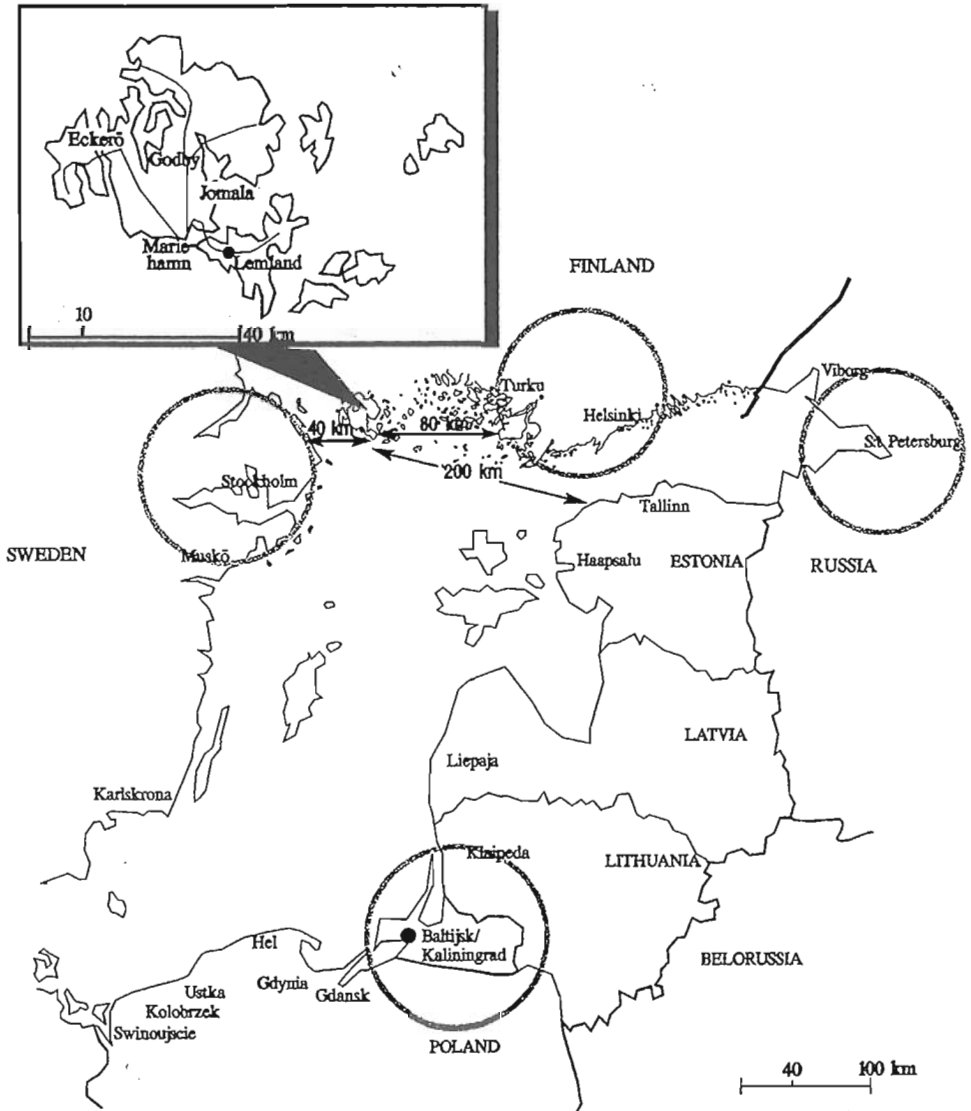
- that the Ålanders in 1939 opposed the "Stockholm Plan" but eagerly formed a home guard of their own at the outbreak of the Winter War less than a year later supports this theory.
- 160 The connection between the autonomy and the conventions is reported to have been made on purpose by the peace movement in Åland, in order to engage the autonomy authorities in the issue, having the desired effect. Barbro Sundback (1994) pp. 76-78.
- 161 As an example we could mention the proposal by Minister Raimo Vistbacka in 1990 that the exemption from military service, indirectly based on the conventions, should be repealed. In this case it is natural that in Åland attempts to revise the conventions are regarded as attempts to reduce the autonomy. The most insulting proposal was made by Marita Jurva, member of Parliament, on 24 Sep. 1990, implying that Finland could start negotiations with the Soviet Union about exchanging Åland for Karelia. See e.g. Hufvudstadsbladet, Åland and Nya Åland 29 Apr. - 10 Sep. 1990.
- 162 Söderlund (1988), Åland 24 Mar. 1987. During the visit of the "Turunmaa" on 21 Sep. 1988, i.a. the Speaker of the Åland Parliament recommended the public not to visit the vessel. The result was the opposite: a protest demonstration was joined by less than ten persons while 600 visited the ship during two hours. (Åland and Nya Åland 22 Sep. 1988).
- 163 In January 1991 the Åland Executive Council for the first time gave their own interpretation of the conventions. According to this, landing is not permitted (cf. footnote 128). This interpretation has at all stages been rejected by both the defence forces and the Ministry of Defence.
- 164 Both Acts enter into force by decree issued by the Council of State, when necessary only in specified areas. According to the Preparedness Act the Council of State can i.a. limit the rights of the local authorities (Preparedness Act, No. 1080/91, Chapter 4, Sections 25-30). According to the Act on State of Emergency the province, district and local authorities must follow the instructions of the military authorities in areas threatened by or subject to attack or similar activities (Act on State of Emergency, No. 1083/91, Chapter 3, Sections 23-27).
- 165 95 % of the Ålanders say they are content that Åland is an autonomous province in Finland. Independence is propagated only by a group called Fria Åland, which has not even surpassed the vote threshold in the elections for the Åland Parliament. (Suomen Kuvalehti 10/1990). It is an interesting fact that one third of the Finns in an inquiry thought that Åland could be granted independence. (Suomen Kuvalehti 24/1990).

