

**FINNISH THREAT
PERCEPTION POLICY
IN THE EARLY
YEARS OF THE 21ST
CENTURY**

Jarno Linnéll



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Jarno Linnéll

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1. Introduction

What are the threats that face Finland?

“What are the threats that face Finland?” is a simple enough question in itself, and one that is frequently asked both in the context of Finnish security policy and in everyday conversation. In academic terms, answers may be sought through a wide variety of perspectives and approaches, as there are numerous ways of defining and interpreting security and the threats posed to it. It is a question that all those in positions of political responsibility should be able to answer, as the defining and management of threats is a matter of crucial importance for the state – it is a matter of its own security. Correspondingly, a vast number of widely differing opinions may exist on this topic in everyday reality, as each one of us may have his or her own views on the subject. We are constantly arriving at our own assumptions regarding the world around us and the factors affecting it, which in turn serve to construct our understanding of the various threats that we face. People perceive reality through a variety of concepts and social processes, and at the same time, if some particular thing is felt to constitute a sufficiently powerful threat, steps are taken to meet this threat in the manner felt to be most appropriate (depending on the object of the security risk), in order to gain a sense of security or eliminate a source of insecurity.¹ One may indeed ask in a critical vein

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¹ Another essential factor in this is the experienced intensity of the threat. One good example of this would be the technological threat scenarios associated with the transition to the new millennium, which were perceived beforehand as very serious matters in terms of both intensity and impact. In the opinion of Johan Eriksson no threat since the Second World War had elicited such a comprehensive response in Sweden as did the interference with telecommunications that might have arisen at the turn of the millennium, and this has subsequently been used in Swedish threat perception research as a prime example of both the relative nature of threats and the relationship between talk and reality in this field. Investigations after the event have shown that certain actors made a conscious attempt to exaggerate the threats on that occasion in order to obtain greater allocations of government funding, but it has also been noted that no mention was made in this research of the significance of the preparations made (to control the threat) relative to the intensity at

what things or factors we regard as threats, and what factors interacted in the early years of the new millennium to construct the Finns' understanding of the threats that faced their society. Who dictated the conditions under which this took place?

The present discussion will set out from the understanding of a threat as a social construct, a political instrument that is both disputed and negotiable. There is no such thing as a threat as a single, defined, stable state of affairs, as it is impossible to establish the "true reality" of a threat objectively,² if only because this would entail an objective measure of security, which no theory of security has yet been able to produce (and is scarcely likely ever to do so). This is in any case also tied up with the nature of a threat as a prediction of the future, and the fact that the *perception* of a threat is tied to a certain evaluative viewpoint. The disputable nature of security and threats is concerned with the reconciliation of different evaluations, world-views and political goals, which means that perceived threats can never command total unanimity and thresholds for defining a threat can vary to a substantial degree. Since actors can look on a security environment and the threats entailed in it in different ways, the understanding upon which the decisions are eventually based is determined by the process by which the perceptions of threats are formed.³ A state's public threat perceptions are constructed through interaction between numerous actors in combination with perceptions expressed by external actors. We shall approach the question of perceived threats in this work from the viewpoint of social reality rather than regarding material factors as being of prime importance. In this sense the perception of a threat may in itself promote the concrete existence of that threat, i.e. a common belief in its existence may turn it into a "reality". At the central government level the definition of threats can be regarded as one of the fundamental processes involved in the outlining of security policy.

which it was realized. See, for example, Johan Eriksson, *Kampen om Hot-bilden. Rutin och Drama i Svensk Säkerhetspolitik*, Santérus Förlag, Stockholm 2004, pp. 11–13, 189–190.

² Thus the defining of a perceived public domain threat to national security is primarily a political issue and not a matter of objective assessment. Cf. Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear, An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Worcester 1991, p. 115.

³ According to Harto Hakovirta, it is a question of whose views carry the greatest weight in this process. See Harto Hakovirta, *Maailmanpolitiikka, teoria ja todellisuus*, Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy, Jyväskylä 2002, pp. 142–143.

Security and threats are what we make of them.⁴ The constructivist theoretical and methodological perspective adopted in this work refers in its entirety to the manner in which security and threats are understood and interpreted. We shall approach the reality of threats in a multi-level, multidisciplinary manner – in as broad a manner, in fact, as the various actors set out to present the threats they perceive and to justify this reality. The examination will not be limited to the level of independent states nor to the perception of political or military threats but will aim at a more comprehensive viewpoint in this respect. In spite of the attention paid to different levels, however, the main emphasis in the empirical interpretation will be upon the state and the national security and defence policy reports that have become established procedure in Finland during the post-Cold War period. Indeed, one of the motives behind this work lay in the observation that the process of preparing these security and defence policy reports and constructing the associated descriptions of perceived threats had not previously been studied.

A secure life calls for secure truths,⁵ and these truths regarding security and perceived threats were constructed during the post-Cold War period to a great extent under conditions dictated by a bipolar view of world politics, a mood of realism and a state-centred philosophy of military security. There was little open discussion of security issues or perceived threats within Finnish society at that time, and the threats that the country faced were shrouded in a certain indeterminacy and ambivalence in addition to being largely of a military nature. The public perception of threats tended to be rather different from the reality on which the actual actions taken to control and counter perceived threats were based.⁶ The Soviet Union was

⁴ To parallel Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1992, p. 391.

⁵ James Der Derian, “The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche and Baudrillard”, in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York 1995, p. 34.

⁶ According to Pertti Salminen, public perceptions of threats in the 1960s showed a powerful tendency to avoid anything that would annoy the Soviet Union. The military and political leadership based their threat perception philosophy on the possibility of an overland Soviet offensive aimed at occupying Finland, but it was impossible to bring this prospect out into the open. Pertti Salminen, *Puolueettomuuden nimeen, sotilasjohto Kekkonen linjalla ja sen sivussa 1961–1966*, Helsinki 1995, pp. 44–46. On ambivalence in threat perceptions on the part of small nations, see Wilhelm Agrell, *Alliansfrihet och Atombomber, Kontinuitet och förändring i den svenska försvarsdoktrinen från 1945 till 1982*, Liber, Stockholm 1985, pp. 20–25.

looked on as the only real military threat, but official public policies were always framed in strict accordance with the provisions of the 1948 Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. This was a form of security policy logic in which different perceived threats were manifested at different levels. The Finnish understanding of the threat scenario was dominated by the possibilities of the country becoming involved in a war above all on account of a worsening of tension between the major world powers of the day.⁷ A public, or semi-public, threat perception was employed as a means of protecting Finland's neutrality, but the covert perception that lay behind it was seldom discussed openly. The main emphasis in all the evaluations of perceived threats was upon military issues and the balance of power, and the official, publically expressed views on the threat scenario were in general highly neutral in character, so that all talk of threats in the public domain was directed towards reassuring the country's citizens and strengthening their belief in Finland's ability to defend itself militarily.⁸ *Thus a publicly declared threat perception should be understood in this context as being above all a carefully formulated political statement designed to support both the country's official foreign policy and its internal stability, in which certain factors in the definition may be "underweighted" or "overweighted" for particular political purposes; in other words it is deliberately constructed and is flexible in relation to the political aims of the moment.* One interesting observation to emerge from earlier research is that threat perceptions are frequently formulated and expressed in public only after the related decisions have been made, so that they do not in fact serve at all as definitions of the pre-existing state of affairs but are in effect the products of political power struggles and conflicting interpretations.⁹

⁷ See Ari Raunio, "Suomen sotilaallinen uhkakuva kylmän sodan aikana 1944–1990", in Petteri Jouko, Pasi Kesseli, Jukka Kulomaa, Ari Raunio (eds.), *Suursotien vuosisata. Sodan ja taistelun kuva 1900-luvulla*, Sotahistorian laitos, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Helsinki 2002, pp. 149–179.

⁸ A comprehensive picture of the multidimensional political and evaluative nature of the concept of threat in Finland is given by Kari Miekkavaara, *Ydinaseiden uhka Suomen maanpuolustukselle, Päättäjien käsitykset uhkasta ja toimenpiteet sen torjumiseksi vuosina 1945–1971*, doctoral thesis, Turun yliopisto, Turku 2004, pp. 213–214.

⁹ See, for example, Fredrik Bynander, "Securitizing Submarine Intrusions", in Johan Eriksson, *Threat Politics, new perspectives on security, risk and crisis management*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot 2001, pp. 123–144.

As may be seen from earlier threat perception policy research,¹⁰ the meaning of the word threat can be judged to have altered in two ways since the end of the Cold War. Firstly, the conceptual foundation for the terms security and threat has been essentially broadened, so that the concept of threat can apply nowadays to a wide variety of problems, risks and even challenges. This is linked to the modernization of society and the projection of security as an everyday issue, so that threats have become to an increasing extent part of our collective cognitive knowledge. Thanks to the greater communicative efficiency of the media, we are more aware than ever before of the various factors in our lives that are identified as threats. At the same time, it is no longer possible to react to threats exclusively by defence policy means. The broadening of the scope of the threats that face society is also a consequence of the increased vulnerability brought about by its dependence on information technology. Virus attacks or other forms of cybercrime would not be possible without the technological progress and high degree of networking typical of our modern society. Secondly, there has been a distinct increase in the openness with which threats are discussed and the use that is made of them to advance political interests. *Threat perception policy has become an aspect of politics alongside many others, and at the same time security and threats have become central concepts in the language of politics.* The scope and diversity of possible threats are increasingly often being discussed with political intent, and this is reflected in the initiatives taken to renew the legislation regarding perceived threats and the creation of functional and organizational structures of various kinds. In national and international contexts this has meant the institutionalization of many new threats.

The beginning of the new millennium, especially the time after the terrorist attack of 11.9.2001, has often been described in research into international relations as “the age of the new security policy mindset”,¹¹ while the period of ten years or so that is referred to as the

¹⁰ See, for example, Johan Eriksson (ed.), *Threat Politics, New perspectives on security, risk and crisis management*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot 2001, Myriam A. Dunn, *Cyber-Threats and Countermeasures: The Threat Politics Behind Efforts to Secure the Information Age*, doctoral thesis, Universität Zurich 2006.

¹¹ See, for example, Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Routledge, New York 2007, pp. 235–243. The metanarratives of international relations, in which the meanings of the narratives themselves serve as mental images, concepts and names for

“post-Cold War era” is regarded as having come to an end at that point.¹² Terrorism emerged at the nucleus of western threat perceptions in the early years of the 21st century, even though no common policy was developed for containing this threat. Alongside this, however, the decline in the probability of a major war, the expansion of security measures and the increased level of globalization created an atmosphere in which states were more committed than ever to the logic of securitization, i.e. the treating of various issues and phenomena as aspects of national or regional security. The notion of securitization alludes to the fact that security and the threats to it are not simple, readily observable states of affairs, but rather they are questions of definition and viewpoint. In fact the definition of security and perceived threats has become a competitive political arena in which practically everything conceivable can be “securitized”. One may very well ask whether security and threat have lost their meaning as concepts. It is certainly true, for instance, that alongside its own nationally perceived threat reality, an individual state in the present-day globalizing world is required to formulate perceptions that serve as parts of a more extensive, international threat perception policy. It then becomes necessary for us to consider to what extent a state’s threat agendas are determined nationally and to what extent internationally. Securitization may be seen as a part of a continuous process of political prioritization which is being carried out both consciously and unconsciously at the national and the international level. The situation becomes rather different, however, at the point where the threats come to be seen as military ones, for then they are understood as requiring the exercise of military force.

The logic of securitization will be examined here in the context of the government’s security and defence policy reports, employing the methods of agenda-setting theory, framing and process tracing. In temporal terms, the work will concentrate on the period from

historical periods, refer to the time following 11.9. as “the war on terror”, “the time of anti-terrorist activity”, etc. On this point, see Jari Rantapelkonen, *The Narrative Leadership of War*, doctoral thesis, Johtamisen laitos, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Julkaisusarja 1, Tutkimuspapereita No. 34, Helsinki 2006.

¹² See, for example, Nicholas Rengger, “Theorizing world politics for a new century”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 3, 2006, pp. 427-430; Jyri Raitasalo, ”Läntinen sodan kuva kylmän sodan jälkeen”, in Jyri Raitasalo, Joonas Sipilä (eds.), *Muuttuva sota*, Jyväskylä 2005, pp. 106–107.

11.9.2001 onwards. The process of constructing threat perceptions will be understood as being expressive of continuity and as taking place constantly, and interest will be focused in the first instance on the threat perceptions of actors external to Finland's security policy mechanism who may be assumed to exercise influence on and interact with the content of the country's perceived threats. Perceptions from outside Finland's security environment contribute to the construction of the country's perceived threats, i.e. they create a certain international perspective for its national threat perceptions. Indeed, national threat scenarios have been regarded in earlier research as emerging to an increasing extent as integrated products of international cooperation.¹³ Secondly, the situation at the beginning of the new millennium would seem in the light of Finland's social and security policy discussions to have been full of threats of one kind or another, and an attempt will be made here to ascertain how certain matters came to be defined officially as part of Finland's security policy, i.e. as publicly acknowledged threats to the state. This is related to the procedure of "going inside the issues" associated with the drawing up of government security and defence policy reports, an approach which is intended to question the fairly uncritical approval commanded by the broad-based concept of security in Finnish society, as it is through political decisions that the concept of security has been extended.¹⁴ Thirdly, the construction of threat scenarios of a particular kind is assumed in a democracy to be all the more legitimate if similar matters are generally regarded as threats within society at large. Therefore, our interest will also be focused on the extent to which the Finns' ideas of threats to the nation coincide with the perceptions expressed at the government level (in its reports).

¹³ See, for example, Georg Sørensen, *Changes in Statehood. The Transformation of International Relations*, Palgrave, New York 2002, pp. 12–21, 141–144; P.H. Liotta, "Through the Looking Glass: Creeping Vulnerabilities and the Reordering of Security", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2005, pp. 65–67.

¹⁴ See Jarno Limnéll, "Laaja turvallisuus on poliittinen valinta", *Ulkopolitiikka*, No. 2, 2008, pp. 59–60.

Political threats

The way in which the term “threat” is interpreted¹⁵ is dependent on the actor’s understanding of security, for like security, the concept of a threat can be a high complex and relative one, and may carry connotations of a danger posed to one’s system of values and at least partial inability to control the situation.¹⁶ One may well regard “threat” and “risk” as parallel concepts, to the extent that attempts to distinguish between them may be of little practical significance. A risk may nevertheless be regarded as less serious than a threat and more of an everyday matter, more often involving an element of concrete activity (the capacity to do something).¹⁷ On the other hand, the concepts of threat and vulnerability are also connected, and may best be distinguished from one another by considering the object whose security is at stake. Where a threat is a factor causing danger, discomfort or uncertainty, vulnerability is a property of the actor, the propensity for becoming an object of the threat or its consequences.¹⁸ Interaction between threats and vulnerability can generate a form of insecurity in which even something that is only perceived as a minor threat may prove to be of political significance if the vulnerability of the object of that threat is regarded as exceptionally high. It is also common when speaking of threats to use various related concepts such as “cause for concern”, “uncertainty”, “possibility” or “danger”.¹⁹

¹⁵ The definition in a widely accepted dictionary of English that comes closest to that given by a basic dictionary of Finnish for the equivalent word, *uhka*, is that of Webster’s Dictionary: “an indication of probable evil, violence or loss to come”. See also *Suomen kielen perussanakirja*, Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus, Helsinki, 1996, pp. 412–413.

¹⁶ Johnson, *Improbable Dangers*, p. 12, Thomas W. Milburn, Kenneth M. Watman, *On the Nature of Threat: A Social Psychological Analysis*, Praeger Special Studies, New York 1981, pp. 8–11.

¹⁷ See, for example, Sjöberg, “Risk Perceptions: Taking on Societal Salience”, pp. 21–22.

¹⁸ See Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 112–113. Buzan maintains that states can attempt to attenuate the influence of threats either by reducing or eliminating the formation of such threats or by reducing their own vulnerability to them.

¹⁹ The relations between the Finnish equivalents of these concepts and the intensity of the threat are discussed in Jari Rantapelkonen, *Konfliktin, konfliktinhallinnan ja turvallisuuden käsitteet kylmän sodan jälkeen*, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Strategian laitoksen julkaisuja, julkaisusarja 1, No. 17, Helsinki 2000, pp. 85–86. Especially in everyday language there is not necessarily very much difference between a threat, the perception of a threat and the various related expressions.

One frequently used basis for defining a threat (especially in military defence planning) is the equation $\text{Threat} = \text{Will} \times \text{Capability}$.²⁰ This suggests that the threat and its intensity are functions of the combined effects of the political will and performance capacity of the opposite party (that posing the threat), and it is on the basis of this that attempts are made in the context of military planning to calculate as “accurate” estimates of the threat as possible in the form of “threat-resource analyses”.²¹ These analyses are usually highly confidential and are drawn up and made available only within a limited group of actors, and they are generally concerned with estimates of performance capacity, which can be regarded as an element that is less open to change than will. It is more difficult to define will objectively, as it can alter within a very short space of time.²² *This traditional conceptual basis for defining a threat is limited in scope and problematical in view of the expansion in the concept of security.* It is difficult, for example, to find a coherent performance capacity or political will behind the threats posed by the refugee problem or environmental disasters, for instance.

Perceived threats do not form the content of a policy by themselves but through the medium of actors, so that the impact of their material basis is consequent upon the interpretations arrived at and measures taken by actors, and it should be noted that the same point of departure also holds good for the modelling of perceived military threats. Publically announced threat perceptions have a powerful political dimension. *Threat perceptions are constructed with various interests in mind and their evolution is always a form of societal activity in which politics is involved.* A threat can be assumed objectively to be

²⁰ See, for example, Puolustusministeriö, *Turvallisesti tulevaisuuteen, puolustusministeriön strategia 2025*, Helsinki 2006, p. 11; also Robertson, “Mediated Threats”, pp. 61–83. According to Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 265, a military threat may be defined as consisting of certain factors: total strength, geographical proximity, offensive capacity and aggressive intentions.

²¹ See *Kenttäohjesääntö, Yleinen osa, Puolustusjärjestelmän toiminnan perusteet*, General Headquarters, Planning Division, Helsinki 2007; Visuri, *Turvallisuuspolitiikka ja strategia*, pp. 461–471.

²² According to Walt, “it is difficult to measure the factors that contribute to a threat, because no clear-cut method has been developed for this.” Stephen Walt, “Keeping the World Off-Balance”, in: John G. Ikenberry (ed.), *America Unrivaled – The Future of the balance of Power*, Ithaca 2002, p. 134. The estimation of military capacity has also become more difficult since the end of the Cold War, see Raitasalo, “Läntinen sodan kuva kylmän sodan jälkeen”, pp. 102–122.

omnipresent, in other words threats in a broad sense are insecurity factors that are experienced by all people. Threats are all those things that people wish to look on as threats.

When interpreting publicly perceived threats (as expressed by governments, for instance) it is possible to by-pass the construction process and that of forming a political consensus. The consensus in the case of perceived threats announced by governments may be defined as far as the present research is concerned as a consequence of the power relations and interactions between the actors involved and factors affecting these. Likewise, when studying different actors' concepts of the same threat or threatening factors, the concept of perception will inevitably include within it *a relativity associated with the actor*. The political construction of a perceived threat is a matter of the relativity of interpretations of threats. Actors experience threats in different ways, and concepts of what is a threat are apt to change. *Interpretations and evaluations are important parts of the reality of a threat*, the reality that the actors attempt to construct by means of the descriptions that they attach to it. Where the threat concerns something that can be predicted, its "truthfulness" is revealed only when it is carried out (or fails to be carried out). All perceived threats, even those claimed to be real, are in principle guesses and imaginary predictions. Since the concept of a perceived threat – a description or mental image of a danger – places emphasis on interpretations, ideas and interests, perceived threats cannot be assumed to be real, but rather they are *social and political constructs*. As Michael Williams points out, a constant, significant struggle then ensues over the correct definition of the truth, the perceived threat.²³ One has to be constantly asking why one particular view of the threat prevails and achieves dominance.

The perceived threats spoken about in publicly accessible documents reflect not only the internal and external environments in which a government is operating but also various tendencies perceivable in the broader political arena. Perceived threats have a dimension of political content and use. Actors do not merely observe what is going on around them but they also give meanings to their observations in the given political context, i.e. they construct an interpretation of each

²³ Michael C. Williams, "The Institutions of Security: Elements of a Theory of Security Organizations", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1997, pp. 297–302.

threat which is designed to be successful in the course of political interaction. *Perceived threats can always be shown to be based on a certain starting point, formations created for some particular purpose, and it is the task of politics to choose between these formations.*²⁴ In the field of threat perception policy, political thinking is taken as the cornerstone for the construction and presentation of the reality in terms of threats – so that any openly expressed perceived threat will inevitably be associated with politics and political thinking.²⁵ Research into “the politics of threat images” involves attempts at interpreting the factors and meanings that affect the social construction of such threat images and the interests that are bound up with them. Threat images are an integral part of politics and political thinking, a starting point for discussing the politics of threat images that can well be put forward as a rejoinder to those who believe that any study of the political nature of threat images is apt to shift attention unjustifiably away from “the threats themselves”. One may very well ask why actors can differ so widely in their understanding of the same threat factor and the means of coping with it, or equally well why certain threat images are permanent within society while others are not. It is necessary in these connections to abandon the assumption of the complete rationality of politics and political actors and accept that it is more a question of rationality from the point of view of the actors’ own ideas and their pursuance of their own goals.

Since it is a question of the political and social interpretation of threats, of the distinction between what is a threat and what is not and of the exposure of things that do constitute threats, politics must be viewed as a dimension that unites all collective activity. Politics is activity, whether official or unofficial, public or private, that takes place on the part of all human groups, institutions and communities. This concept is grounded in Carl Schmitt’s definition of politics as social activity taking place between individuals.²⁶ Politics always

²⁴ See Roxanna Sjöstedt, “Exploring the Construction of Threats: The Securitization of HIV/AIDS in Russia”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2008, pp. 7-29; Erik Noreen, “Verbal Politics of Estonian Policy-makers: Reframing Security and Identity”, in: Johan Eriksson (ed.), *Threat Politics*, Aldershot 2001, pp. 84–100.

²⁵ This association is frequently referred to in English as “Threat Politics” or “The Politics of Threat Images”. A regularly used equivalent concept in Swedish is “Hotbildernas Politik”.

²⁶ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1996, pp. 19–37. See also Pirjo Jukarainen, “Tieteellinen katse ja politiikka”, in:

involves more than one person, even though the political actors themselves may be individual people. Personal perceptions of threats become political only through social intercourse and social practises. In this view politics is manifested at all levels of social interaction, and threat politics can be associated with practically any phenomenon defined by an actor.²⁷ Anything and everything can have a political aspect, which implies that nothing is “protected” from the politics of threat images.²⁸ It is merely a question of what things one makes (wishes to make) into political threat images by means of politics. This notion of politics does not prevent us from paying attention to the actors who in the final instance decide on a nation’s perceived threats; on the contrary, one should devote due attention to those decision-makers who are in a position to politicize and securitize threat images at the national level. The aspectual nature of threat politics is a manifestation of the changing politicization of threats, and also of the broad spectrum of meanings attached to their political nature.

Politics is ever-present in the construction of perceived threats – as *it is in the nature of threat politics that it should be grounded in conflicts* over how things should be interpreted in threat contexts and as belonging to those contexts. Threat politics refers to the problematic relationship between two interconnected perspectives in the political construction of threats: 1) *What threat images* should be commonly understood as official perceived threats at the national level, i.e. what threats should in general be taken to represent perceived threats at that level? and 2) *In what form* should one describe those threats? These perspectives combine to generate a competition over the common threats to be recognised by the community concerned.²⁹ The fact that politics is grounded in

Jouko Huru & Tarja Väyrynen (eds.), *Kadonnutta poliittista etsimässä, Kansainvälinen turvallisuus ja politiikka*, Helsinki 2004, pp. 18–20.

²⁷ See Kari Palonen, *Tekstistä politiikkaan. Johdatusta tulkintataitoon*, Hämeenlinna 1988, pp. 18–21 (quote from p. 19), Kari Palonen, ”Politiikka”, in: Matti Hyvärinen, Jussi Kurunmäki, Kari Palonen, Tuija Pulkkinen & Henrik Stenius (eds.), *Käsitteet liikkeessä. Suomen poliittisen kulttuurin käsitehistoria*, Tampere 2003, pp. 467–518. According to Nokkala, *Laajeneva sotilaspolitiikka*, pp. 54–56, the concept of aspect is consistent with this basic constructivist assumption, because “aspect politics” lays emphasis on the naming of things and the fact that things political are always open to interpretation and are dependent on social understanding.

²⁸ Palonen, *Tekstistä politiikkaan. Johdatusta tulkintataitoon*, p. 19.

²⁹ See Heikki Paloheimo & Matti Wiberg, *Politiikan perusteet*, WSOY, Helsinki 1997, pp. 42–50; Palonen, *Tekstistä politiikkaan. Johdatusta tulkintataitoon*, pp. 20–21.

conflicts³⁰ gives expression not only to the relative and actor-centred nature of threat images but also to their property of being forms of political activity. Politics may be understood as a perspective from which to examine the construction of perceived threats and the interpretation of those that are to be put forward as such. Political activity gains its impetus from the existence of various goals and interpretations.

The political production of threat images raises the question of their inevitability: could a situation arise in which a nation was not facing any threats? This is to some extent a philosophical question, as it implies the possibility of people experiencing a complete absence of threats of any kind. Although it is impossible to conceive of a nation having a certain “threat quota” which must always be fulfilled, the politics of threat images is such that threats of some kind must always be assumed to be present. This in turn implies that the existence of perceived threats is an inalienable part of the requirement for defining the existence of a state and its collective security. States have a need to create perceived threats, as this provides a purpose for the state’s existence.³¹ It is also easier to find threats if one sets out purposefully to look for them. On the other hand, perceived threats are constructed if and when someone wishes to construct them. Perceived threats and their construction are a political practise that is permanent in nature, so that, viewed from a conflict perspective, they are always part of the reality of political life and collective security. The broadening of perceived threats and of the concept of threat is in part a consequence of the reduction in the probability of realization in the case of military threats, which means that room has been created for the existence of other kinds of threat.³² *Perceived threats can be looked on as catalysts for changes in the concept of security, i.e. by broadening the perceived threats one can broaden the concept of security.* For threat politics, the broadening of security has meant a broadening of the

³⁰ On the conflict-based nature of politics, see Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp. 26, 29, 35; Paloheimo & Wiberg, *Politiikan perusteet*, pp. 43-44, 49; Palonen, “Politiikka”, pp. 499–506.

³¹ Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 141-142. On the inevitability of perceived threats, see, for instance, Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp 53-58; Moisio, *Kriittinen geopolitiikka ja alueelliset uskomusjärjestelmät*, pp. 43–62.

³² See, for instance, Eriksson, *Kampen om Hotbilden*, pp. 113–151; Dunn, *Cyber-Threats and Countermeasures*, p. 10.

areas of interests and activities and an increase in the conflict-based nature of threats, so that it has also meant the partial disappearance of the epithets “high politics” and “low politics” as threat perceptions with the re-definition and securitization of perceived threats.

Constructing Finland’s threat reality

Given that *the interpretive framework for a theoretical synthesis forms the theoretical context against the background of which empirical observations can be examined*, a comprehensive interpretation of the construction of the perceived threats facing Finland will require attention to be paid not only to the central government level but also to both its external and internal dimensions. One essential perspective (and focus of research) will consist of the factors which govern *the construction of perceived threats to the state* and the manner in which the reality of such threats is put forward. The present research is therefore concerned with the process of forming threat images, by which answers were provided to the question “What constitutes a threat to Finland?” for the purposes of the 2004 Government Report on Security and Defence Policy.³³

It has become established practise in Finland since the end of the Cold War for each government to produce a report on security and defence policy in the course of its life, so that such reports have to date been placed before parliament in 1995, 1997, 2001, 2004 and 2009. This practise has meant a regular “updating” of Finland’s official threat images and the reaching of agreement on these at intervals of approximately four years. Parliament has in turn approved various statements of opinion on these reports (it has not been required to approve the reports themselves), and these statements are appended in a conceptual sense to the reports themselves for the purposes of this paper. Thus *the Security and Defence Policy Reports may be regarded as the most significant officially published documents describing and defining Finland’s security and the threats to it to be produced in the early years of the 21st century*. Although the present work concentrates as far as threat images are concerned on the process of

³³ Finnish title: *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004, Valtioneuvoston selonteko 6/2004*.

drawing up the 2004 government report, attention will also be paid to two other documents at the level of the Council of State that define the concept of broad-based security: the Strategy for Ensuring the Vital Functions of Society (SVFS strategy) and the Programme for Internal Security. For purposes of the present research, however, it is the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy that will be taken as Finland's security policy agenda in the context of which the construction of threat images is to be examined, for it is the opening up of the politically constructed description of the reality of the threats facing Finland to this agenda that is the principal issue here. If we can "penetrate inside" the process by which the report was drawn up we should be able to produce previously unstudied information and promote an understanding of the wording of these reports and of the factors influencing the formulation of this wording. Some attention will also be paid to the structure of Finnish security documents as a whole.

Arguing from the theoretical approach adopted in this work and the synthesis constructed in it, the empirical examination will be guided by the following main question to be asked: *How were Finland's threat images constructed in those early years of the 21st century, and how did they correspond to the images and concepts harboured by external actors and the Finns themselves?*

The theoretical frame of reference to be used for examining the construction of public threat images in Finland and the factors affecting it is presented in Figure 1. This frame of reference is bound to the Security and Defence Policy Report, a concrete political document in which actors constructed their images of the threats facing the country (in the prevailing circumstances). This framework for the interpretation of a theoretical synthesis of Finland's perceived threat policy represents a combination of the factors contributing to the state's construction of its threat images as set out in the sections above and the theoretical points of departure for this work. It describes the complexity of the politics of threat images and the levels upon which it exists, for which purpose a theoretical synthesis – one that is neither too generalized nor too detailed – is essential in the context of this research. It functions as a general interpretive framework for the questions to be asked here and as a basis for empirical interpretations of the construction of individual threat images, interpretations that can then be refined by means of a methodology that involves both framing

and process monitoring. The interpretive synthesis can be looked on as a framework by means of which attempts may be made to interpret the contributory factors forming the background to the construction of the perceived threats. But at the same time it is a question of combining the various perspectives that are connected with the construction of Finland's threat images, i.e. the threat reality will be examined via three dimensions of analytical levels and actors. In this way it is hoped to achieve greater investigatory depth and diversity in the analysis. The individual contributory factors that are introduced may vary greatly in the influence that they exert, as the power of the interpretational framework is based on a synthesis³⁴ and on the paying of due attention to the contributory factors operating within it.

³⁴ The removal of the Russian threat from the Estonian security agenda in the 1990s may be taken as a good example of the construction of perceived threats as empirical manifestations of the combined effects of various contributory factors. The removal of the threat was connected with Estonia's attempts to associate itself more closely with the western culture and a European identity. On the other hand, the considerable reduction in Russian military power in the Baltic region in the mid-1990s had the effect of eliminating the Russian threat from the Estonians' public agenda at least. The threat undoubtedly remained on the hidden agenda, however. Noreen et al. interpret this as having arisen from cognitive "memories of the past" (of historical events and the period of Russian occupation), which still exercise a considerable influence in Estonia. Further factors contributing to the removal of the threat can be found in the institutional and political context, especially in pressures from the views of the epistemic community. See Noreen & Sjöstedt, "Estonian Identity Formations and Threat Framing in the Post-Cold War Era"; Erik Noreen, Susanna Björk & Stefan Lundblad, *Hot, Identitet och Historiebruk. Analys av det säkerhetspolitiska språkets utveckling i Baltikum under 1990-talet*, Studentlitteratur, Lund 2004.

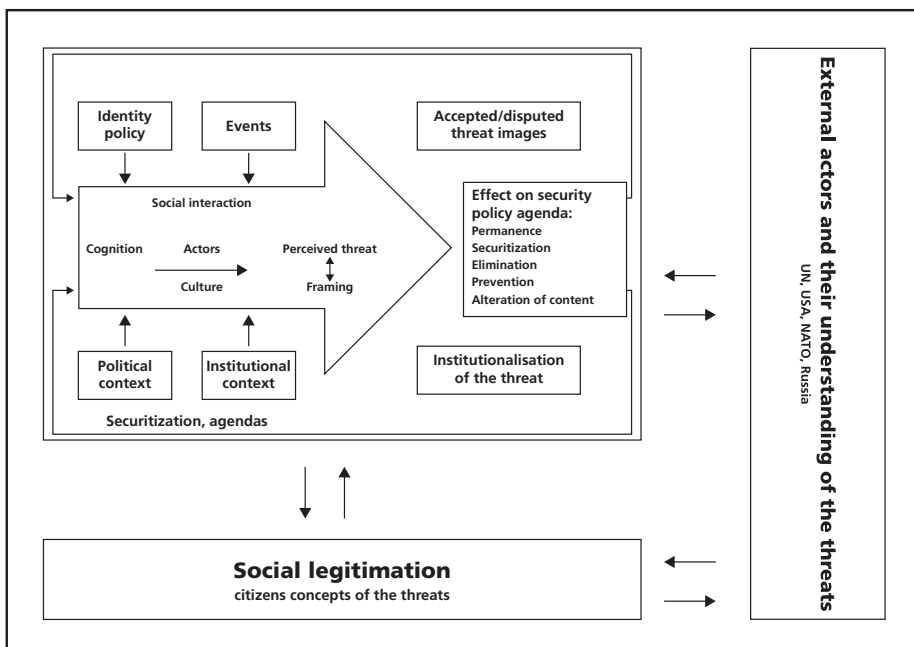


Figure 1. Theoretical frame of reference for interpreting the construction of perceived threats to Finland.

The aim of the theoretical interpretive framework is to combine variables existing on several analytical levels, i.e. to take account of the dynamics of the interaction relationships between various actors with regard to the construction of perceived threats at the national level. In spite of the demand for the combining of levels of analysis³⁵ frequently voiced in the field of international relations, and more particularly in that of security research (rather than concentrating on just one level),³⁶ there are few studies in security and perceived threats that have actually done this.³⁷ Indeed, both strategic and security

³⁵ Interpretability is seen as based on five levels of analysis: those of the international system, international subsystems, units, subunits and individuals.

³⁶ See, for example, Valerie M. Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2005, p. 2; Sjöstedt, "Exploring the Construction of Threats: the Securitization of HIV/AIDS in Russia", pp. 11-25. The present research differs in this respect from the view of security adopted by Lipschutz, for example, who recognises only one level of analysis. See Lipschutz, "On Security", p. 9.

³⁷ The exceptions as far as agenda theories are concerned comprise certain studies focused on foreign policy and international organizations. See, for example, Christer Jönsson,

research has devoted very little theoretical or empirical attention to questions of how and why certain matters have been worked up into public threat images (and above all, how and why there has been a desire to do so). It is hoped by means of the present theoretical interpretive frame of reference to respond to these demands within the field of academic research concerning the insufficiency of multi-level analysis and the need to take account of the factors influencing the construction of perceived threats.

One of the foundations for constructing a government report on security and defence policy is inevitably the previous such report, i.e. the security policy agenda to be laid down is formulated on the basis of the previous agenda. This is reflected in the references to feedback received from the previous agenda with regard to a common understanding of the threat situation built up on that occasion, references that are taken up once more at the beginning of the process. This is a matter of the continuity characteristic of such an agenda, in that choices made earlier, the prevailing conditions and the cultural background together provide the basis on which the next security policy agenda is constructed. The nature of the continuity and institutionalization of perceived threats alludes to a slow political process of change in threat images in the context of security policy agendas. It can be assumed that only very dramatic changes will lead rapidly to significant alterations in the content of perceived threats at the national level. Previous reports also serve as bases for comparison when interpreting changes in perceived threats relative to those put forward in more recent reports. Thus past threats are tangibly present in the process of defining current threats.