Chapter 6

- 166 PPN 28 Feb. 1990, pp. 22-23.
- 167 Finnish Military Doctrine (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, March 1990) mentions Åland as a fourth focus area, separate from the south of Finland.
- 168 See the series of articles on the activities of the coast guards in Nya Åland 19 Feb. - 2 Mar. 1991.

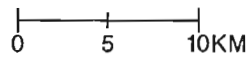
- 169 See Stjernfelt (1991).
- 170 See e.g. Olof Santesson's article in *Dagens Nyheter* 1 Oct. 1990.
- 171 One example of such an avoidance of taking a stand is the editorial in *Dagens Nyheter* 27 Feb. 1992: "Better leave Åland's status alone. Demilitarization serves the inhabitants - but in case of war Finland is responsible for the defence". The Swedish Commander-in-Chief Bengt Gustavsson agreed with admiral Visa in principle, but considered that the timing of a change is another question. Åland 24 Sep. 1992.
- 172 To quote Commander Cay Holmberg in *Problems of arms control in the Baltic - Legal aspects* (1993) pp. 11-12: "The "lock" to the Gulf of Bothnia might easily have ended up in the wrong hands and the "bridge" between Sweden and Finland would have been easy to cut off. It is therefore doubtful whether the Swedish efforts to keep the islands demilitarized have been wise." But Holmberg sums up his article by saying that revising the treaties is not a current issue.
- 173 See e.g. de Geer-Hancock (1986).
- 174 See e.g. Cay Holmberg (1993) p. 15. "The Aaland Convention is in force and revisions would not help in promoting arms control".
- 175 Stjernfelt (1991) pp. 52-53.
- 176 Plan for the Swedish Defence Forces 1994 p. 12.
- 177 See e.g. Ö Berner: *Sovjet och Norden* (Stockholm 1985) pp. 29-30, Päärnilä (1982).
- 178 The opinions on whether the Paris Peace Treaty is to be considered an official confirmation of the 1921 convention vary, as the text is rather vague, "in accordance with the situation as at present existing". Cf. Björkholm-Rosas (1990) p. 44.
- 179 During the debate about the demilitarization of Åland, Russian embassy officials said that Russia considers that Åland's present status should be maintained.
- 180 See e.g. McQuail (1964), C. Donnelly: *Red Banner* (1983), Lund: *Don't rock the boat* (1989).
- 181 Ries (1990), p. 108.
- 182 Petersen, IDR 6/89.
- 183 Sandli (1990).