It is impossible to build a threat image into the government's public security policy agenda unless it is subjected to social interaction with actors who have the political and/or administrative powers to handle it. These actors who are competent to influence the construction of the report may then between them assign the desired political significance to each threat image, a consensus understanding of the threat involved. This aspect of the exercise of power is essential, as the 2004 report was prepared in secret, away from the public eye, within a specially created preparation mechanism and amongst only a certain specific

body of actors. It was only after the report had been published that open discussion of the official threat images put forward in it became possible within society at large. In accordance with democratic structures, this discussion was concretized in the parliamentary debate on the report.

The theoretical framework proposed here thus implies that the process of political construction of the perceived threats facing Finland is influenced by both structural and actor-related factors, and that when interpreting the construction of perceived threats it is necessary to take all the contributing factors into account both together and separately. It depends on the situation as to which factors serve best to explain the construction of any particular threat scenario, but it must be emphasized that, in spite of alterations in the operational environment or particularly favourable circumstances, the perceived threats detailed in a report will not change without deliberate political action on the part of actors. *Even changes in the material factors associated with perceived threats will only be concretized through social activity.* The essential thing as far as interaction and the semantic content of perceived threats to be built into the security policy agenda are concerned is the form given to the threat, its linguistic expression. It is by giving it a framework that a perceived threat is assigned the content that is desired and agreed upon for it.

Although theoretical syntheses have been widely criticized as being conjunctions of excessively many explanatory factors, the combining of the various factors affecting the politics of threat images into a synthesis is justified on the grounds of the multidimensionality of the problem. In this way it is possible to draw wide attention to the principal interpretive factors influencing the construction of perceived threats, and it is always possible to extend the interpretive framework as required by means of empirical research.

2. Towards the Finnish threat reality³⁸

Finland's perceived external threats

Since Finland constructs the content of its own perceived threats through interaction with other actors, states and organizations in the international system, this implies that the construction process will be bound to the concepts of security and threats to security put forward by key external actors, principally the United Nations, the United States, NATO, the EU and Russia. These form the context for the international dimension of Finland's process of threat image construction, so that the talk of threats at this level – publicly expressed international views on the prevailing threat reality – will affect the content of Finland's perceived threats and the choices made with respect to it. Meanwhile, the threat images put forward by the various actors will be ideas agreed upon within the states or communities that they represent. The actors, through the views on security and threats to security that each expresses, construct not only their own understanding of the prevailing threat reality but that of other actors as well, although they do so each from their own perspective and within their own set of institutional and cultural structures. Thus, in order to interpret the perceived threats as formulated by such actors, it is important to take into account their understanding of their own security environment and their ability to influence it.³⁹

From the perspective of the actors considered here, the end of the Cold War, and more particularly the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, brought about major alterations in both national and international concepts of security. The world was understood in the early years of the 21st century as a far more complex place where

³⁸ The conclusions summarized in this chapter are set out in more detail in Finnish in Linnéll. *Suomen uhkakuvapolitiikka 2000-luvun alussa*, pp. 157–242, 353–368.

³⁹ On the connection between presentation of the security environment and understanding of the prevailing threats, see Susan E. Penska, "Defining the Enemy: EU and US Threat Perceptions after 9/11", in Heinz Gartner & Ian Cuthbertson, *European Security and Transatlantic Relations after 9/11 and the Iraq War*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2005, pp. 19–20

there was more emphasis on interdependence between actors and on connections between the various security sectors than ever before. This meant the construction of a new way of thinking in security matters, with a broadening of the understanding attached to security and perceived threats rather than the predominance of a military threat as had been the case earlier. The meanings assigned to security and threat images varied with the spirit of the times. At the same time the distinction between external and internal security became more blurred. Thus *the framework for the construction of threat perceptions can be said to have moved towards more generalized and global definitions at the beginning of the 21st century*. The need for wider security was combined with the development brought about by globalization on the one hand and with the borderless, universal nature of the threats on the other, and conceptually the same threats came to be set in different frameworks by different actors, and in quite different ways and with different political purposes in view.

The perceived threats to Finland at the beginning of the new millennium were construed in a security-dominated discursive environment within international relations. Security, perceived threats and the associated political pressures were well to the fore in both the security policy and the political agendas of the various actors. Security had by no means lost its significance in international relations; on the contrary, the actors considered here pursued both their national (organizational) and international interests and goals through the medium of arguments based on threats. At the same time, however, the threat images quoted betrayed a certain relativity and artificiality, as they were being used as political instruments and the form in which they were presented by the actors reflected a certain political motivation. Perceived threats were used on the one hand to construct a threat reality that would influence other actors, and on the other hand to promote internal cohesion within the entity represented by the actor. In the second sense practically every one of the actors examined here can be seen to have had distinct identity-related goals in mind.

Thus instead of the previous emphasis on military threats, a new language of security evolved to some extent in the early years of the 21st century, a language in which the actors frequently referred to their threat perceptions quite emphatically as “new threats” or “threats of a new kind”. This applied to virtually all threats except for military ones, and although military security was reflected in the background

to the thinking on security in general (or in its foundations) there was a clear desire on the part of some actors to avoid speaking of such perceptions in public. It was social, political and economic threats, and to some extent environmental ones, that dominated the international discourse in this field, a discourse that also provided the justifications for new military means of control. One might say that military security was re-framed through the association of new threats with it. The threat discourse was nevertheless dominated by the replacement of old threats with new ones.

Finnish security and the perceived threats to the country frequently appeared in the definitions provided by the key external actors as objects of dispute, the actors themselves often referring to the fact that it had become difficult to define security or outline precisely the nature of the threats and that it was necessary to consider so many approaches, points of view and interests in connection with them. This was when talking of the internal construction of threat images (on the actor's own threat agenda), but it is possible in the international context surrounding Finland's threat politics to deduce that a power struggle took place (and continues to take place) over which actors and what understanding of the content of the threat images should predominate. Internal and external cultural processes such as these create interpretive structures, collective metacognitions of a certain type, within the international understanding of threats, so that international relations and the understandings of threats are partly a question of what threat images and related securitization proposals predominate. This relates in part to the moral paradox attached to security, whereby an actor is simultaneously seeking security for himself and a feeling of insecurity for the "other".⁴⁰ Threat images are part of a political process in which "others" are divided into current and potential allies and enemies. On the other hand, the threat images put forward by actors were not only internally disputable but also had a desired function of guiding the practising of common policies. The framing of threat images reflected an actor's need for new concepts with which to create identity policy "otherness" - and at the same time to legitimize the means for controlling threat images.

⁴⁰ Another political paradox is that it is impossible to promote security interests in an unbiased way, see Robert N. Berki, *Security and Society – Reflections on Law, Order and Politics*, Dent, London 1986, pp. 29-39.

Western⁴¹ definitions of threats reflected the faded nature of military threat perceptions, so that a distinct absence (or at least pronounced diminution) of the threat of a large-scale offensive can be seen in the security policy agendas of the 1990s in particular, to the extent that western thinking turned to the question of what threats the nations' security efforts should now be directed against. Thus, although the nature of the shared threat perceptions occurring in the western security discourse of that period does not mean that the actors' perceptions were identical in content in all respects, the threats perceived in EU, NATO and US circles were nevertheless similar: *the western understanding of the existing threat in the early years of the 21st century was dominated by terrorism, the uncontrolled spread of weapons of mass destruction and the existence of politically unstable states* (referred to under various names). These threat discourses referred to the events of 11th September 2001 as decisive in this respect, so that the new security environment, new threats and new means of controlling those threats were all directly traceable back to those terrorist attacks. In terms of agenda theory, the attacks constituted a dramatic event through which the threat posed by terrorism became the first priority on the political agenda. As a concept and a mental image "9/11" became a part of the western culture, i.e. of the culture maintained by the western threat discourse. *Terrorism can be regarded politically as a useful threat image, as it is hard to define precisely and the enemy is difficult to locate, but the periodic terrorist strikes have shown it to be a concrete reality.*

The predominance of the need for the securitization (and militarization) of terrorism was to be seen above all in the US politics of threat images, and thereby in the framing of the "war on terrorism". Terrorism was the dominant perceived threat in the EU and NATO, too, but it did not have the same powerful ideological foundation as in the United States. It was nevertheless possible to regard it as the

⁴¹ The definition of "the west" and "western" as designations of reference groups is always a somewhat dubious matter. "Western" and the "western security community" are socially constructed concepts (that are still under construction), so that there are many ways of interpreting them. The point of departure for this work alludes to the two ideologically opposed camps that existed in the Cold War era, the "east" and the "west", with each viewing the other as a more serious threat to its own security and the achievement of its own aims. On the definition of the "west" and problems related to it, see Stuart Hall, *Identiteetti*, Vastapaino, Tampere 1999, pp. 77–98; Pertti Joenniemi & Marko Lehti, "Murtunut, uusiutuva vai muuttumaton länsi?", *Kosmopolis*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2006, pp. 5–29.

determining factor in western threat politics, a factor with which many of the other principal threat images (such as organized crime and illegal trafficking in drugs) were seen to be connected. Defence against the threat of terrorism and other non-traditional perceived threats was also used as a justification for governments setting up lines of defence beyond the boundaries of their own nations or regions. The war on terrorism/battle against terrorism/anti-terrorist activities could be carried to the source of the threat. At the same time the western countries developed their military forces for deploying in “new” tasks beyond their own territory. Terrorism and other related threats were pictured as originating somewhere outside the western world, but at the same time, with advances in globalization, their impacts were described as near at hand. In accordance with the western understanding of threats, the actors ensured their own security by functioning over a wider geographical area than previously, the one exception to this, however, being the EU, whose threat perceptions were usually focused on areas adjacent to Europe. It was also the case that the means for controlling the new threat images were understood differently by the various western actors, so that there was no direct one-to-one correspondence between a threat and the means of combating it.

The western understanding of its perceived threats did not deny the possibility of a large-scale military threat, but neither did it regard such a threat as probable in the near future. Certain reservations were expressed regarding developments in Russia, but in no connection was that country spoken of as an actual threat or enemy. *Russia as a military threat had been removed from the western public definition of perceived threats.* Instead, attention in the field of perceived military threats was turned to cases of regional conflicts and internal violence affecting unstable nations. Thus the previous Russia-centred understanding of perceived threats may be said to have altered radically. A broadening of the scope of security in general nevertheless took place on a moderate scale, and the threat discourse laid emphasis on the priorities to be assigned to the various threats relative to the object of the security measures in each case. Admittedly the US security discourse did construct an image of terrorism as a military threat, and the descriptions of the threats facing the nation gave expression to an understanding of its own role as a world power and a demand that the other western actors should adopt its definition of the threat posed by terrorism as part of their own set of threat

images. NATO, on the other hand, may be looked on as an actor for which it is essential, in order to justify its own existence, to have a perceived threat that is common to all its members. Thus, with the passing of the threat posed by Russia, terrorism was adopted to fill the gap, in spite of the fact that some of its members were still looking to the military alliance for security from the previous threat. Meanwhile the EU may be regarded as having other reasons for extensive collaboration between its members (such as economic ones) as well as the defining of common threats. Security was nevertheless adopted as a normative goal within the EU, too, in that a common understanding of the threat situation was consistent with the drive towards deeper integration.

The UN was inclined to use its threat images as a means of constructing a world-view that would promote solidarity and humanitarian security. Although terrorism was to be found on its security policy agenda, efforts were made to underline a broad-based understanding of threats that was linked to environmental factors and the responsibility of member states, a central role in which was to be played by the characterization of threats as applying to all the people and nations of the world. It was thus threats that were framed as global and taken to refer to all sectors of security that were emphasized in the UN concept of security. The UN was also the only one of the actors considered here that clearly emphasized the feminist aspects of security.

The concept of security and perceptions of threats that existed in Russia at that time reflected the wide-ranging problems associated with the post-Cold War reconstruction of the Russian Federation and the drive for internal unification. Perceived threats were to be used primarily for stabilizing internal development, but also to some extent for building a new external image of the country as a major power capable of influencing world politics. Russia therefore claimed to have a considerable number of perceived threats (according to various lists), the characteristics of which from a western perspective were a continued emphasis on military security, a powerful connection with national interests and the sovereignty of the Russian state, and a critical attitude towards the western means of controlling the perceived new threats. It should particularly be noted that Russia retained its image of a war between nations.

It is possible on the basis of the framing of the threat factors put forward by the actors considered here to make certain general observations regarding the threat reality constructed at the beginning of the 21st century, in which there was a desire and notable effort to emphasize the change in the security environment (relative to the Cold War period). If the perceived threats of the Cold War era were relatively permanent, concrete and unambiguous, they now came to be more multidimensional, more multisectoral and more bound up in each other. On the other hand, anti-terrorist activity had come to form a kind of umbrella concept for all threats, a framework within which other perceived threats were constructed and evaluated among all the actors. The threats were frequently framed as global, or at least regional, and as involving elements from all security sectors. Symptomatic of this was the fact that all the perceived threats that were put forward were interconnected, which in turn heightened their individual intensity. It was also maintained that the interconnected and global nature of the threats obliged the actors, particularly at the national level, to enter into closer collaboration with one another in order to guarantee their own internal security. Meanwhile, those threats that were described as non-national were nevertheless said to be targeted at national values or ones defined by that particular actor. Correspondingly, the political goals and interests through which the perceived threats were viewed were often left in the background in the security and threat discourse.

In addition to increased emphasis on the new threats, the security discourse of the early years of the new century was characterized by their framing as manifestations of permanence, long-term validity and often high intensity. The actors' threat perceptions conveyed an impression of a world that was in effect more dangerous and more unpredictable than ever. At the same time more and more things were coming to be framed as threats, creating a parallel impression of the security defined by the actor being threatened by a multitude of factors over a broad front. *The threat perceptions put forward by the various actors were all very similar – conceptually the descriptions given by all the actors included the notions of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organized crime.* When examining the framing of the perceived threats, however (e.g. considering how terrorism was defined), it was possible to detect differences in the ways in which the same threat images were understood. Russia had similar threat images

to NATO, for instance, but the aims combined with them (e.g. concerning crisis management) were quite different.

The perceived threats put forward by key actors external to Finland may be seen as *securitization proposals targeted at Finland by its international operating environment*. The strategies, speeches and documents of these actors were aimed at constructing – for Finland, too, – an understanding of what are “real” threats and what mental images and means of control should be associated with them. Since Finland was involved in interaction with these external actors and was engaged in monitoring their definitions of threats and security, a situation of political choice offered itself as to which externally constructed threat images should be adopted as part of the content and thinking regarding the threats facing Finland and to what extent. At the same time it was a question of the Finns mirroring themselves and their own threat perceptions in the frame of reference created by the external actors – by evaluating the threats perceived by others and assessing their relevance in order to gain support for and new perspectives on the ideas that they were obliged to develop for themselves.

Monitoring of the international discourse on threats is a continuous political and administrative process in Finland which can be expected to affect indirectly (not by direct imitation) – but also to some extent directly – the construction of the perceived threats that appear on the national security policy agenda. At the same time we may be justified in stating that *it would, especially on political grounds, be impossible for Finland to construct its own threat perceptions and threat reality without reference to the international threat discourse and without taking account of the threats perceived by the principal relevant external actors*. The external threat image reality will inevitably be reflected in Finnish security and defence policy discussions and situation reviews. It is a matter of the influence implicitly exercised by external actors and the perceived threats manifested in the international operating environment, all of which form an important context for Finland’s construction of its own national spectrum of threats.

Finnish threat concepts

The threat concepts prevalent among the Finns will be interpreted here through the medium of opinion polls and surveys. This will of course imply approaching the theoretical object of study, the individual level, from the perspective of general public opinion, viewed primarily as a conjunct of personal opinions, a citizens' opinion.⁴² Thus it is a question not only of examining the assumption of successful securitization but also of interpreting the general climate of opinion as regards perceived threats that prevailed within Finnish society and among Finnish citizens in the years 2004–2006 in relation to the threats identified in the government report.

An individual's views on potential threats are indicative of that individual's way of thinking, his or her interpreted and cognitively constructed attitude, which may be referred to as an opinion. The background influences brought to bear on this opinion can include social and personal values and preferences, the person's cultural foundation and world-view and numerous other factors that contribute to the interpretive reality guiding that individual.⁴³ In the context of research into public opinion these individual opinions are combined to form a collective opinion, which can then enter into a two-way interaction relationship with the political interpretive reality constructed by the political elite. Indeed, it is through such studies of public opinion that the political elite are able to monitor the ways of thinking of ordinary citizens. Thus opinion surveys can serve the democratic purpose of drawing the attention of decision-makers to the opinions and attitudes of ordinary citizens, factors that are relevant to the construction of the content of (threat) policies. Opinion polls can also be looked on as part of the game of power politics played out between the public administration, the media and citizens' organizations, in which they serve as instruments for influencing opinions and political decisions. On the other hand, if public opinion is seriously at odds with the views of the political elite, it is possible

⁴² Opinion polls and surveys may be regarded as both deriving from and describing general public opinion, in which the key concept is that of a common (collective) opinion, as opposed to the understanding of public opinion in terms of that represented by the political elite and influential pressure groups within society. See Pertti Suhonen, *Mielipidetutkimukset ja yhteiskunta*, Tampere 2006, pp. 210–214.

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 27–28; see also Erik Allardt, *Sosiologia I*, WSOY, Helsinki 1983, pp. 51–55.

for the authorities to intensify their efforts to disseminate information and enlighten the general public.

The Finns' threat perceptions over the period 2004–2006 were dominated by the notions of international terrorism, environmental issues and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and also fairly prominently by internationally organized crime. These factors were emphasized as causes of concerns and increased feelings of insecurity among Finnish people regardless of the way in which the questions were formulated and the selection of optional answers provided. Terrorism was felt above all to be not a national threat as far as either its source or its target was concerned but rather an international phenomenon directed at the western countries at large, and the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was frequently combined with that of terrorism. The Finns were also of the opinion that, alongside environmental issues, it was the threat posed by terrorism that was most likely to increase in intensity in the near future. Factors likely to undermine environmental security formed a second major source of anxiety, even to the extent that climate change and environmental disasters were viewed as liable to increase the threats posed by other factors, e.g. the refugee problem. Environmental problems were looked on as comprehensive threats that could affect the security of individuals, states and mankind as a whole. Organized crime was felt to pose a threat primarily to the international community as a whole, alongside terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and environmental issues, but one that could impinge quite specifically on Finland.

Surveys carried out among the Finns in 2004–2006 tended to approach security and perceived threats on the basis of a broad understanding, so that issues of various kinds were subsumed under the headings of security and threats. It may even be said that these opinion surveys (with their questions and answers) served to construct and establish a broad-based approach to security, as the approach adopted in them was indeed very broad. Correspondingly, the alternative answers offered to some of the questions regarding threats made reference only to non-military factors. These surveys reflected the general understanding with regard to threats, an understanding that was confirmed by the emphasis placed on non-military threats in Finnish public opinion. At the same time the Finns felt that they were living in a relatively insecure world and believed that the feeling of insecurity

would be accentuated still further – in all respects other than that of military threats. Thus a broad definition of security could be regarded as legitimate as far as Finnish society was concerned.

The sources of anxiety for the Finnish population lay elsewhere and not in perceived military threats. They regarded military threats, and especially that of military action against Finland, as highly likely to materialize. People did not believe in a threat of war or any other armed conflict either in Finland or in Europe as a whole. On the other hand, one respondent in every five believed that the military situation in the areas adjacent to Finland would become more threatening in the future. The most probable military threat was seen to be that of an armed conflict breaking out somewhere outside Europe and having knock-on effects on Finland. The military threat scenarios mentioned in the survey questions were frequently associated with Russia in the eyes of the respondents, whereas no other states or actors were specifically linked with military threats in this way, which serves as such to indicate that, in terms of identity policy, the notion of a military threat tends in Finnish society to be linked specifically with Russia. Correspondingly, since it became evident from the surveys that about a third of the Finns regarded Russia as posing a significant military threat to Finland, the result may be interpreted as indicating that two-thirds of the Finns do not regard Russia as a source of any military threat. In fact, although Russia was often mentioned as a potential military threat, the respondents were more worried about non-military threats associated with that country, e.g. those arising from its nuclear power stations. Thus it may be said that Finnish public opinion linked military threats with Russia, a country whose behaviour was regarded as uncertain and unpredictable, but these threats were regarded as being of low intensity and probability.

The threats, problems and causes for anxiety experienced by the Finnish respondents were consistent with the non-military threat scenarios presented in the government report. In particular, terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and organized terrorism occupied a prominent place in the threats perceived by the general public, whose concepts of a threat can in general be seen to conform closely to the western definitions and international trends. Environmental issues were a further aspect of security over which the Finns expressed considerable concern, although it is debatable in the light of the opinion polls whether they should really be defined as

perceived threats. When asked for their opinions on the probability of the military threats being realized, the respondents estimated this probability to be very low. *To a certain extent the Finns' estimate of the legitimacy of the military threat scenarios may be regarded as fairly poor, but it should be noted on this score that the information provided by the opinion polls concerns only the estimated probabilities attached to threat images.* It is clear from the perspective of Finland's security, however, that the possibility of a military threat materializing was linked to the uncertainties surrounding the question of Russia. In terms of the threat situation in society as a whole, military threats formed little more than a background.

Perceived threats in the 2001 Government Report

The Council of State submitted its 2001 Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy⁴⁴ to Parliament on 13th June 2001. Although the original assignment had been to produce a concise defence policy summary in the nature of an interim report, subsequent political demands and observations of changes in the security environment had led to its being constructed in the manner of a full-scale security and defence policy report. The emphasis within its content was on analysing the security environment and evaluating the measures taken by the Finnish authorities, and these topics were also discussed more widely in Parliament than the structural changes in the country's defence. It was indeed noted in a number of speeches in Parliament that it was purely a matter of taste as to whether the document was regarded as an updating of the previous report or an entirely new statement of policy.⁴⁵ Extensive and unprecedentedly forceful criticism was made in Parliament of the way in which the report had been prepared, and it was suggested that the main parliamentary committees, citizens' organizations and research institutes should in

⁴⁴ Finnish title: *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001, Valtioneuvoston selonteke eduskunnalle 2/2001.*

⁴⁵ See, for example, Johannes Koskinen, *Suomen puolustusjärjestelmä integroituvassa maailmassa*, speech made on 4.12.2001, and Liisa Jaakonsaari's speech during the feedback discussion. *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelu 19.12.2001*, PTK 157/2001 vp.

future be consulted when drawing up such reports.⁴⁶ The differences of opinion among the parties making up the government that had been discussed in public during the winter and spring of 2001 with regard to the content of the report had, in the opinion of the opposition, led to a “meagre compromise” and caused the Minister of Defence himself to note that “the preparatory work could not be awarded many points for style”.⁴⁷

The description of the security environment contained in the 2001 Government Report can be regarded as an attempt to shift Finland’s understanding of security and defence policy in a more international direction. It is dominated by a general optimism and views that are centred firmly on international institutions and rely on cooperation in security matters. Far more non-military threats and uncertainty factors affecting international and European security were considered in the report than ever before, and the sources of these threats were framed to an increasing extent in circumstances external to Finland and Europe and described as being cross-border factors by nature and apt to reduce the significance of geographical distance. There was a great deal of talk of global developments in connection with international security, which in itself was described as being reflected more powerfully than ever in *Finland’s security*, although the report contained no actual analysis of this connection. At the same time it was noted that this trend offered Finland opportunities for strengthening its overall security and developing the performance capacity necessary for this.⁴⁸ On the other hand, it was also pointed out that the international dependence on security and the development of a global economy were leaving Finnish society increasingly vulnerable, even though globalization also offered opportunities for

⁴⁶ *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö 14.12.2001*, PuVM 2/2001 vp, *Ulkoasiainvaliokunnan lausunto 27.11.2001*, UaVL 6/2001 vp, *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelu 5.9.2001*, PTK 87/2001 vp. In the opinion of the Foreign Affairs Committee, this was justified on account of the complexity of the factors affecting the security environment that needed to be evaluated.

⁴⁷ See comments by Ilkka Kanerva and Jan-Erik Enestam during the feedback discussion. *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelu 5.9.2001*, PTK 87/2001 vp.

⁴⁸ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle 13.6.2001, VNS 2/2001 vp, Helsinki 2001, pp. 14, 20.

tightening the country's overall security. No military threat to Finland "in the foreseeable future" was envisaged in the report.⁴⁹

When defining those "on Finland's side" as a broad-based frame of reference for the country's security, the report put forward an institutional coalition that included the UN, the OSCE, the EU, association with NATO under the Partnership for Peace scheme and Nordic cooperation. All of these were regarded as strengthening Finland's security. Identification with these was said to be grounded in a common system of values and common social and economic interests. Strong transatlantic relations were deemed important for the security of the Euro-Atlantic region, to which Finland was considered to belong.

Although Finland's security was described as being more closely connected in an interdependent manner with the perceived threats entailed in the development of European and international security, no changes were proposed as far as the objects of that security – the preservation of Finland's independence, the protection of the basic values governing the country's society and the ensuring of a capacity for action – were concerned. The difficulty of combining national and international security thinking and the priority given to national security were most clearly in evidence in the views put forward in Parliament regarding international crisis management. Although the report mentioned that Finland will take an active part in international crisis management operations as a means of strengthening the country's own security, it was criticized in Parliament for placing excessive emphasis on this, and a number of speakers insisted that crisis management assignments should be subordinated to Finland's own defence needs.⁵⁰ The same conflict between national and international security could also be seen in the discussion concerning the need for anti-personnel mines.

A rather different picture of Finland's security environment was presented in the defence policy part of the government report, the report submitted by the Parliamentary Defence Committee and in Parliament, especially in the speeches made by Coalition Party

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 41.

⁵⁰ See, for example, speeches by Juha Korkeaoja and Olli Nepponen in the preliminary debate in Parliament. *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelu 5.9.2001*, PTK 87/2001 vp.

members. The Defence Committee criticized the government report for failing to distinguish the main threats from second-degree uncertainty factors, and for paying little attention to geopolitical and many other viewpoints. In the committee's opinion the report had not succeeded in explaining the various phenomena connected with wars and crises, "so that the consequence may be an excessively rosy picture of developments in international relations".⁵¹ Criticism was levelled at the minor weight placed by the report on military threats (relative to non-military ones), and attention was drawn to the need to take the significance of Finland's geographical position into account in threat analyses. "There are two crucial directions of interest in the areas adjacent to Finland where conflicts could lead to a military threat extending to this country: the Baltic region and the sea areas to the north."⁵² The Defence Committee referred to this description as a "threat derived from geostrategic factors" and regarded it as a matter of importance that this should be clearly stated, demanding that it should certainly be taken into account in the 2004 security and defence policy report. The perceived threat was framed as arising directly or indirectly from Russia, whose internal development, as noted in the 2001 report itself, "was still beset by many uncertainty factors".⁵³ The discussion of the perceived threats mentioned in the government report may be looked on as a struggle to lay more emphasis on military threats relative to non-military ones, as opinions were greatly divided over what constituted "real" threats and which should be assigned priority.

One illustration of the difference of opinion over the definition of threats concerns the impression of the improbability of Finland being involved in a war and of the exacerbation of non-military threats that was built up in the security policy section of the report by comparison with the statements on "the maintenance of a military deterrent to eliminate threats in advance" and "the development of a defence capability in keeping with the security threats" contained in the defence policy section.⁵⁴ This apparent inconsistency may be interpreted as suggesting that an attempt was made to be more broad-minded with respect to non-military threats even though these were

⁵¹ *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö 14.12.2001*, PuVM 2/2001 vp.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, p. 15.

⁵⁴ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, pp. 47, 53.

not believed to impinge directly on Finland's sovereignty as a state, precautions for the protection of which were to be made by developing a defence capability to cope with military threats. The impacts of non-military threat images on Finland were framed in general terms in the report, as uncertainty factors existent in a globalizing world, and by emphasizing these an attempt was made at the same time to effect a change in the country's security policy identity. On the other hand, it was also noted in the report that "Finland will decide on its defence policy and the development of its defences on the basis of its geopolitical position and historical experiences",⁵⁵ which creates an impression of considerable importance being attached to state security and a national defence identity. No corresponding accentuation of perceived military threats on historical grounds had been mentioned in any previous government report on security and defence policy. Continuous references were made to geopolitics and geostrategy in the defence policy section, while the state-centred aspect of security was also to the fore in the defence policy evaluations of other states: "regardless of their estimations of threats at the national level, all states will retain a sufficient military capacity to defend their own territory as a basic element in their security provisions".⁵⁶ Thus the connection between national and international security and perceived threats would appear to have been somewhat equivocal in this report.

The threat scenarios defined in the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy were foreshadowed in the committee reports and statements on the 2001 report and in the feedback discussion on it in parliament. Thus the definitions put forward that departed from those set out in 2001 may be seen as being parliamentary securitization proposals, especially in view of the specific demands made in Parliament that the threat images to which it had drawn attention should be taken into account in the next such report. Particularly significant in this respect is the fact that the attack on the United States on 11.9.2001 took place after the submission of the report, on 13.6.2001, and the preliminary debate on it in Parliament, on 5.-7.9.2001. There was in fact considerable discussion in Parliament as to whether the report "should be updated to correspond to the age of global terrorism and anti-terrorist activities",

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 41.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 24.

since “the threat descriptions in the report proved outdated before the committee stage of the parliamentary discussions on it had even begun.”⁵⁷ No attempt was made to re-write the document, however, but rather the necessary new points of emphasis raised in the discussions that departed from those in the report itself were recorded in the minutes of the committees. Although terrorism was in any case discussed in this report more extensively than in any previous one, no special evaluation was made of the intensity of the threat or its degree of political priority. It was simply stated that “terrorism is a threat to international security, the implementation of human rights, democracy and constitutional government.”⁵⁸ Considered together with weapons of mass destruction, this threat could nevertheless be framed as an extremely serious one: “the prospect of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists constitutes an extremely serious threat indeed.”⁵⁹

The opinions expressed by the parliamentary committees and in the feedback discussions in Parliament were that the report’s threat analysis was outdated as far as the threat posed by terrorism, the military situation in the Baltic region (a reference to possible NATO membership for the Baltic States) and developments in relations between the United States and Russia were concerned, and it was noted in Parliament that these trends would affect the evaluations of threats facing Finland to the extent that the points in question would have to be revised in the next report. Typical of the feedback discussion in Parliament were statements of the kind “the events of September 11th put the last full stop to the era known as the Cold War” or “terrorism is now a major threat”,⁶⁰ regardless of party affiliations. Thus the opinions expressed in Parliament foresaw a greater priority for the threat of terrorism by the time of the next report.

⁵⁷ Speeches by Pertti Hemmälä and Kari Uotila in the feedback discussions in Parliament, *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelu 19.12.2001*, PTK 157/2001 vp.

⁵⁸ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, p. 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See, for example, speeches by Aulis Ranta-Muotio, Anni Sinnemäki, Ismo Seivästö, Marja Tiura and Matti Väistö, *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelu 19.12.2001*, PTK 157/2001 vp.

The report dealt more precisely than earlier with the uncertainty factors (but not threats) associated with Russia, and also reached the conclusion that in the context of Finnish security and defence policy planning it would be as well to allow for the possibility of an unfavourable future trend in this respect. At the same time, however, the situation in Russia was discussed much more openly than in previous reports of this kind, stating that developments there could lead to a crisis in Northern Europe and the Baltic region under three sets of circumstances: 1) an environmental disaster brought about by a technological failure or error, 2) increased tension between Russia and the Baltic States, or 3) failure of Russia's policy of renewal, isolation of Russia and a change in direction within the country's foreign and security policy.⁶¹ Nevertheless, although the more detailed framing in this report relative to earlier ones clearly conveyed the uncertainty associated with the unpredictability of developments in Russia and the deviant nature of the country's identity policy, the general picture of the Russian situation was more positive than previously.

As far as the more precise definition of the broad concept of security was concerned, both the report itself and the opinions of the parliamentary committees referred to the 1997 government security and defence policy report and contented themselves with observing that "Finland's security and defence policy sets out from a broad concept of security."⁶² It was noted, however, that the broad concept of security had gained in significance and that the intensity and probability of the new threats were framed as having increased. The Foreign Affairs Committee even identified the broad concept of security with the security of mankind. Although the definition of broad security in it remained indeterminate, the understanding of security conveyed by the report can be estimated to be more complex, with greater weight placed on the interconnections between threats and on an international perspective. The threat factors were also framed as less applicable to the level of the nation-state than previously. Although the report succeeded in framing the new threats in a more detailed manner than in 1997, the question of their impact

⁶¹ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, p. 32.

⁶² The accent on a broad concept of security was most prominent in the statement issued by the Foreign Affairs Committee, from which this quotation is taken. *Ulkoasiainvaliokunnan lausunto 27.11.2001*, UaVL 6/2001 vp. In the report itself the broad understanding of security was framed as a concept mostly in connection with the EU and the UN. *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, pp. 14, 21.

on Finnish security policy was largely left open. One characteristic of the new threat images, however, was that the means of controlling them were fundamentally non-military.

The most serious non-military threats described in the report were environmental problems and major disasters, especially of a nuclear kind in the Baltic and Kola regions and oil spills in the Gulf of Finland. The danger of illegal immigration and an influx of refugees from the direction of Russia was observed to have increased, professional crime was seen to have become more violent and epidemics of AIDS and tuberculosis were seen to have spread. In all these instances the source of the problem was closely associated with Russia. Very much more international, more comprehensive and more general threats were framed in the report as being the uncontrolled spread of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and handguns, the rise of financial frauds and cybercrimes, threats to information systems, infringements of human rights, damage inflicted on the basic structure of society, general changes in the environment, various disease epidemics, drug and human trafficking and mass migrations of population. These images were first and foremost presented as threats to the international community (as the object to be securitized), with which Finland was associated on the principle of the global indivisibility of security. The sources of these latter threats were still more difficult to locate, but their priority and intensity were regarded as being relatively low as far as Finland's security was concerned. The statement of opinion issued by the Parliamentary Defence Committee also proposed that racism, hostility towards foreigners and changes in the welfare state should be added to the threat analysis.⁶³

⁶³ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, pp. 12–17, 74–79, *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö 14.12.2001*.

The procedure for drawing up the report as a constructor of threat images

In accordance with the constructivist frame of reference, the perceived threats facing Finland at the beginning of the new millennium were constructed as a continuum of cultural ‘handicaps’, in that previously constructed threat images were allowed to influence both the current cognitive understanding of threats and the understanding based on the national identity. Finland’s history as a borderland between world powers and distinct cultural spheres of influence, the Second World War and the Cold War era and the various events that went with it all left their mark on the country’s security policy and general understanding of security. *The acquired starting points for thinking about national security – the avoidance of new wars and the preservation of the country’s independence and territorial integrity – were essentially still involved in the interpretation of Finland’s threat policy as laid down in security policy agendas during the Cold War era and thereafter.* It should be noted, of course, that the reality of these agendas as made public was not directly identifiable with the “facts of the case”, but rather the interpretation as such was constructed through a process of political compromise and with a political purpose in mind. Thus what was written down as security policy included conflicting views and assumptions regarding the actual threats that faced Finland at particular moments in time.