THE ÅLAND ISLANDS AND THE BALTIC SEA

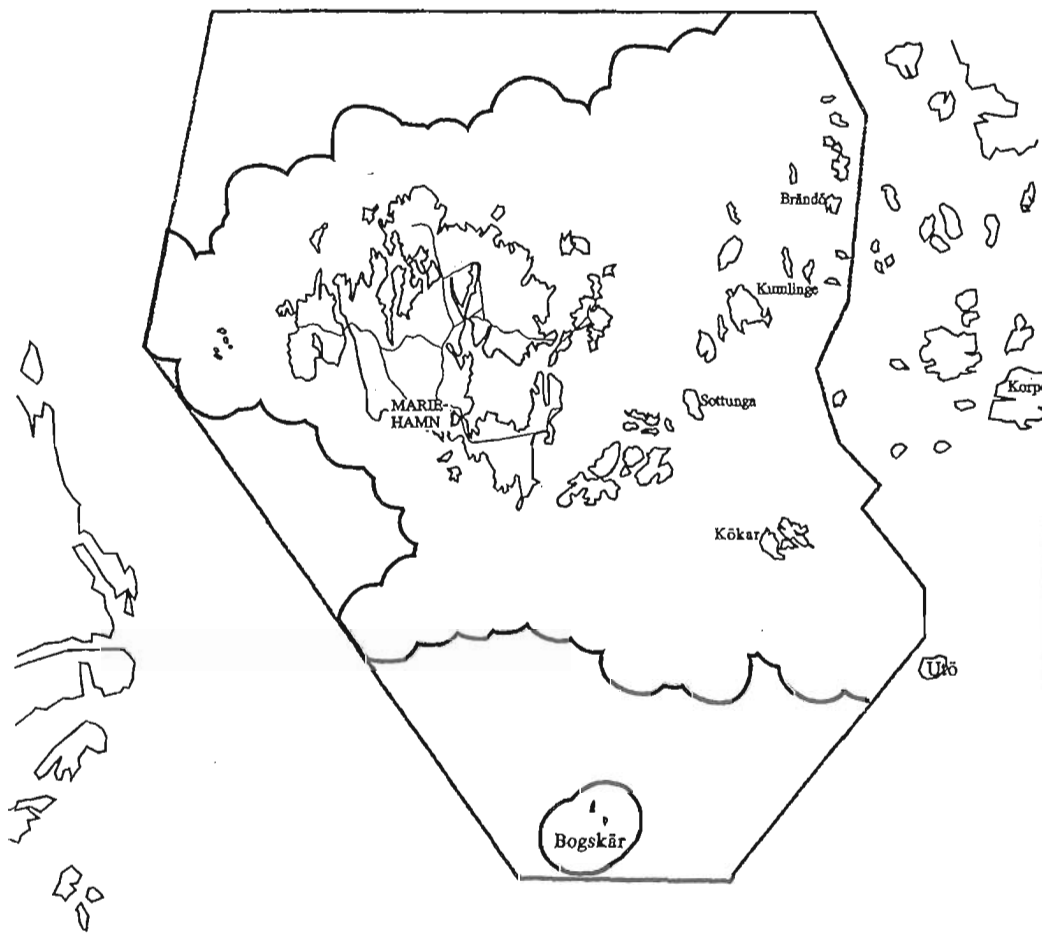


ÅLAND - THE MAIN ISLANDS

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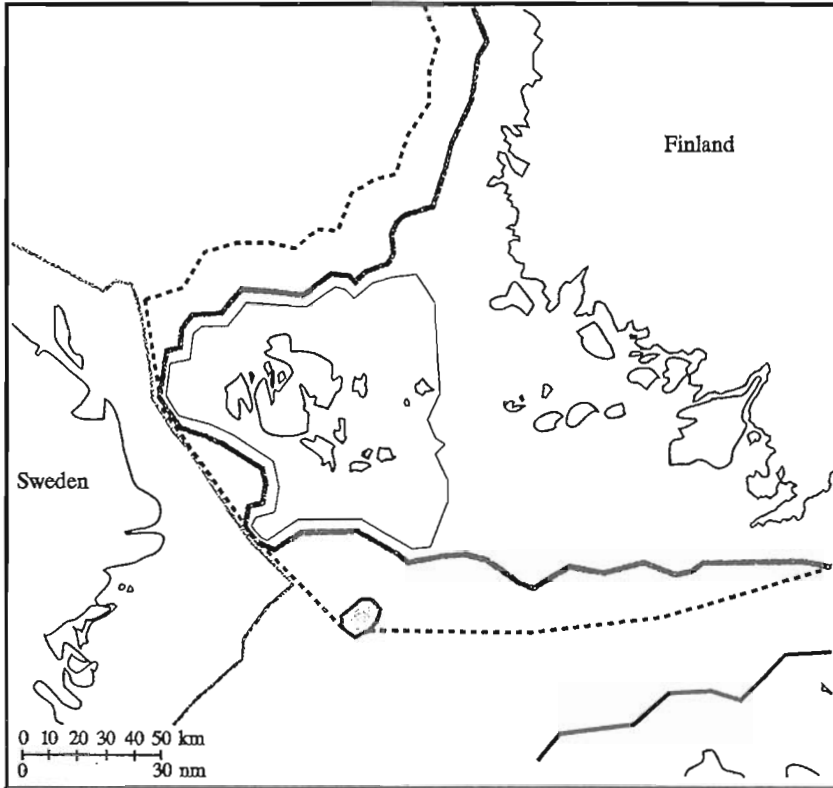