The end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Finland’s entry into the EU had fairly rapid effects on the perceived threats mentioned on security policy agendas. Thus as the 1990s were ushered in it could be said that the probabilities attached to the military threats had diminished considerably⁶⁴ and the social atmosphere in which threats were discussed had become very much less restrained. Broad-based governments that remained viable from one general election to the next, the stabilization of internal policy and the changes that had taken place in the security environment nevertheless created pressures for the parliamentary discussion of security policy issues, and *the adoption of the security and defence policy report procedure may be seen as a parliamentarianization of*

⁶⁴ According to Nokkala, one could have expected “official” policies in the early 1990s to have included descriptions of the security environment in which the “new threats” played a more prominent role. Nokkala, *Laajeneva sotilaspolitiikka*, p. 258.

these policies. At the same time more lively discussions emerged on topics such as broad-based security and the new threats. The question of broad-based security was linked to the optimism aroused by the retreat of the military threat and the emergence of new regional and international means of handling security threats through co-operation. Although broad-based security and its appearance on security policy agendas had begun to be discussed during the Cold War era, *Finland's security policy may be regarded as having moved into the "broad-based security age" with the government security and defence policy reports of 1995 and 1997.* The foundations for the concept of a broad-based, comprehensive view of security were laid in the initial assumptions of the 1995 report.

The reports of 1995, 1997 and 2001 gradually increased the weight assigned to non-military threat images of a kind presupposed by the notion of broad-based security, and the intensity of such threats was framed as being on the increase, but (in accordance with the dualistic structure of the reports) these non-military threats were clearly separated from the military ones. This "juxtaposition" was observable in all three reports, even though the 2001 report did build a bridge between the military and non-military threats by drawing attention to the need for a national strategy of preparation for comprehensive security. Russia was treated as a source of non-military threats (especially in the 1995 and 1997 reports) and Finland as the target of these threats, whereas by 2001 the understanding of the threat scenario was on their complex, multisectoral cross-border nature, their constant integration one with another (with an accompanying increase in intensity) and their powerful geographical bond with Europe and the areas adjacent to Finland (as both source and target areas). On the other hand, the new threats were also framed as being general in character and indistinct in their impact on the primary object of securitization, the preservation of Finnish independence.⁶⁵ With the appearance of the new threats on the scene, more weight came to be placed on general uncertainty (insecurity), and the reports began to emphasize the importance for Finland of constructing international, chiefly European, security and of the country's obligations to combat

⁶⁵ "Finland's foreign, security and defence policy measures are aimed at the preservation of Finnish independence and the ensuring of a capacity for taking action in pursuance of Finland's interests." *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2001*, p. 37.

the new threats as a part of a general European front. The reality of the common, non-military international threats was represented in the reports as being more serious, even though no clear connection was demonstrated between Finland's political and military security and international security.

The government security and defence policy reports have established themselves as political instruments for laying down the main outlines of the country's security and defence policy and the threats facing it. In this respect *the adoption of the government report procedure in the mid-1990s permitted a more open discussion of perceived threats and a certain degree of public debate, but it also made the achievement of common interpretations of the threats a more challenging goal than ever.* The procedure has now become an established one, however, with the consequence that *this report submitted by the Council of State (Cabinet) to Parliament once during the government's term of office is regarded as a political document in which the government presents Parliament with a statement of its policy, defends this in public and, having obtained parliamentary approval for it, commits itself to following it.*⁶⁶

The role of the report as a statement of policy and an expression of political will has also meant that there has been a growing political and administrative desire to influence its contents. *With the more open atmosphere surrounding discussions of security policy, the adoption of a broad-based concept of security, the greater element of parliamentarianism attached to the procedure for handling the report and the more open evaluation of threat interpretations within society at large, it has become very much easier than it used to be to put forward deviating views on security and the threats to it.* On the other hand, the public nature of the reports and their thorough examination in Parliament may be regarded as creating a firm foundation for unanimity in the adoption of a certain understanding of the threats facing Finland. This situation in which criticism can be expressed and alternatives suggested can indeed be regarded as giving rise to a

⁶⁶ On the significance of these reports as definitions of Finland's security and defence policy, see, for example, Matti Vanhanen's speech in the preliminary hearing on the 2004 report, *Puhe valtioneuvoston turvallisuu- ja puolustuspoliittisen selonteon lähetekeskustelussa* 28.9.2004, also the speech given by President Tarja Halonen at the Opening of Parliament in 2006, *Puhe valtiopäivien avajaisissa eduskunnassa* 3.2.2006.

consensus reached in an atmosphere of open discussion. But given that reports approved through the reaching of a broad political consensus carry a great deal of political weight, the political interests in influencing their content will also be great.

It can also be argued that the open nature of these reports means that they represent attempts to “calm down” the usually lively discussions surrounding Finnish security policy. The fact that the reports outline the country’s security and defence policy, its security environment and perceived threats at four-year intervals can certainly lead to a situation in which its outlines are treated as “boundaries” within which discussions of perceived threats should be confined. On the other hand, they also allow the basic strategies behind Finnish security policy to be subjected to extensive discussion at regular intervals. It is clear, however, that they can serve as *an instrument for the exercise of power* by the security policy elite, *a field for the distribution of security resources* and *an internal means of putting forward securitization proposals* both to Parliament and the state administration and to the general public. Within Finnish society, the public descriptions of perceived threats contained in the report drawn up by the Council of State are submitted to discussion in Parliament and by experts and are also exposed to public opinion and the media. The report serves in a sense as the focal point of the whole discussion of security issues and carries a great deal of authority. Finnish society has substantial, and perhaps excessive, expectations regarding these reports, as is reflected by the considerable increases in their length in the course of time.⁶⁷ The process of producing this report every four years has also been described as a form of “national security therapy”.⁶⁸

It is possible, of course, to look on security and defence policy reports simply as one alternative model for defining these policies and the associated threat images. There were powerful demands expressed during the parliamentary discussions of the 1997 and 2001 reports, for instance, for a return to the days of parliamentary defence committees

⁶⁷ Where the 1995 report amounted to 45 pages, that of 1997 was 92 pages long and that of 2001 similarly 93 pages, but the 2004 report ran to 170 pages. See comparison at www.defmin.fi/index.phtml?s=180.

⁶⁸ See Raimo Väyrynen, “Turvallisuuden käsite kaipaa täsmennystä”, *Turun Sanomat*, 1.8.2007. In Väyrynen’s opinion the report is “a very detailed document that securitizes the whole of Finnish social policy”.

or select committees on defence policy, particularly on account of the non-parliamentary nature of the preparation work that goes into these reports. Similarly, the government report procedure has been criticized as being too “cumbersome, inflexible and formal”, so that the threat images and their prioritization are updated relatively seldom in view of the rate at which the security environment alters and develops.⁶⁹ This situation was highlighted in 2001, when the description of the threat posed by terrorism became outdated before the report had been discussed in Parliament on account of the terrorist strike of 11th September. Another object of criticism has been the promises of financial allocations for particular purposes that have subsequently failed to materialize.⁷⁰ One alternative to the government report approach, or means of supplementing it, would be a procedure by which the government could draw attention more often to changes in the security environment or threat images.⁷¹ On the other hand, from the point of view of the defence administration the defence policies outlined in these reports have enabled political guidance to be provided for the planning and development of the Finnish Defence Forces over longer periods of time. The reports can thus be estimated to serve defence policy ends fairly well, whereas security policy situation reports would be required at more frequent intervals, e.g. in the form of an annual speech by the Prime Minister on “the state of the nation”.⁷²

A government security and defence policy report can in principle be regarded both as *a broad-based definition* of Finland’s understanding of security and perceived threats and *a high-level political programme and statement of opinion* on the subject. It is nevertheless also *a political document that has evolved through choices and compromises*, which gives expression to the “outer shell” of Finland’s

⁶⁹ See, for example, Teija Tiilikainen, *Turvallisuuspoliittinen selonteko liian raskas*, internet column, 3.3.2006.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Matti Ahola, ”Seuraava selontekoa silmälläpitäen”, *Sotilaisaika-lehti*, No. 3, 2007, p. 9-15. Ahola sees a problem in the different time spans applying to the government’s interests and the development of the country’s defence systems.

⁷¹ See Pauli Järvenpää, *Selko-08*, column, 10.6.2007; Liisa Jaakonsaari, *Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan näkymät*, speech 26.1.2006; Pasi Rutanen, *Suomalaisen ulkopoliitiikan keskus-teluvaje*, column, Finnish Broadcasting Company, 9.11.2005.

⁷² On alternatives to the government report procedure, see Jarno Linnéll, *Toimiiko turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selontekomenettely?*, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Strategian laitos, jul-kaisusarja 4, No. 26, Helsinki 2008.

threat politics but not to its “soul”. It is the product of a construction process taking place “in the wings” in which various actors’ world-views, various administrative proposals and various political interests are reconciled. Thus the perceived threats described in the reports are constructs emerging from administrative and political processes, put together largely by the Council of State itself in the case of the 1995, 1997 and 2001 reports. This means that the political evaluation and discussion of the perceived threats took place in public only after the Council of State had submitted its report to Parliament, where the more thoroughgoing discussion and evaluation, with the help of expert advisors, took place in the parliamentary committees.⁷³

⁷³ On the nature of the government report procedure as interaction between the government and parliament, see Ismo Lumijärvi, ”Selontekomenettely poliittisen ja hallinnollisen ohjauksen välineenä”, *Hallinto*, No. 3, 2005, pp. 16–18.

3. Construction of perceived threats in the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy

The political and institutional context

Following the general election in spring 2003 the process of drawing up a new Report on Security and Defence Policy was set in motion as one of the first projects to be undertaken by the new government. The two parties that had gained the most support in the election, the Centre Party, with 24.7% of the votes and 55 out of the 200 seats, and the Social Democrats, with 24.5% and 53 seats, had together achieved a majority in Parliament and had formed a government along with the Swedish People's Party, which had gained 4.6% of the votes and 8 seats. The government led by Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki began its work on 17.4.2003 and noted in its political programme that "the government will provide a wider assessment of Finland's foreign and security policy in a security and defence policy report to be completed in 2004."⁷⁴ The government began work on preparing this report on 23.5.2003 under a decision made by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.⁷⁵

The mainly political responsibility for guiding the preparation of the report was vested in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, to which the fields of foreign and security policy belonged, in addition to the ministries concerned, under the decision-making principles of the Council of State. It may be inferred from the procedural regulations governing the Council of State that foreign and security policy belonged at that time to the province of the Office of the Council of State, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. The same regulations also provided more precise details on the position of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security

⁷⁴ *Pääministeri Anneli Jäätteenmäen hallituksen ohjelma 17.4.2003*, Valtioneuvoston kanslia, Helsinki 2003, p. 4.

⁷⁵ *Hallituksen toimenpidekertomus vuodelta 2003*, K 1/2004 vp, pp. 3–6, Personal notice sent by the Office of the Council of State to members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, 5.5.2008.

Policy, noting that it “prepares matters of importance concerning foreign and security policy and other relations between Finland and foreign countries and matters of importance concerning the overall national defence.” The committee can be regarded as a fairly closed forum for discussions and decisions related to a security and defence policy report, as its meetings and the documents related to them are accessible to only a restricted body of actors. It has been shown by the researcher Minna Tiili, for instance, that actors remaining outside this cabinet committee have scarcely any opportunity to influence its actions or the decisions made by it.⁷⁶ The committee has no permanent obligations to hold meetings, but can meet together with the President of Finland whenever circumstances require. In this case it met a total of 10 times in connection with the preparation of the government report in the course of 2003 and 2004, in all cases together with the President. The Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy can thus be regarded, especially when working in conjunction with the President, as a crucial decision-making body in matters of foreign and security policy, although it must be added that the revision of the Finnish Constitution implemented in the year 2000 is generally held to provide the Council of State, and also Parliament, with better opportunities to participate in and influence foreign and security policy decision-making processes than was the case previously.⁷⁷

The future outlines of the security and defence policy report and the “limitations” to be imposed at the preparatory stage (e.g. with respect to the issues of defence alliances, universal conscription etc.) were laid down in the programme of the subsequent government headed by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen on 24.6.2003 and in the assignment document produced by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy on 23.5.2003. The government programme described the preparation of the report in very general terms, following the Jäätteenmäki government’s wording, but it did lay down points of departure for defining threat images, by observing that “national

⁷⁶ Minna Tiili, *Ministerit strategisina johtajina*, valtio-opin laitos, Helsingin yliopisto, Helsinki 2003, pp. 63–64.

⁷⁷ *Laki valtioneuvostosta*, 175/28.2.2003, § 24, *Valtioneuvoston ohjesääntö*, 3.4.2003, luku 3 § 10–24, luku 4 § 25. In particular the powers of decision vested in the President in matters of foreign and security policy were restricted under the revision of the Finnish Constitution. For another evaluation, see Teija Tiilikainen, *Suomen ulkopoliittinen johtamisjärjestelmä uuden perustuslain mukaan*, Perustuslain seurantatyöryhmän mietinnön liite, Oikeusministeriön tausta-selvityksiä 2002, pp. 1–14.

precautions and plans for the development of the national defence should take account of the new risks and threats that have appeared,” and that “environmental destruction and other major disasters should be taken into consideration.”⁷⁸ There was no actual mention of perceived threats in the government’s programme, however, nor was it specifically said that the report should be drawn up on the basis of a broad concept of security. It is merely significant that the programme should have given the question of the security of the population such a prominent position in its programme, being assigned more or less the same number of pages as foreign and security policy. In fact, the programme also discussed separately the international bases for Finnish thinking on security, the UN, the EU and transatlantic co-operation.⁷⁹ Regarding the Finnish Defence Forces and other aspects of the national defence, the programme noted that these would be developed in accordance with the outlines given in the security and defence policy report.⁸⁰

Although the assignment document produced by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy did define clearer aims for the process of preparing the government report, it was for the most part fairly general in nature, nor did it lay down any limitations as to content or give any more precise instructions regarding the understanding of security or perceived threats. One reason for this may have been that the Cabinet Committee set up a separate working group consisting of Secretary of State Risto Volanen from the Office of the Council of State, Jaakko Kalela, head of the President’s Office, Undersecretary of State Jaakko Laajava, who was responsible for political matters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Pauli Järvenpää, head of the defence policy section at the Ministry of Defence, to prepare the report. As mentioned in the assignment document, this working group comprising four civil servants with Volanen as its chairman was intended to do its job “under close

⁷⁸ *Pääministeri Matti Vanhasen hallituksen ohjelma 24.6.2003*, Valtioneuvoston kanslia, Helsinki 2003, p. 49.

⁷⁹ “The government will support improvements in the functioning of the United Nations and other collaborative bodies based on extensive international co-operation, in order to strengthen democracy, respect for human rights and the principles of constitutional government. Finland will be an active member of the European Union and promote the strengthening of its common foreign and security policy and transatlantic co-operation.” *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5, 47–49.

guidance from the Council of State's Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.”⁸¹

In terms of the assignment document, responsibility for drawing up and presenting the government report was divided into two parts: 1) the security and defence policy operating environment and the outline of the security and defence policy itself, for the writing of which the working group set up by the Cabinet Committee could call on the resources of the Foreign Ministry, after which it was to be put before the Cabinet Committee by the Foreign Minister, and 2) the part concerned with the development of various branches of the administration (in accordance with the description of the operational environment provided in the first part), for which the working group was to make use of resources from the Ministry of Defence and the Security and Defence Committee. The aim when preparing the second part was to take account of the threats perceived by the various branches of the administration and construct appropriate links to both the Strategy for Securing Functions Vital to Society (SFVS Strategy) and the Internal Security Programme. Responsibility for presenting this part to the Cabinet Committee lay with the Minister of Defence. Nothing was said at this point about the budgetary effects of the recommendations made in the report; it was simply noted that this would be taken care of later. The procedural structures that had been created and the actors in the preparatory phase (particularly the civil servants involved) became apparent later in the preparation process.⁸²

A stronger parliamentary dimension was introduced into the preparation of this report by the *Security Policy Monitoring Group* set up by the then Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, on 13.6.2002 in the light of the proposal made in the parliamentary discussion on the 2001 report to the effect that the following one, in 2004, should be prepared in such a way that the main parliamentary select committees should be involved in it at the initial stage under the auspices of the Council of State. The idea was to bring parliamentary guidance to bear on the process of preparing the report (regardless of which parties were in the

⁸¹ Valtioneuvoston tiedotusyksikkö (Council of State Information Department), *Turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittisen selonteon valmistelu käynnistetään*, press release 152/2003, 23.5.2003.

⁸² Ibid., see also Risto Volanen, ”Valtioneuvoston turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selonteko 2004 - valmistelujen vaiheita ja painopisteitä”, *Maanpuolustus*, N:o 77, 2004, pp. 16–19.

government at the time and which in the opposition) and allow as broad a political front as possible to take part in the preparatory work. At the same time the significance of a monitoring group can be seen to lie in the aim of ensuring Parliament's commitment to the work of preparing the report and to the policies expressed in it, as it would allow Parliament to monitor the preparatory work and to make recommendations (provide political guidance) to the working group appointed by the Council of State. The monitoring group was chaired by Antti Kalliomäki (Soc. Dem.) from 13.6.2002 to 9.5.2003 and Aulis Ranta-Muotio (Centre Party) during the preparation of the 2004 report. The group working under Ranta-Muotio included 11 members of parliament representing eight parties (two each from the Social Democrats, Centre Party and Coalition Party and one each from the Left-Wing Alliance, the Swedish People's Party, the Greens, the Christian Democrats and the True Finns.⁸³

The procedural structure created for preparing the report, a political document intended to define the Finnish understanding of security and the threats to it, also gave many other actors an opportunity to influence and take part in the construction of its content. The working group was closely assisted in its practical deliberations by a number of permanent expert advisors who took a full part in its activities, three of whom, Markus Lyra, Jukka Salovaara (special advisor to Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen on international affairs) and Major-General Hannu Herranen of the General Headquarters of the Finnish Defence Forces, were engaged in this from the beginning, while Colonel Sakari Honkamaa of the General Headquarters joined the group later and Ritva Viljanen, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior, took part in a few meetings. Anne Sipiläinen of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Janne Kuusela of the Ministry of Defence acted as secretaries to the meetings of the working group and gathered together the material produced by their respective ministries. The Finnish Defence Forces (in practise the General Headquarters, where Admiral Juhani Kaskeala was Commander-in-chief at the time, Lt.-Gen. Kari Rimpä was Chief of Staff and Lt.-Gen. Olavi Jäppilä was Chief of Operations) occupied an important position in the work of preparing part II of the report and in constructing the military threat images.

⁸³ Valtioneuvoston tiedotusyksikkö, *Turvallisuuspoliittinen seurantaryhmä*, press release 5.6.2002, Valtioneuvoston tiedotusyksikkö, *Turvallisuuspoliittinen seurantaryhmä asetettiin*, press release 13.6.2002, *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantatöryhmän raportti*, Valtioneuvoston kanslian julkaisusarja 9/2004, Helsinki 2004, app. 1.

Other persons in influential positions at that time were Matti Ahola, as Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, Olli-Pekka Jalonen, as head of its international defence policy department, Arto Mansala as Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Raimo Sailas as Secretary of State at the Ministry of Finance. The Security and Defence Committee, which had played a prominent role in preparing the 2001 report, with Colonel Tapani Hyötyläinen as its secretary, was involved to a much lesser extent in the preparatory work for the 2004 report, being concerned mainly with work in autumn 2003 on the SFVS Strategy and the part of the report dealing with this.

Great expectations were entertained for the new report both in the Council of State, Parliament and several ministries and also in Finnish society at large, and it was emphasized in numerous speeches that the 2001 document had been in the nature of an interim survey of the situation and that the coming report would be of greater significance, being based on a thorough, broad-scale assessment of the security situation. A picture was built up in the public eye in advance of a comprehensive assessment of the nation's security which would for the first time achieve full coverage of Finland's security environment from a broad-based point of view and of the new threat factors at work within it.⁸⁴ Indeed, hopes were raised regarding the new report even on the pages of the 2001 version, where no less than 52 matters were left to be examined or determined in the 2004 version. As Juhani Kaskeala noted somewhat prophetically in the autumn of 2001, after the publication of that year's report, "much is expected of the 2004 document", to which the Minister of Defence at the time, Jan-Erik Enestam, added "it will be necessary then to go into certain major questions affecting the defence administration which have now remained, or have been left, unresolved."⁸⁵ Thus a considerable political charge was placed in advance on the 2004 report, and especially on its description of the security environment. As the foreign policy journal *Ulkopolitiikka* put it in autumn 2003, the

⁸⁴ See, for example, Tarja Halonen, *Puhe suurlähettiläskokouksessa*, 21.8.2002; Erkki Tuomioja, *Globalisoitumisen ilmiöitä ja kehityssuuntia*, 6.6.2002; Ville Itälä, *Puheenvuoro keskustelussa Nato-aloitteesta*, 7.6.2002.

⁸⁵ Juhani Kaskeala, *Turvallisuusympäristö muuttuu, puolustusvoimien kehittäminen jatkuu*, speech, 1.11.2001, Jan-Erik Enestam, *Puhe itsenäisyyspäivän juhlassa*, 6.12.2001.

preparations for part I of the report were proving to be like “playing with fire”.⁸⁶

If we examine the mood prevailing in (Finnish) national security policy in 2002 and 2003 in the light of Kingdon’s agenda-setting theory, we can say that the speeches made by the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Defence Minister were dominated to a great extent (from the perspective of threat politics) by three themes: 1) the threat of terrorism and its influence on both national and international security (in that the terrorism “threat window” thrown open in the parliamentary discussion of the 2001 report had been kept wide open), 2) the active discussion of the question of Finland joining or declining to join a military alliance, with possible reference to NATO (a discussion that was reflected in the threats that were perceived and the weights attached to them, and 3) globalization and its connection with security matters, which was a crucial theme pursued by the elite at the core of Finnish security policy. It was with reference to these themes that President Halonen observed in her New Year speech to the nation on 1.1.2003 that “the preparing of the 2004 Government Report on Security and Defence Policy will provide a suitable framework in which to examine our position in the constantly changing international situation.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Arno Ahosniemi, ”Suomen turvallisuuslinjaukset neljän huippuvirkamiehen käsissä”, *Ulko-politiikka*, No. 3–4, 2003, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Tarja Halonen, *Tasavallan presidentin uudenvuodenpuhe*, 1.1.2003. See also Paavo Lipponen, *Suomi ja Euroopan turvallisuusrakenteet*, speech 16.1.2003, Jan-Erik Enestam, *Esitelmä Paimion Rotary-klubin kokouksessa*, 29.4.2002, Erkki Tuomioja, *Puhe eduskunnassa*, 14.5.2003.

Administrative preparation of the report under political guidance⁸⁸

“Government reports to Parliament are an instrument for managing change situations. In the midst of change it is important for our country’s political leadership to be able to discern and define the directions in which developments are leading and to agree at a general level on the main perceived threats and the means of controlling them. In matters connected with security and defence policy this is done by means of government reports submitted to Parliament. The process of drawing up such a report allows a certain degree of fine tuning of political viewpoints, first of all within the government and then within the whole political leadership.”⁸⁹

Points of departure for defining threat policy

It is clear that the procedure developed for preparing the government report had an essential influence on the construction of the perceived threats described in it. Where the previous such reports had been prepared in a fairly well-established manner through consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, it was the Council of State that was assigned the leading role in preparing the 2004 document. This meant in practise that particular emphasis was placed on the roles played by the Office of the Council

⁸⁸ In addition to the documentary sources mentioned, the analyses and interpretations presented here are based on notes made by the author at personal interviews with the following people: Matti Ahola 28.4.2008, Jan-Erik Enestam 21.1.2008, Mari Eteläpää 17.4.2008, Juha Harjula 1.2.2008, Hannu Herranen 11.6.2008, Sakari Honkamaa 24.6.2008, Tapani Hyötyläinen 30.5.2008, Jyrki Iivonen 21.1.2008, Olli-Pekka Jalonen 12.2.2008, Olavi Jäppilä 19.5.2008, Pauli Järvenpää 19.2.2008 and 3.3.2008, Jaakko Kalela 26.5.2008, Elina Kalkku 2.4.2008, Antti Kalliomäki 12.3.2008, Juhani Kaskeala 29.5.2008, Juha Korkea-aoja 21.2.2008, Johannes Koskinen 12.3.2008, Janne Kuusela 20.5.2008, Seppo Kääriäinen 22.2.2008, Jaakko Laajava 25.1.2008 and 9.6.2008, Paula Lehtomäki 4.6.2008, Markus Lyra 6.5.2008, Tarja Mankkinen 5.6.2008, Arto Mansala 2.5.2008, Juha Martelius 5.5.2008, Matti Piispanen 29.4.2008, Kari Rajamäki 26.2.2008, Aulis Ranta-Muotio 27.5.2008, Raimo Sailas 29.5.2008, Jukka Salovaara 5.5.2008, Kai Sauer 7.1.2008, Anne Sipiläinen 12.6.2008, Folke Sundman 8.5.2008, Pekka Toveri 13.5.2008, Erkki Tuomioja 6.2.2008, Matti Vanhanen 17.7.2008, Ritva Viljanen 15.5.2008 and Risto Volanen 6.5.2008.

⁸⁹ Seppo Kääriäinen, ”Mihin selontekoja tarvitaan?”, *Lalli*, 24.9.2004.

of State, principally the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, Risto Volanen. A further innovation was the gathering of a separate small, closed group of civil servants to work on the text of the report, a group which Volanen then moved over to lead. This was the first time that the leading role in the preparation of such a report had been entrusted to the Office of the Council of State, and *the resulting mechanism reflected at the outset the broader goals of the intended security assessment*, as the argument for assigning the leading role to the Office of the Council of State was that the whole broad field of security should be open to scrutiny. Indeed that office regarded itself as the natural co-ordinator of security activities that united all branches of the administration and reflected best the nature of security issues in applying to the whole central government sector.

The Council of State observed in the late spring of 2003 that it was now ready to produce the first thoroughgoing report to be based on a broad concept of security since the adoption of the new Constitution, and that it therefore regarded it as natural that the preparation of the *Council of State report* should be managed from the Office of the Council of State. It was also of the opinion that collaboration with the parliamentary Security Policy Monitoring Group called for a clearer than ever transfer of leadership to the Prime Minister. From one point of view this was a matter of power politics: the explicit aim of the structure being created was to underline the position of the Prime Minister and strengthen the coordinative capacity of the Council of State in matters of security. At the same time, however, it was felt desirable to ensure the commitment of the other principal instances capable of influencing security policy, i.e. the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defence, President's Office and to some extent the Ministry of the Interior, to the process of preparing the report. The Foreign Ministry, and still more obviously the Ministry of Defence, did not approve of this "position of authority" assumed by the Office of the Council of State and the working group appointed from within it. In the view of the Ministry of Defence the previous arrangement whereby the Security and Defence Committee had been responsible for coordinating the preparation of the government report had worked well and there was not felt to be any good reason for changing it. There were also suspicions within the ministry that Volanen in particular was liable to lay too much emphasis on a broad-based interpretation of security.

The procedure created on this occasion for preparing the report implied the existence of three essential points of departure for the construction of threat images. In the first place, the administrative process of constructing these images was in the hands of a small group of civil servants; in fact it was personified by four officials and the institutions that they represented. This meant in general terms a strengthening of the power of civil servants and expert advisors, and more particularly the concentration of power – the opportunity to influence the definition of threat images – in a very narrowly restricted group of actors.⁹⁰ In the end the cognitive interpretations put forward by the members of this working group proved to be of considerable significance (in spite of the political guidance provided), and the members of both the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy admitted afterwards that the views of these four civil servants had been decisive for the construction of the threat images, especially for the introduction and framing of certain weightings with regard to their content. On the other hand, the long duration of the preparation process (about six months) gave the working group ample time in which to draw up the report in a conscientious manner as “executives” of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, given that the committee itself could not have achieved the same degree of thoroughness in discussing the issues or preparing the report.

Secondly, the structure of the preparation process led to the threat images being constructed administratively mainly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. Since, in accordance with the division of the report proposed by the Council of State in the assignment document and confirmed by the working group, the purpose of part I was to describe non-military threats in the country’s security environment, the preparation of the models for the military threats was handed over entirely to the Ministry of Defence. This sectorizing of the threat images (their assignment to different branches of the administration) was further reinforced by the initial decision to include perceived threats to internal security in the report (the

⁹⁰ Although the formation of the working group to prepare the report had been agreed upon by all the parties making up the government, the people behind the original idea of such a working group (and its composition) had been the Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki and Risto Volanen.

province of the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Thirdly, the structure of the process may be looked upon as having given the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Defence and the President the best political opportunities to influence the content of the perceived threats to be presented, so that both their personal views and the mutual relations that prevailed between these people came to be of particular significance. It should be noted, too, that the Minister of the Interior in Matti Vanhanen's first cabinet was also a member of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.⁹¹

The main issue regarding the construction of the threat images in the report was the independence of the working group in relation to the political "background influences" that its members represented. At least the Office of the Council of State had been of the opinion that the Security and Defence Committee had enjoyed too independent a role as a participant body in the preparation of the 2001 report and had also been too closely bound to the defence administration, so that it was now felt desirable to exert more direct political guidance on the body responsible for the 2004 report, and in addition to the government's programme and the political guidance represented by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, political views and interests could best be brought to bear on the preparation of the report through background actors capable of influencing the members of the working group. Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's views could be communicated to the group by Risto Volanen and Jukka Salovaara, and President Tarja Halonen's by Jaakko Kalela, as these representatives of the offices of the Council of State and the President, respectively, held numerous discussions on the subject with their own political heads of department and kept them abreast of the matters under consideration in the working group. On the other hand, on account of differences of opinion, Jaakko Laajava, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the working group, did not act as a link with the Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja, a role performed by Markus Lyra as a permanent expert advisor to the group. Another member of the group who, like Laajava, supported a more independent role for the group as a whole, was Pauli Järvenpää, who felt to a greater extent than the other members that he was acting independently within the group, free of background political influences, in his case from the Ministry of Defence. The background to this situ-

⁹¹ This was no longer the case with Vanhanen's second cabinet.

ation lay in differences of opinion on matters such as Finland's possible relations with a military alliance that existed between Järvenpää and the Minister of Defence, Seppo Kääriäinen. Thus it may be said that the Minister of Defence did not enjoy the same "representation of his views" in the working group as did the President, the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister.

Although the working group did discuss the alternative of carrying out its task independently of the "political reality" of the day, it was fairly soon realized that it was important for the work of preparing the report to take account of the constant political guidance that it was receiving and the "shadows" influencing it in the wings. In other words, the group acknowledged the guiding principle that its work would have to achieve political acceptability – including acceptability for its perceived threats. It regarded it as important that what was written into the report should from the outset be in accordance with the views of the security policy elite and have gained their approval. The members knew what the political decision-makers whom they represented wished to see included in the report and what choices of wording it was possible to put before them. The group could not, in its own opinion, break away from the instances that had entrusted them with the task, and thus the views that they expressed were to a great extent those of the political actors whom they represented. One illustration of this situation is the statement by a member of the group that "as far as my own thinking was concerned, membership of the working group was two-thirds a matter of representing an institution and one-third a matter of using my own expert knowledge." The work was basically a matter of preparing an administrative proposal that contained crucial points and problematic issues that mostly had to be dealt with in the course of the preparation work, through political guidance from those exercising a background influence on the group members. According to these members, this way of working helped to ensure that the report passed smoothly through the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, but it did mean that the political views that lay behind it were powerfully reflected in the content of the perceived threats, especially the non-military ones. The good relations that prevailed between the political instances working in the background also served to increase the weight carried by the political guidance that the working group received, with the unofficial channels of communication between the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defence and between the Foreign Minister and the President of Finland

emerging as particularly significant when it came to constructing consistent lines of argument to be presented in the report. In other words, the messages received by the working group frequently contained indications that matters had been agreed on between the background instances.

The acknowledging of the existence of political guidance provided further support for the emphasis on a broad concept of security, as the working group was aware that the President and the Foreign Minister were both apt to lay stress on non-military threats that were in accordance with this interpretation of security. Since the views of the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and to some extent the Minister of Defence were most strongly to the fore in guiding the administrative construction of the perceived threats discussed in the report, the preparation procedure may be said to have been responsible for the fact that their construction was dependent on the personal views of these actors regarding potential threats – for they had the best opportunities to influence the threat images put forward in the report. Its link to particular people (the actors responsible at a certain point in time) was what made this report unique. One tribute to this effect was the serious expression of discontent with which the report was greeted in the Ministry of the Interior, which had not had any permanent representative in the working group.

The working group met for the first time in June 2003 and established a routine whereby it would meet once a week, for four or five hours on Friday afternoons. Meetings then became longer and more frequent in spring 2004. All in all, the manner in which the group worked, and thus the manner in which the report came into being, was largely closed off from the outside world, one might almost say secretive. The meetings took place in a sealed-off conference room in the building of the Council of State, and the members of the group scarcely said anything in public about their work – in fact they felt that they were submitting the report to the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. Discussions within the group, on the other hand, would appear to have been fairly informal, and no politicians were allowed to take part in the meetings. The four actual members of the group never held any private meetings among themselves, as all meetings took place in the presence of the secretaries and the permanent expert advisors, and the working group was always of the same composition when it attended discussions of the report in the

Cabinet Committee.⁹² The working group sought support for its assumptions by consulting expert advisors, which in turn led to *an accent on the power of expert advisors over the construction of the content of the perceived threats set out in the report*. About 40% of the just over 40 expert advisors summoned by the working group, mostly in autumn 2003, were from the Foreign Ministry and about 40% from the Ministry of Defence, while the remainder were representatives of epistemic communities and other ministries, e.g. the permanent secretaries of the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of the Environment. It was mainly Volanen and Sipiläinen who were responsible for choosing the expert advisors who were to be consulted.

Another major group of actors influencing the construction of the perceived threats in addition to the working group and its sources of political guidance consisted of the authorities that produced textual material and threat evaluations for the working group. The group itself did not actually produce threat descriptions, but rather (in accordance with the agreed procedure) it was responsible for editing the descriptions produced by various branches of the administration and for choosing which perceived threats were to be included in the report. The material supplied to the group came via Anne Sipiläinen in the case of part I of the report and Janne Kuusela in the case of part II, and it was these two members who were chiefly responsible for gathering together, handling and editing the threat descriptions.

The dual structure of the preparation process was thus also reflected in the production of the threat descriptions. *The working group did in fact regard this dual structure as somewhat problematic and incompatible with the group's working methods in the early stages*, although the group can be regarded as having fulfilled its role well in this respect, for without such a coordinative body parts I and II of the report would probably have been prepared still more obviously as separate entities. As it was, the working group attempted from the outset to coordinate the material that was produced and ensure its compatibility. Altogether thousands of pages of material were

⁹² The members of the working group did not, however, take part in the meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy in the early autumn of 2004 at which decisions were made on the eventual content of the report.

produced for the working group by the various branches of the administration, which testifies to the thoroughness with which both the working group and the civil servants approached their work on the report, but also to the laboriousness of that work.⁹³ The working group then determined its policy with regard to what was to be contained in the report, including its intended length, points of emphasis and table of contents. It even contemplated producing a brief report, in the manner of the EU security strategy, as none of its members was particularly enthusiastic about producing a very long report. One good reason for a shorter report (no more than 50 pages in length) was that the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy had only a limited amount of time available to discuss it. On the other hand, as the document from that committee commissioning the report had already laid down the division of labour between the various bodies responsible for its production, it was difficult for the working group at that stage to set about revising its points of departure. The defence administration had required that the report should have a detailed defence policy section, which meant that part I had to be increased in length somewhat at the last stage of preparation to render it comparable to part II in terms of the number of pages. The conscious need to increase the number of pages is also reflected in the extent of the threat descriptions. At the same time chapters six and seven were correspondingly shortened considerably at the last minute, so that they would not dominate the whole report. A great deal of time and effort was in any case put into polishing the wording of the document before its release, partly to improve the Finnish and partly to eliminate repetitions. The working group also added a number of “boxes” containing background facts,⁹⁴ with the general educational purpose of making the report easier to read.