THE AREA OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS, AS PRESENTED IN THE CONVENTIONS



- Boundary according to the 1921 convention and 1940 treaty
- Demilitarized sea (3 nautical miles)

BOUNDARIES IN THE ÅLAND CONstriction



-  demilitarized zone (3 nautical miles)
-  Finnish 4 nautical mile boundary
-  approximate Finnish 12 nautical mile boundary
-  Swedish 12 nautical mile boundary

NOTE: The boundaries on the map are approximate

APPENDIX

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS TO MILITARY ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON THE DEMILITARIZATION AND NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS

Defence obligations:

- Article 7.II in the convention of 1921
- Article 1 in the treaty of 1940

Activities permitted in peacetime:

Normal situation:

- Control and safeguarding of the territorial integrity by measures taken by the Finnish frontier guards
- Temporary visits by two Finnish warships
- Overflights by the Finnish air force
- Finnish military helicopters in rescue service
- Temporary visits by one alien warship per country, as permitted by Finland
- Innocent passage of warships through territorial sea

When "special circumstances" demand:

- Temporary stay of more than two Finnish warships, provided that their displacement does not exceed 6000 tons.

When "exceptional circumstances" demand:

- Temporary stay of an armed Finnish force which is strictly necessary for maintaining peace and order.

Activities permitted in wartime:

In event of a war affecting the Baltic Sea:

- Temporary mining in order to safeguard the neutrality of the zone, and "strictly necessary" maritime measures for this purpose. It should also be pointed out that putting out mines in the strip of territorial sea one nautical mile wide outside the demilitarized zone is possible irrespective of the conventions. When Finland extends its sea territory to 12 nautical miles the strip of non-demilitarized territorial sea will grow to nine nautical miles.

In case of an attack "either against the Åland Islands or across them":

- Necessary measures to check and repulse the aggressor.

DOCUMENTATION

Convention 30 March 1856 on demilitarization of the Åland Islands (French) Transcription

Au nom de Dieu Tout-Puissant.

Sa Majesté la Reine du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande, Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français et Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, voulant étendre à la Mer Baltique l'accord si heureusement rétabli entre Elles en orient et consolider par là les bienfaits de la paix générale, ont résolu de conclure une Convention et nommé à cet effet:

Sa Majesté la Reine du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande, le très-honorable George Guillaume Frédéric Clarendon, Baron Hyde de Hindon, Pair du Royaume Uni, Conseiller de Sa Majesté Britannique en son Conseil Privé, Chevalier du très-noble Ordre de la Jarretière, Chevalier Grand Croix du très-honorable Ordre du Bain, Principal Secrétaire d'Etat de Sa Majesté pour les Affaires Etrangères,
et le très-honorable Henri Richard Charles Baron Cowley, Pair du Royaume Uni, Conseiller de Sa Majesté en son Conseil privé, Chevalier Grand Croix du très honorable Ordre du Bain; Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté près Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français,

Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français, le Sieur Alexandre Comte Colonna Walewski, Sénateur de l'Empire, Grand Officier de l'Ordre Impérial de la Légion d'honneur, Chevalier Grand Croix de l'Ordre équestre des Séraphins, Grand Croix de l'Ordre des Saints Maurice et Lazare, décoré de l'Ordre Imperial du Medjidyé de première classe & a, & a, & a; Son Ministre et Secrétaire d'Etat au Département des Affaires Etrangères,

et le Sieur François Adolphe Baron de Bourqueney, Grand Croix de l'Ordre Impérial de la Légion d'honneur et de

l'Ordre de Léopold d'Autriche, décoré du Portrait du Sultan en diamants, & a, & a, & a, Son Envoyé extraordinaire et Ministre plénipotentiaire près Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique:

et Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, le Sieur Alexis Comte Orloff, Son Aide-de-camp général et Général de cavalerie, Commandant du quartier général de Sa Majesté, Membre du Conseil de l'Empire et du Comité des Ministres, décoré des deux Portraits en diamants de Leurs Majestés feu l'Empereur Nicolas et l'Empereur Alexandre II, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint André en diamants et des Ordres de Russie; Grand Croix de l'Ordre de Saint Etienne d'Autriche de première classe, de l'Aigle noir de Prusse en diamants, de l'Annonciade de Sardaigne et de plusieurs autres ordres étrangers;

et le Sieur Philippe Baron de Brunnow, Son Conseiller privé, Son Envoyé extraordinaire et Ministre plénipotentiaire près la Confédération Germanique et près Son Altesse Royale le Grand Duc de Hesse, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint Wladimir de première classe, de Saint Alexandre Newski, enrichi de diamants; de l'Aigle blanc; de Sainte Anne de première classe, de Saint Stanislas de première classe, Grand Croix de l'Ordre de l'Aigle rouge de Prusse de première classe, Commandeur de l'Ordre de Saint Etienne d'Autriche et de plusieurs autres Ordres étrangers;

Lesquels après avoir échangé leurs Pleins-Pouvoirs trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants.

Article 1^{er}.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, pour répondre au désir qui lui a été exprimé par Leurs Majestés la Reine du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande et l'Empereur des Français, déclare que les Iles d'Aland ne seront

pas fortifiées, et qu'il n'y sera maintenu ni créé aucun établissement militaire ou naval.

Article 2.

La présente Convention, annexée au Traité général signé à Paris en ce jour, sera ratifiée, et les Ratifications en seront échangées dans l'espace de quatre semaines ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi, les Plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposées le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Paris le trentième jour du mois de Mars de l'an mil huit cent cinquante six.

Clarendon
Cowley
A. Walewski
Bourquenay
Orloff
Brunnow

Source:
Meddelanden Från Ålands kulturstiftelse Nr 6
Internationella avtal och dokument rörande Åland
1856–1992

International Treaties and Documents
Concerning Ålands Islands
1856–1992

Mariehamn 1993.
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Convention on non-fortification and neutralization of the Åland Islands 20 October 1921
English translation.

1922

League of Nations — Treaty Series.

213

¹ TRADUCTION. — TRANSLATION.

No. 255. — CONVENTION² RELATING TO THE NON-FORTIFICATION AND NEUTRALISATION OF THE AALAND ISLANDS, SIGNED AT GENEVA, OCTOBER 20, 1921.

Official text in French. The registration of this convention took place April 6, 1922.

The President of GERMANY, His Majesty the King of DENMARK and of ICELAND, the Head of State of the ESTHONIAN REPUBLIC, the President of the REPUBLIC of FINLAND, the President of the FRENCH REPUBLIC, His Majesty the King of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND and of the BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS, Emperor of INDIA, His Majesty the King of ITALY, the Head of State of the REPUBLIC of LATVIA, the Head of the POLISH STATE, and His Majesty the King of SWEDEN, having agreed to carry out the recommendation formulated by the Council of the League of Nations in its Resolution of June 24, 1921, that a Convention should be concluded between the interested Powers with a view to the non-fortification and neutralisation of the Aaland Islands in order that these islands may never become a cause of danger from the military point of view ;

Have resolved for this purpose to supplement without prejudice thereto, the obligations assumed by Russia in the Convention³ of March 30, 1856, regarding the Aaland Islands, annexed to Treaty of Paris of the same date ;

And have appointed the following as their plenipotentiaries :

FOR GERMANY :

M. Oscar TRAUTMANN, Counsellor of Legation ;

FOR DENMARK :

M. Herman Anker BERNHOFT, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris,
and Captain Henri Lucien Erik WENCK, Chief of Staff of the Danish Navy ;

FOR ESTHONIA :

M. Antoine PIIP, Minister of Foreign Affairs :

FOR FINLAND :

General Oscar Paul ENCKELL, Chief of the General Staff of the Finnish Army ;
M. Rafael Waldemar ERICH, Former President of the Council of Ministers, Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Helsingfors ;
M. Carl ENCKELL, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris ;

¹ Traduit par le Secrétariat de la Société des Nations. ¹ Translated by the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

² The instruments of ratification of Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, the British Empire and Sweden were deposited at Geneva, April 6, 1922; those of Italy May 11, 1922, those of Poland June 29, 1922 and those of Latvia, September 9, 1922.

³ British and Foreign State Papers, vol. 46, page 23.