⁹³ The material was rendered more concise (and some of it rejected) within the ministries before it was submitted to the working group.

⁹⁴ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, pp. 41–42, 46, 54–55, 91, 108, 110–111, 115, 133–135.

The production of textual material and background material for the use of the working group was divided up as follows:

- Chapter 2, The operational environment for Finland's security and defence policy.
Prepared mainly in various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The material for section 2.5 (Role and activities of NATO) was prepared by the Finnish Delegation to NATO in Brussels (at the request of the Foreign Ministry), and the writing of sections 2.6 (Changes in Russia), 2.7 (Significance of the Baltic region) and 2.8 (Military developments in areas bordering on Finland) involved major contributions from the defence administration.
- Chapter 3, Outlines of Finnish security and defence policy.
Written by the working group towards the end of the preparation period.
- Chapter 4, Development of external performance capacity.
Sections 4.1 (Promoting Finland's security interests), 4.2 (Implementation of the development programme, human rights and global security), 4.3 (Prevention of conflicts) and 4.4 (Civilian crisis management) were prepared by the Foreign Ministry, and sections 4.5 (Military crisis management) and 4.6 (Weapons inspection) by the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defence.
- Chapter 5, Development of Finland's defence capability.
Section 5.1. (Principles for the development of Finland's defence capability) was written by the working group towards the end of the preparation period for the purpose of linking the two descriptions of the security environment contained in this chapter to the remainder of the chapter. The other parts of chapter 5 were prepared by the defence administration.
- Chapter 6, Development of internal security.
Prepared by the Ministry of the Interior.
- Chapter 7, Securing functions vital to society.
Preparation supervised by the Security and Defence Committee. Material also provided by the Centre for the Security of Supplies, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The division of labour in the production of this material gave the civil servants who had produced text and background information for the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defence in particular (who had no political accountability) the power to influence the content of the wording. Although the material was discussed very thoroughly in the working group, the civil servants who had actually written it had the power to choose the wording for the threat descriptions, for instance. It was unanimously agreed in both ministries afterwards that the threat descriptions produced by these officials had fared remarkably well in passing through the procedure for producing the report.

The work of writing the material for the report in the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defence was highly intensive at times and occupied large numbers of civil servants. It was also noticeable, however, that the resulting threat descriptions differed markedly between the two ministries, those received from the Foreign Ministry concentrating on the “new threats” belonging to the broad interpretation of security⁹⁵ while those from the Ministry of Defence concerned military threat models. The threat images that concerned internal security were constructed in the Ministry of the Interior. *The division of responsibilities that had been decided upon led to a challenging situation as far as the production of threat descriptions was concerned, which resulted on the one hand in a state of competition for weighting between threat descriptions of different kinds and on the other hand in the placing of a certain degree of emphasis on the branch of the administration from which each threat description had originated.*

While the working group concentrated its attention at an early stage in the process on evaluating Finland’s security environment, it was the threats perceived by the Foreign Ministry that were accentuated most in its discussions and evaluations. The verbal representations of these threats were usually very much less formal than those produced by the Ministry of Defence and were more in the nature of background memoranda, whereas the latter clearly bore the mark of having qualified for approval from the leadership of both the Ministry of Defence and the Finnish Defence Forces prior to submission to the working group. It was also the case that the working group had to wait

⁹⁵ All non-military threat descriptions and models were referred to by the actors involved under the broad heading of “new threats” during the production of the report.

very much longer to receive material from the defence administration than from the Foreign Ministry. Where the “new (non-military) threats” were concerned, it was also noticeable that the Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja, himself played an active role in proposing perceived threats of this kind to be worked up by civil servants in his ministry. Tuomioja also followed assiduously the process of preparing the material in the Foreign Ministry and arranged a number of meetings at which he brought forward his own opinions on the form in which the threat descriptions should be written and points that should be emphasized. No real disagreements arose at these meetings over the relative prioritization of these new threats; the most essential thing for the Foreign Ministry was that non-military threats should be emphasized in the perceptions put forward in the report, as the ministry regarded it as extremely unlikely that any of the military threats mentioned in it would actually be realized.

Tuomioja also edited and finalized the material written in the Foreign Ministry (especially at the end of the preparation process) before it was sent to the working group, and likewise the material produced by the working group for part I of the report before it was presented to the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.⁹⁶ Thus part I of the eventual report bore distinct evidence of the close involvement of the Foreign Minister in its production. In fact it was noted both in the Foreign Ministry and in the working group that Tuomioja would much rather have written the whole of the first part himself if this had only been possible. Illustrative of this fact is Tuomioja’s book *Suomen ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka, Anno 2004* (Finland’s Foreign and Security Policy 2004),⁹⁷ which was published in the same year as the report and parallels its first part in placing the accent on a broad concept of security and in its analysis of Finland’s security environment in the light of the new threats. The Foreign Minister himself may thus be assumed to have had a considerable influence on the construction of the new threat images contained in the report.

The preparation work that took place in the Ministry of Defence was confined to a much smaller group of civil servants than in the Foreign

⁹⁶ The Foreign Minister was responsible for placing the material for part I of the report before the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.

⁹⁷ Erkki Tuomioja, *Suomen ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka, Anno 2004*, Tammi, Keuruu 2004.

Ministry. Pauli Järvenpää, Matti Ahola and a few civil servants appointed by them were responsible for the majority of the material to come from that ministry. Similarly, there was virtually no discussion of matters connected with the preparation of the report, nor was material intended for it circulated among the ministry's staff. Although the Minister of Defence, Seppo Kääriäinen, was aware of how active Erkki Tuomioja was being in preparing material for the report, he himself did not inspect or edit the material from the defence administration before it was presented to the report's working group or to the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. Kääriäinen's main objects of political guidance within the Ministry of Defence as far as the report was concerned lay in regional policy and defence policy issues that could have affected the development of the armed forces, e.g. preservation of the principle of universal male conscription.

The working group was not satisfied with the way in which the defence administration had produced its material (for chapter 5 of the report, presenting the military threat models), as it was regarded as having set out too obviously on a path of its own. Although experts from the defence administration had visited the working group and told it in advance of the policies and military threats that would be included in this material, the actual content for chapter 5 was only handed over in a "ready-made package" at a very late stage in the preparation work. This meant that many of the working group members were of the opinion that there had not been sufficient time to discuss the content of chapter 5 or the military threat descriptions belonging to it: "We were left with the feeling that they were trying to use the working group to deliver the material directly to the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, where they knew it would be accepted." The working group felt that the defence administration had delayed delivery of the material on purpose, whereas the defence administration itself insisted that it was because approval had to be obtained from the highest authorities in the administration before the material could be handed over. The result was, however, that the perceived military threats set out by the defence administration never managed to be submitted to the same kind of broad-based discussion in the working group that the new threats had received, especially since the main topics of interest in defence circles by the time the material was received were the use of anti-personnel mines, the relocation of the headquarters of the ground forces and the major

reorganization of the Defence Forces' command and administration system. The working group was nevertheless convinced of the need for descriptions of the military threats; it was only a question of the way in which they were framed and of the fact that the working group itself had been by-passed in the process of producing them.

The broad concept of security may be regarded at the level of the Council of State as comprising, in addition to the government's programme, a set of three documents intended to guide discussions on security and the definition of threats: the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy, the Internal Security Programme and the SFVS Strategy. The latter two, both of them security documents that had been produced in the early years of the new millennium, had repercussions of their own for the process of constructing threat images for the government report, and both of them described the altered – i.e. broadened – nature of Finnish thinking in security matters. There was one essential point on which the Internal Security Programme and the SFVS document differed significantly from the government report, however: both had arisen as decisions in principle arrived at by the Council of State, so that they had not been subject to extensive discussion in Parliament, nor did they contain any indication of the allocation of funds for the implementation of the development plans put forward in them. Thus their publicity value and the weight to be attached to them were distinctly lower than in the case of the government report in the eyes of the politicians and civil servants who had been responsible for preparing it. This situation led to interest being focused (especially in the Ministry of the Interior) on the perceived threats mentioned in the report and the means suggested for controlling these.

It had been decided in the government's programme to draw up the country's first internal security programme at the same time as the report on security and defence policy, but coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior.⁹⁸ This was to concentrate on the promotion of citizens' security and outline the aims of this, the measures to be taken and the resources required.⁹⁹ This programme was published on 23.9.2004, the

⁹⁸ Altogether nine ministries and a number of expert advisors were involved in drawing up the Internal Security Programme. See *Arjen turvaa. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma*, sisäasiainministeriön julkaisuja 44/2004, appendix 1.

⁹⁹ *Pääministeri Matti Vanhasen hallituksen ohjelma 24.6.2003*, p. 48. "This Internal Security Programme is a concrete description of how matters connected with internal

day before the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy. The production of this document was taken within the Ministry of the Interior to be a highly significant achievement in terms of both the impact of the ministry's own activities and the extension of broad-based security to the level of the individual citizen. As far as that ministry was concerned, it was felt to be one of the central embodiments of security policy for Finnish society and to lay emphasis on the growth in the intensity of threats to the country's internal security. At the same time, the ministry maintained that the distinction between external and internal security had become more blurred in recent times, as Finland's internal and external operating environments had to some extent come to be subjected to the same developmental factors and threats. Indeed, the definition of the concept of internal security reflected the point of departure for a broad understanding of this field: "Internal security implies a state of affairs within society in which each individual can enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the legal system without any justifiable sense of fear or insecurity occasioned by crime, disturbances, accidents or changes and phenomena affecting either Finnish society or the globalizing world."¹⁰⁰

The principal responsibility for protecting the people against the threats perceived in the internal security programme lay with the security authorities operating under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, primarily the police, customs officials, rescue services and border guard service, with additional emphasis placed on the need for extensive cooperation between the various organizations.¹⁰¹ The implication was, therefore, that society's response to perceived threats to its internal security should be for the most part in the hands of the Ministry of the Interior. It is noticeable, of course, that this programme, too, together with the aims set out in it, was constructed on the basis of a set of perceived threats, the most serious of which seemed to be those associated with alienation, a problematic element with regard to social security that was seen to be reflected in all

security affect all people in some way or other and form a major part of people's everyday welfare." *Arjen turvaa. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Arjen turvaa. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma*, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Other authorities mentioned in this connection were the customs service, the judiciary, the prison service, the health service, the social services, transport and communications, educational and cultural organizations, youth organizations and the employment and environmental authorities.

branches of Finnish society. Also connected with social insecurity were the increases in alcoholism, unemployment and inequality. In addition, the document assigned priority to crime organized from outside the country (drug trafficking, prostitution, financial crimes and human trafficking), accidents (suffered by individuals), the increased vulnerability of the cyber society, illegal immigration and terrorism.¹⁰² These threats were seen in terms of the Internal Security Programme to be targeted very definitely at the everyday security of Finnish citizens.

The SFVS Strategy, a document that may be regarded as less political than those mentioned above, had arisen out of the 2001 Government Report on Security and Defence Policy, on the strength of which the Council of State had asked the Security and Defence Committee to draw up a national strategy that defined the functions that were essential to society and desired conditions of life,¹⁰³ the factors that threatened these and, crossing the divisions between administrative branches where necessary, the plans of action and development plans necessary for ensuring that such threats could be brought under control. The Council of State then approved a decision in principle on this matter on 27.11.2003, the preamble to which stated the aim to be that of preserving Finland's national sovereignty and the safety and living conditions of its population by securing those functions that were vital to society. All the government ministries were involved in preparing the document, with the Security and Defence Committee providing the necessary coordination. The document was a markedly administrative one, constructed by civil servants in consultation, and it was also discussed in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, although not "piece by piece" as it was prepared but in its entirety when the whole strategy was complete.¹⁰⁴ Attempts were

¹⁰² *Arjen turvaa. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma*, pp. 17–19, 100–118. See also Ministry of the Interior, *Sisäasiainhallinnon vuosikertomus 2004*, pp. 11–17.

¹⁰³ The SFVS document defines as vital functions for Finnish society central government, an external operational capacity, military defence of the national territory, internal security, the functioning of society and its economy, the guaranteeing of a livelihood for the population and the psychological ability to withstand crisis conditions. *Yhteiskunnan elintärkeiden toimintojen turvaamisen strategia*, Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 27.11.2003, Helsinki 2003, pp. 21–36.

¹⁰⁴ On the process of producing the SFVS document, see *Yhteiskunnan elintärkeiden toimintojen turvaamisen strategian arviointi 2005*, puolustusministeriö 2005, pp. 12, 26–28.

made to call this a “national security strategy”, but such a term did not meet with the approval of the Foreign Ministry, at least, as it was felt to assign too much weight to it, especially as it had been prepared without any notable involvement of the Foreign Ministry or the President’s Office. One problem with the strategy can be seen to be that it was looked on by the Security and Defence Committee (both during its preparation and especially afterwards) as very much an instrument of the defence administration.¹⁰⁵

The SFVS document was naturally weighted towards the broad-based approach to security, and the strategy put forward in it was linked to threats perceived in various security sectors and involved the strengthening of contacts between the international, national and internal branches of security. At the same time it emphasized cooperation between branches of the administration in combating the perceived threats, as reflected in the notions of *perceived threats that are not bound to any particular branch of the administration* and the possibility of combining threats. The spirit that prevailed during the preparation of the strategy was very much one of acceptance that Finnish society would have to prepare itself for threat factors that were liable to become progressively more broad-based and multidimensional, and it was also noted at that stage that the threat models put forward in the strategy should not be inconsistent with those constructed for the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy, especially since the aim was that the strategy should update the threat models put forward in the Defence Committee memorandum of 1999.¹⁰⁶ In the end the SFVS document, when it appeared just under a year before the government report, did carry the demand – concerning the threat models as well – that “the policies outlined in this strategy should be incorporated into the forthcoming Government Report on Security and Defence Policy.”¹⁰⁷ In the opinion of the civil

¹⁰⁵ The question of the role of the Security and Defence Committee was felt to be a difficult matter during the preparatory work for the government report, as the SFVS material written for the report (chapter 7) was regarded by both the working group and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior as being too closely bound to the defence administration. It is easy to see in the background to this a certain power struggle between the ministries over which branch of the administration should be primarily responsible for securing the essential functions of society.

¹⁰⁶ Defence Committee, *Varautuminen yhteiskunnan häiriötilanteisiin ja poikkeusoloihin*, Helsinki 1999.

¹⁰⁷ *Yhteiskunnan elintärkeiden toimintojen turvaamisen strategia*, p. 12.

servants who worked on the SFVS Strategy, and also of the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, an honest attempt had been made to fashion the strategy into a practical document that would promote control over perceived threats and the improvement of the ability of Finnish society to withstand crisis situations, and one that would attempt to reconcile the various dimensions of security. No serious differences of opinion emerged between ministries or politicians in connection with the defining of the SFVS threat models, but rather these differences were targeted at the perceived threat content of the government report.

A total of ten actual threat models that it was the intention to define more precisely in connection with the threat descriptions produced by the various branches of the administration and their evaluations were put forward in the SFVS Strategy, the idea being that these should be reconsidered in connection with reviews of the strategy itself, which were planned to take place every four years or as required. It was noted that if such a threat scenario should come to pass it could cause a disturbance or state of emergency in Finnish society. One outstanding feature of the SFVS threat images was that they had strong European connections, i.e. the threats outlined for Finland could well be experienced by other members of the European Union.¹⁰⁸

The SFVS threat models may be regarded as representing an attempt to construct a general form of overall security for the country. The most serious (militarized) threat model, the intensity of which it was not deemed reasonable to conjecture in the SFVS Strategy, was a strategic strike, a large-scale armed invasion, a war or the aftermath of a war. Finland's geostrategic position as a neighbour of Russia was very much to the fore in considerations of a perceived threat involving a serious violation of Finland's territorial integrity and a consequent war, and it was noted that such a situation could arise through political, economic or military pressure. The threat model of a state of international tension was described mainly as a situation that could increase the intensity of other threat models. The main area in which a major catastrophe might occur was regarded as being the Gulf of Finland, on account of the density of shipping. As far as organized crime and terrorism were concerned, the former was regarded as a threat that could well increase in intensity, while the latter was largely

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 12.

a threat to Finland's internal security. In the case of environmental and economic threat models, emphasis was laid on the fact that the threat factors could be either global or local in nature. The model of a threat to the population's health and food supplies was linked closely with the security of Finnish citizens and stability within society. In addition, the SFVS Strategy described threats to information systems, illegal immigration and movements of population that were liable to threaten security, noting that these were likely to increase in intensity in the future.

The main outlines of the threat images to be included in the government report were drawn up by the working group in the early autumn of 2003 and were then approved by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy before the drafting of the actual text of the report. One major question as far as the perceived threats were concerned – both in the early days of the working group and throughout the preparation process – was the difficulty of defining the limits to be set on the concept of broad-based security, i.e. the question of *how broad the understanding of security should be when defining threat images specifically for the purpose of the security and defence policy report*. Although the members of the working group were unanimous in the understanding they had of broad-based security, the achieving of a balance between the different threat images proved extremely difficult and constituted a real problem for the internal functioning of the group. At the same time, discussions were taking place over perceived threats to be described in connection with the Internal Security Programme, the SFVS Strategy and the Developmental Policy Programme.¹⁰⁹

The working group was well aware of the political nature of the threat descriptions to be included in the government report, and the intention was that all the descriptions (but particularly the military ones) should be constructed so as to be sufficiently neutral and couched in general terms, and also to be timeless, a reference to the rapidity with which the 2001 Government Report became outdated on account of the terrorist attacks of 11.9.2001. None of the members of the working group felt that any ready-made formulations for the threat descriptions

¹⁰⁹ Like the Internal Security Programme and the SFVS Strategy, the Developmental Policy Programme that was under preparation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was based on a Council of State decision in principle. The programme was approved by the Council of State on 5.2.2004.

had been politically dictated to them (or asked for by them), but rather – bearing in mind the political boundary conditions of the task entrusted to them – they had been able to construct the threat content of the report “with an open mind” and “on a realistic basis”. One crucial issue for the working group at the early stages had been that of Finland’s possible decision to join a military alliance or not to do so, as it was realized that this question would have a bearing on the threat content that they were constructing. The representatives of the defence administration taking part in the working group were extremely interested at the early stages in the extent of the budgetary financing that the Council of State was prepared to invest in Finland’s military defences. Where the threat descriptions were concerned, however, it was established that the document should be one on which all the members of the working group were unanimously agreed. It was important to achieve a consensus of opinion.