For FRANCE :

M. Jean GOUT, Minister Plenipotentiary of the First Class ;

For the BRITISH EMPIRE :

M. John Duncan GREGORY, C.M.G., Assistant Secretary of His Britannic Majesty's Foreign Office ;

For ITALY :

M. Arturo RICCI BUSATTI, Minister Plenipotentiary of the First Class ;

For LATVIA :

M. Michael WALTERS, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Rome ;

For POLAND :

M. Szymon ASKENAZY, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Delegate to the League of Nations ;

For SWEDEN :

M. Eric Birger de TROLLE, Provincial Governor, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs ;
Baron Erik Teodor Marks von WÜRTEMBERG, President of the Court of Appeal of Svea, Former Minister ;

Who, having deposited their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions :

Article 1.

Finland, confirming, for her part, as far as necessary, the declaration made by Russia in the Convention of March 30, 1856, regarding the Aaland Islands, annexed to the Treaty of Paris of the same date, undertakes not to fortify that part of the Finnish Archipelago which is called " the Aaland Islands. "

Article 2.

I. The name " Aaland Islands " in the present Convention includes all the islands, islets and reefs situated in the stretch of sea bounded by the following lines :

- (a) On the North by the parallel of latitude 60° 41' north ;
(b) On the East by the straight lines joining successively the following geographical points :

(1)	Lat.	60° 41'.0 N.	and long.	21° 00'.0 E.	of Greenwich
(2)	»	60° 35'.9 N.	»	21° 06'.9 E.	»
(3)	»	60° 33'.3 N.	»	21° 08'.6 E.	»
(4)	»	60° 15'.8 N.	»	21° 05'.5 E.	»
(5)	»	60° 11'.4 N.	»	21° 00'.4 E.	»
(6)	»	60° 09'.4 N.	»	21° 01'.2 E.	»
(7)	»	60° 05'.5 N.	»	21° 04'.3 E.	»
(8)	»	60° 01'.1 N.	»	21° 11'.3 E.	»
(9)	»	59° 59'.0 N.	»	21° 08'.3 E.	»
(10)	»	59° 53'.0 N.	»	21° 20'.0 E.	»
(11)	»	59° 48'.5 N.	»	21° 20'.0 E.	»
(12)	»	59° 27'.0 N.	»	20° 46'.3 E.	»

- c) On the South by the parallel of latitude 59° 27' North ;

d) On the West by the straight lines joining successively the following geographical points :

(13)	Lat.	59° 27'.0 N.	and long.	20° 09'.7 E.	of Greenwich
(14)	»	59° 47'.8 N.	»	19° 40'.0 E.	»
(15)	»	60° 11'.8 N.	»	19° 05'.5 E.	»
(16)				Middle of Market rock	
	(»	60° 18'.4 N.	»	19° 08'.5 E.	»
(17)	»	60° 41'.0 N.	»	19° 14'.4 E.	»

The lines joining points 14, 15 and 16 are those fixed by " the Topographical Description of the Frontier between the Kingdom of Sweden and the Russian Empire in accordance with the demarcation of the year 1810, corrected to conform with the revision of 1888. "

The position of all the points mentioned in this Article is generally taken from the British Admiralty map N° 2297, dated 1872 (corrected up to August 1921) ; but for greater precision the position of points 1 to 11 is taken from the following maps ; Finnish maps No. 32, 1921, No. 29, 1920, and Russian map No. 742, 1916 (corrected in March 1916).

A copy of each of these maps is deposited with the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

II. The territorial waters of the Aaland Islands are considered to extend for a distance of three marine miles from the low-water mark on the islands, islets and reefs not permanently submerged, delimited above ; nevertheless, these waters shall at no point extend beyond the lines fixed in § I of this Article.

III. The whole of the islands, islets and reefs delimited in paragraph I and of the territorial waters defined in paragraph II constitute the zone to which the following Articles apply.

Article 3.

No military or naval establishment or base of operations, no military aircraft establishment or base of operations, and no other installation used for war purposes shall be maintained or set up in the zone described in Article 2.

Article 4.

Except as provided in Article 7, no military, naval or air force of any Power shall enter or remain in the zone described in Article 2 ; the manufacture, import, transport and re-export of arms and implements of war in this zone are strictly forbidden.

The following provisions shall, however, be applied in time of peace :

(a) In addition to the regular police force necessary to maintain public order and security in the zone, in conformity with the general provisions in force in the Finnish Republic, Finland may, if exceptional circumstances demand, send into the zone and keep there temporarily such other armed forces as shall be strictly necessary for the maintenance of order.

(b) Finland also reserves the right for one or two of her light surface warships to visit the islands from time to time. These warships may then anchor temporarily in the waters of the islands. Apart from these ships, Finland may, if important special circumstances demand, send into the waters of the zone and keep there temporarily other surface ships, which must in no case exceed a total displacement of 6,000 tons.

The right to enter the archipelago and to anchor there temporarily cannot be granted by the Finnish Government to more than one warship of any other Power at a time

(c) Finland may fly her military or naval aircraft over the zone, but, except in cases of *force majeure*, landing there is prohibited.

Article 5.

The prohibition to send warships into the zone described in Article 2 or to station them there shall not prejudice the freedom of innocent passage through the territorial waters. Such passage shall continue to be governed by the international rules and usages in force.

Article 6.

In time of war, the zone described in Article 2 shall be considered as a neutral zone and shall not, directly or indirectly, be used for any purpose connected with military operations.

Nevertheless, in the event of a war affecting the Baltic Sea, Finland shall have the right, in order to assure respect for the neutrality of the Aaland Islands, temporarily to lay mines in the territorial waters of these islands and for this purpose to take such measures of a maritime nature as are strictly necessary.

In such a case Finland shall at once refer the matter to the Council of the League of Nations.

Article 7.

I. In order to render effective the guarantee provided in the Preamble of the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties shall apply, individually or jointly, to the Council of the League of Nations, asking that body to decide upon the measures to be taken either to assure the observance of the provisions of this Convention or to put a stop to any violation thereof.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to assist in the measures which the Council of the League of Nations may decide upon for this purpose.

When, for the purposes of this undertaking, the Council is called upon to make a decision under the above conditions, it will invite the Powers which are parties to the present Convention, whether Members of the League or not, to sit on the Council. The vote of the representative of the Power accused of having violated the provisions of this Convention shall not be necessary to constitute the unanimity required for the Council's decision.

If unanimity cannot be obtained, each of the High Contracting Parties shall be entitled to take any measures which the Council by a two-thirds majority recommends, the vote of the representative of the Power accused of having violated the provisions of this Convention not being counted.

II. If the neutrality of the zone should be imperilled by a sudden attack either against the Aaland Islands or across them against the Finnish mainland, Finland shall take the necessary measures in the zone to check and repulse the aggressor until such time as the High Contracting Parties shall in conformity with the provisions of this Convention, be in a position to intervene to enforce respect for the neutrality of the islands.

Finland shall refer the matter immediately to the Council.

Article 8.

The provisions of this Convention shall remain in force in spite of any changes that may take place in the present *status quo* in the Baltic Sea.

Article 9.

The Council of the League of Nations is requested to inform the Members of the League of the text of this Convention, in order that the legal status of the Aaland Islands, an integral part of the

Republic of Finland, as defined by the provisions of this Convention, may, in the interests of general peace, be respected by all as part of the actual rules of conduct among Governments.

With the unanimous consent of the High Contracting Parties, this Convention may be submitted to any non-signatory Power whose accession may in future appear desirable, with a view to the formal adherence of such Power.

Article 10.

This Convention shall be ratified. The protocol of the first deposit of ratification shall be drawn up as soon as the majority of the signatory Powers, including Finland and Sweden, are in a position to deposit their ratifications.

The Convention shall come into force for each signatory or acceding Power immediately on the deposit of such Power's ratification or instrument of accession.

Deposit of ratification shall take place at Geneva with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and any future instruments of accession shall also be deposited there.

In faith whereof the plenipotentiaries have signed this Convention and have annexed their seals thereto.

Done at Geneva, on the twentieth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, in a single copy, which shall remain in the Archives of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. A certified copy shall be sent by the Secretariat to each of the signatory Powers.

(Signed) (L. S.) TRAUTMANN.
(L. S.) H. A. BERNHOFT.
(L. S.) WENCK.
(L. S.) ANT. PIIP.
(L. S.) O. ENCKELL.
(L. S.) R. ERICH.
(L. S.) CARL ENCKELL.
(L. S.) JEAN GOUT.
(L. S.) J. D. GREGORY.
(L. S.) M. RICCI-BUSATTI.
(L. S.) M. WALTERS.
(L. S.) S. ASKENAZY.
(L. S.) ERIC TROLLE.
(L. S.) E. MARKS VON WÜRTEMBERG.

Treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union 11 October 1940
concerning Åland Islands.
English translation.

Treaty

between Finland and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics concerning
the Åland Islands.

The Government of the Republic of Finland and the Government
of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics wishing to strengthen the founda-
tion of their security and peace in the Baltic Sea, have considered it
necessary to make the following treaty and for that purpose appointed the
following representatives:

The Government of the Republic of Finland:

The Finnish plenipotentiary in Moscow Juho Kusti Paasikivi;

The Government of the Socialist Soviet republics:

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR
and people's Commissar for foreign affairs Vjatcheslav Mihailovich
Molotov,

who after having exchanged their letters of attorney, which have been
found in order, have agreed as follows:

Article 1.

Finland pledges to demilitarise the Åland Islands, not to fortify
them, and not to put them at the disposal of the armed forces of foreign
states.

This also implies that neither Finland nor other states, within the
zone consisting of the Åland Islands may keep or establish any installations
or bases of operation of a military nature, installations or bases of
operation of military air forces or any other installations for military pur-
poses, and that the artillery platforms now present on the islands shall be
demolished.

Article 2.

The denomination "the Åland Islands zone" in this treaty includes
all the islands, isles and skerries which are inside the sea area bordered by
the following lines:

a) in the North, the latitude parallel N 60° 41',

b) in the East, the straight lines successively connecting the

following geographical points:

1) lat 60° 41',0 N and long. 21°00',0 E (Gr.)

2) lat. 60° 35',9 N and long. 21° 06',9 E "

- 3) lat. 60° 33',3 N and long. 21° 08',6 E (Gr.)
- 4) lat. 60° 15',8 N and long. 21° 05',5 E "
- 5) lat. 60° 11',4 N and long. 21° 04',4 E "
- 6) lat. 60° 09',4 N and long. 21° 01',2 E "
- 7) lat. 60° 05',5 N and long. 21° 04',3 E "
- 8) lat. 60° 01',1 N and long. 21° 11',3 E "
- 9) lat. 59° 59',0 N and long. 21° 08',3 E "
- 10) lat. 59° 53',0 N and long. 21° 20',0 E "
- 11) lat. 59° 48',5 N and long. 21° 20',0 E "
- 12) lat. 59° 27',0 N and long. 21° 46',3 E "
- c) in the South, the latitude parrallel 59° 27'N,
- d) in the West, the straight lines successively connecting the following geographical points:
 - 13) lat. 59° 27',0 N and long. 27° 09',7 E (Gr.)
 - 14) lat. 59° 47',8 N and long. 19° 40',0 E "
 - 15) lat. 60° 11',8 N and long.19° 05',5 E "
 - 16) The mid-point of Märket Rock; lat. 60° 18',4 N and long.19° 08',5 E (Gr.)
 - 17) lat.60° 41',0 N and long. 19° 14',4 E (Gr.).

The territorial waters of the Åland Islands are considered to reach to a distance of three nautical miles from those islands, isles and skerries which are at least temporarily visible above the sea surface at low water.

Article 3.

The USSR is granted right to maintain an own consulate on the Åland Islands that beyond usual consular functions supervises the fulfilment of the commitments stated in Article 1 in this treaty, concerning the non-fortification and demilitarization of the Åland Islands.

In case this consular representative would observe anything that according to his views stands in conflict with the stipulations in this treaty about the demilitarization and non-fortification, he is authorized to report this to the Finnish authorities with the Governmental office in the Province of Åland as intermediary for steps to be taken for a joint investigation thereof.

This investigation is to be made by a representative of the Finnish government and of the consular representative of the USSR as soon as possible.

The results of the joint investigation are to be written down in a protocol in quadruple in Finnish and Russian and reported to the governments of the two signing parties for the taking of necessary steps.

Article 4.

This treaty is in force as soon as it has been signed, and shall thereafter be ratified.

The ratification documents are to be exchanged in Helsinki within ten days.

This treaty is written in two original copies in Finnish and Russian in the city of Moscow on the 11th October 1940.

J. K. Paasikivi

V. Molotov

Source:

Meddelanden Från Ålands kulturstiftelse Nr 6

Internationella avtal och dokument rörande Åland
1856–1992

International Treaties and Documents
Concerning Ålands Islands
1856–1992

Mariehamn 1993

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Pekka Visuri, 1990.
- 2 *Flank or Front: An Assessment of Military – Political
Developments in the High North*
Tauno Nieminen, 1991.
- 3 *Non Offensive Defence: A Criteria Model of Military Credibility*
Arto Nokkala, 1991.
- 4 *Development of Military Technology and its Impact
on the Finnish Land Warfare Doctrine*
Markku Koli, 1992.
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