The process of constructing the threat descriptions set out from the aim that the report should give broad expression to the threat factors involved, but within a framework in which each could come to the fore to the extent that its relative weighting in actual terms merited. On the other hand, this was very much a question of the weight that should be assigned to the military threats, as the working group held lengthy discussions on the time-scale over which Finland might face a military threat and what circumstances might lead to such a situation. It was important at the same time, however, to remember how security should be understood at that moment, in the early years of the new millennium. Should the threat descriptions produced for the report pay attention to social problems such as violence within the family or alienation? Interviews with the members of the working group suggest that they adopted five basic criteria for their definitions of perceived threats: 1) External threat images were to be the main object of concern when defining threats for inclusion in the report, 2) Threats to the security of the individual were not to be included, although it was necessary to be aware of the impact of threats at the individual level, 3) The threats described in the report should be connected with collective security and the security of collectivities (Finland and the Finns), 4) The intention was that the report should be broad-based and comprehensive in the threat images that it brought forward, which may be understood above all as a reference to globalization, increased mutual interdependence in matters of security and the general appreciation of the need to examine threats in terms of a broad

concept of security, and 5) The aim was to discuss and give expression to the influences of internationally perceived threats on Finland's security and to concentrate on threats to Finland originating from its neighbouring regions. In this way the constructing of the threat descriptions proved to be a matter of perspective, i.e. *the working group approached the task from a viewpoint defined by the above criteria*. It was decided in the course of the process of preparing the report what the threat images in it should be like, even though the dividing lines laid down initially, e.g. that between internal and external threats, were found later to be somewhat diffuse. The control maintained over the process of constructing the threat descriptions thus emerges as a major factor explaining the nature of the threats included in the report.

The changes that had taken place in Finland's security environment were regarded by the working group as necessitating a new understanding of the nature of threats. It was recognized that Finland's security was linked more powerfully than ever to trends in international (global) security, and it was evident to the working group that the operating environment for Finland's security policy was no longer merely a dual one but that the country's security policy depended for its success on future developments in the relations between three major factors: the EU, Russia and the United States. Correspondingly, it was also estimated that events in the developing countries and the "new threats" would come to exercise an increasing influence on relations between the above three actors and thereby directly on Finland's security. Thus Finnish membership of the EU, the terrorist attacks of 11.9.2001, anticipated developments in Russia and the generally increasing significance of the new threats were regarded as important starting points for the threat images that were to be constructed.

Risto Volanen drew a diagram at the initial stages of the working group's activities to show the basis on which the threat factors were to be examined for the report.¹¹⁰ This represented a multisectoral approach to their examination (coming close to the sectors of security as recognized by the Copenhagen school) and the mutual bonds that exist between threats arising from different levels and threats targeted

¹¹⁰ See also Risto Volanen, *Suomi ja vuosikymmenemme turvallisuuspoliittiset haasteet*, 28.8.2003; Jaakko Laajava, *Puhe maanpuolustuskurssiyhdistyksessä*, 26.9.2003.

at different levels. Volanen was attempting by means of this diagram to give expression to the broad-based approach required for examining threats and the interconnections characteristic of threats. His message was that security was something that applied on a larger scale than that of the nation-state but that when considering threats, attention had to be paid to the national characteristics that were special to Finland. This may be interpreted as a reference firstly to increased dependence on international threat images and secondly to an awareness of threats arising from regions adjacent to Finland. This diagram was regarded within the working group as a demonstration of how difficult it was to draw distinct boundaries for broad-based security and its associated threat images. The group nevertheless regarded it as important that the existing threats should be examined in a comprehensive manner.

There was one important line that was drawn regarding the definition of perceived threats in the early stages of the working group's activities, namely the threat associated with the use of nuclear weapons was to be excluded from consideration entirely. It was chiefly Jaakko Kalela and Markus Lyra who were reluctant to extend the scope of the report in this direction. The working group did discuss the nuclear threat a great deal and summoned a number of experts to advise on the probabilities attached to it, but there were three good grounds for its exclusion: 1) The threat was regarded as highly improbable and theoretical, 2) Finland did not have the resources to safeguard itself against such a threat to any notable degree, and 3) Its inclusion was regarded as likely to undermine citizens' feelings of security – there was no desire to cause alarm amongst the population. It was also noted that the inclusion of nuclear weapons as a threat could have exposed the group to the criticism of arguing in favour of Finnish membership of NATO (since a nuclear attack was regarded as still less probable in the case of countries that were NATO members), or else of advocating a substantial increase in defence expenditure. Thoroughgoing, open discussions were held on various types of perceived threats during the autumn of 2003 in particular, but no others were found that needed to be ruled out in the same way as the nuclear threat.

The guidelines decided upon for the threat descriptions and the planned structure for the report as a whole were approved by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy in autumn 2003. The committee regarded it as important that the starting point for the

report should be a broad concept of security and it scarcely had any comments to make on the guidelines for the threat descriptions. It did observe, however, that it should be made quite clear in the report that the definition of security was based on a broad interpretation of the word, and that this should be reflected in the attention paid to the examination of non-military threats. This emphasis in the new threats was justified in the eyes of the Cabinet Committee in view of the changes that had taken place in Finland's security environment and the spirit of the times in terms of approaches to security. The committee was of the opinion that the report should emphasize Finland's commitment to the EU and that the EU should be defined in it as the principal frame of reference for Finland's security policy.¹¹¹ It was agreed between the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy that the material for inclusion in the report should be discussed in seminar-like sessions as each section reached the point where this was possible. *The Cabinet Committee clearly wished to adopt a powerful guiding role in defining and approving the threat images included in the report*, even though it gave the working group a substantial amount of freedom in the administrative preparation of the report as such. In fact the committee gave the working group very clear political guidance when it came to the major security issues of a political nature that were raised in it. For example, the 3+3 structure for security policy that was built in as the core of the report was initially outlined by the committee,¹¹² which also insisted that the conclusions reached in the report should be justified on the grounds of these six points. The Cabinet Committee also decided (at the Prime Minister's suggestion) that details of the report would not be released to the media while it was still in

¹¹¹ See, for example, Erkki Tuomioja, *EU tärkein tekijä Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikassa*, 20.8.2004. "Yhteisvastuuseen ja keskinäisiin sitoumuksiin kaikilla aloilla perustuvan unionin jäsenyys tukee Suomen turvallisuutta." *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 6.

¹¹² Although the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy had informed the working group of its security policy guidelines in autumn 2003, it was not until 2004 that the draft of the report's chapter on policy outlines was brought to the committee (on the suggestion of the Prime Minister). The 3+3 structure for Finland's security policy refers to the basic elements in this policy, on the one hand universal conscription, a regional defence system and defence of the whole territory of Finland, and on the other hand military non-alignment, close participation in developing the EU's common security and defence policy and the possibility of applying for membership of NATO if the need should arise.

preparation and that only brief communiqués on the subject should be released by the Council of State.¹¹³

Significance of the report for various branches of the administration – the struggle for power and funding

Since the administrative work of constructing the threat images as coordinated by the working group was concentrated in the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior, the disagreements over the threat images to be defined were very largely a matter of the different viewpoints adopted by these three branches of the administration and of a struggle for power and money taking place between them. The government report – in its role as the most significant Finnish security document and a basis for the allocation of the nation's security budget – was a vehicle by which each branch of the administration could attempt to emphasize the importance of its "own perceived threats" relative to the other proposed threats to broad-based security. This may be understood as a state of competition over both the political prioritization of threat images and the nature of the report as the document that defined those images.

Significance of the report for the Foreign Ministry

The prevailing opinion in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time when the 2001 Government Report on Security and Defence Policy was in preparation had been that the preparation work should never have been placed in the hands of the Ministry of Defence. In the background to this lay the view that the primary and dominant consideration was Finland's foreign and security policy (the province of the Foreign Ministry) relative to either defence policy (the province of the defence administration) or internal security (the province of the Ministry of the Interior). Although decisions regarding the allocation of funding did not as such concern the Foreign Ministry, the government report was looked on as a crucial forum for outlining a

¹¹³ On press releases, see, for example, Valtioneuvosto, *Valtioneuvoston viikko* 40, 27.9.–3.10.2003.

foreign and security policy for Finland in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would play a leading role, i.e. the ministry's interests with regard to the report were governed more by power politics than by budgetary considerations. Thus, *in connection with the construction of the threat images for the government report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (under the direction of the Foreign Minister himself) attempted to emphasize not only the importance of security policy as a whole and of a broad-based concept of security but also the connection between Finland's security and the country's foreign policy actions and its development, human rights and globalization policies.*¹¹⁴ This may be seen from the fact that the emphasis in the construction of the Foreign Ministry's threat descriptions was on global issues and non-military threat perceptions. Such an emphasis in connection with the defining of perceived threats was regarded by the defence administration as leading to the production of a government report on *foreign*, security and defence policy. In other words, the Foreign Ministry's global approach to threat perceptions was seen as leaving room for only a very tenuous evaluation of the threats existing in the areas adjacent to Finland itself.

In terms of functional entities, the Foreign Ministry was aiming through the threat perceptions it constructed for the report to emphasize both the importance of foreign policy and the need for means of implementing a development policy and of controlling civilian crisis management threats, with the implication that more financial resources would be required for development policy and civilian crisis management purposes in the future. It was claimed that excessive amounts of money had been allocated to Finland's military defence and to military crisis management, and that *it was now important to build up the country's development activities as one part of its security policy.* These views were also clearly to the fore in the Development Policy Programme, Report on Finnish Human Rights Policy and Government Report on Globalization which had been drawn up in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had been referred to in the course of constructing the security and defence policy report.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ulkoasiainministeriön vuosikertomus 2004*, Helsinki 2005, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ It was noted in the Development Policy Programme, for instance, that "Finnish development policy is also Finnish security policy." Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Kehityspoliittinen ohjelma*, valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 5.2.2004, Helsinki 2004, p. 14.

Considerable weight was also attached to the preparation of the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which became a top priority matter to which particular attention was to be paid, and the Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja, emphasized this in his own actions and in the guidance that he gave to the ministry's civil servants.

Significance of the report for the Ministry of Defence

Of all the branches involved, the report was nevertheless of the greatest importance to the defence administration,¹¹⁶ and it was looked on by the leadership of both the Ministry of Defence and the Finnish Defence Forces as the definitive statement by the Finnish government of its policy for the future development of the country's military defences, i.e. there was no corresponding document in existence as far as the defence administration was concerned. The procedure entailed in placing government reports before parliament was seen as ensuring the commitment of both the government and parliament to examining the country's defence policy decisions in depth at four-year intervals, and it was a good thing that a defence policy consensus could be reached in this way. It guaranteed a strong measure of political support for the decisions reached and longer-term commitment to the guidelines that had been agreed upon. "Politicians can be expected quite concretely to commit themselves to the affairs of this branch of the administration," as one leading figure in the Ministry of Defence put it. The same view of the government report procedure as an effective means of ensuring long-term political commitment was shared by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, and both instances were ready to point out that the procedure also allowed defence policy issues to be brought before the general public at regular intervals, something that was apt to maintain citizens' interest in the national defence.

See also *Valtioneuvoston selonteko Suomen ihmisoikeuspolitiikasta*, VNS 2/2004, Helsinki 2004; *Globalisaation hallinta ja Suomi*, valtioneuvoston globalisaatioselvitys eduskunnalle 10.5.2005.

¹¹⁶ See Arto Nokkala, *Uhka ja Kumppani: Venäjän Suomen puolustushallinnossa*, Strategian laitos, julkaisusarja 1, no. 28, Helsinki 2009, p. 54. Nokkala observes that the report enjoyed almost the same status in the defence administration as the Finnish Constitution did.

The great significance of the report as a statement of the political will of the nation's leadership with regard to the outlines of its defence policy was reflected in the way in which the preparatory work took place in the defence administration. The officials of the Ministry of Defence looked on the preparation of the report as one of their most important duties, while in the Defence Forces the importance of practical guidelines and a "political backbone" led both the upper level of command and those responsible for operative planning to pay an enormous amount of attention to the report during its preparation stage. It should be noted that the actual wording of a report of this kind (e.g. part II of the 2004 report, that dealing with defence policy) would always be read extremely carefully in the defence administration, as a single sentence could lead to substantial practical measures, especially in the case of the armed forces. This means that individual things that are written into a government report to parliament during its preparation in the defence administration can take on great significance. At the same time, of course, *the construction of military threat images was a matter of justifying the activities of this branch of the administration in public and seeking political approval for them.* The defence administration paid little attention to part I of the document, that drawn up by the Foreign Ministry, as the core of the issue was seen to lie in part II. Indeed, the points of emphasis in part I – its concentration on the "new threats" and its institutionally centred and globally inspired viewpoint – were regarded from the defence policy perspective as erroneous. It was felt that excessive emphasis on the new threats could well lead to a situation in which military threat perceptions were underestimated. Cooperation between the Finnish Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence (in coordinating the preparatory work for the report) ran into some difficulties and conflicts,¹¹⁷ but it proved possible to achieve agreement relatively painlessly at the "upper level". In the view of the defence administration, preparation of the report should as a whole have been more distinctly in the hands of the Ministry of Defence.

The defence policies and financial allocations approved for inclusion in the report were sufficient in the opinion of the defence administration to enable a long-term rhythm of planning and

¹¹⁷ It was thought in the Ministry of Defence that the General Headquarters of the Defence Forces had acted too independently when preparing the wording of certain sections.

development to be established, so that it would be possible, for instance, to plan the defence forces' material investments and activities more economically and over a longer period of time. The financial resources detailed in the report were felt by the defence administration to be of the utmost importance, as the report was looked on as representing a political commitment to the provision of these resources and at the same time as giving the defence administration an opportunity to justify its financial needs and development programmes. The defence administration regarded it as important that it should be able to set out its financial requirements clearly, concretely and as unambiguously as possible at four-year intervals (rather than having to do this annually), and also that it should be able to refer back to the report in questions of finance. The question of the assurance of adequate financial resources through the medium of the government report procedure was something to which the leadership of both the Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence attached particular importance, as was reflected in numerous speeches made by the Commander of the Defence Forces at that time.¹¹⁸

Significance of the report for the Ministry of the Interior

The commission to produce an Internal Security Programme, one of the items belonging to the political platform of Matti Vanhanen's first cabinet, was taken as a matter of some importance by the Ministry of the Interior, where it was regarded as an indication that internal security had gained a more prominent position as a part of the overall picture of Finnish security and that the Ministry of the Interior was one of those ministries that had a serious stake in matters of security. The ministry was therefore ready to stress in the present connection that the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy was not the only Finnish security document but that the Internal Security Programme was of considerable importance for understanding the reality of the threats facing Finland and for developing new means of combating these threats. As a Council of State decision in principle, however, the Internal Security Programme did not have the same

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Juhani Kaskeala, *Puhe Maanpuolustuskurssien avajaisissa 24.1.2004*, where he asserts that "Regardless of their various coalitions, governments have committed themselves in their budgets to implementing the existing government defence policy reports in an exemplary fashion."

status in the “hierarchy of administrative documents” as did the Government Report on Security and Defence Policy, a fact that was felt in the Ministry of the Interior to be a weakness in the system. The ministry therefore proposed that this programme should be upgraded to the status of a government report on internal security, which would have meant that it warranted the same kind of extended discussion in parliament and allocation of budgetary funds as the security and defence policy report was to receive.¹¹⁹ This would have created a firmer framework for the activities of the security agencies that were subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior.

A second alternative in the eyes of the Ministry of the Interior would have been the conceiving of a broad-based “rainbow report” in which the various aspects of security such as defence policy and internal security were all dealt with in a single document, and a similar motive of raising the profile of internal security and the ministry itself was also to be detected in its proposal that the mandate of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy should be extended to cover internal security as well. The defence administration did not look kindly on these proposals, which in any case were never acted upon, and it was also somewhat perplexed by the fact that the eventual Internal Security Programme had been published, at the suggestion of the Ministry of the Interior and for obvious tactical reasons, at almost exactly the same moment as the Government Report of Security and Defence Policy, although it had originally been intended for publication some time after the report.

Although the Internal Security Programme had a major influence on the actions of those security agencies that are subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, the above circumstances did create a situation in which *the Ministry of the Interior was trying to construct internal security threat images as part of the Security and Defence Policy Report*. The report was seen by that ministry as a document that strengthened the central principles of Finnish security policy, and for this reason internal security and the perceived threats to this should be

¹¹⁹ Sisäasiainministeriö, *presentation*, Poliisiasiain neuvottelukunta 7.2.2003, Poliisiasiainneuvottelukunnan arkisto. The background to this suggestion was the constant uncertainty felt in the Ministry of the Interior with regard to the budget available to the police force.

one part of it. The threats to internal security were seen to be targeted at Finland to an increasing extent from the outside, so that it was justifiable to include these threats and the means of controlling them in the government report. There were numerous issues, such as the prevention of terrorist acts, violent radicalism, movements of population and organized crime, which gave rise to threats in which foreign relations and internal security (matters of concern to the Ministries of Foreign and Internal Affairs, respectively) were tightly linked together. The Government Report on Security and Defence Policy was nevertheless regarded for practical purposes by the Ministry of the Interior as a slower and more static document than the Internal Security Programme, if only because the threats to internal security were more pressing ones that were being actualized day by day.

The struggle for power and money over perceived threats

Apart from the question of finding the right balance between the non-military threats perceived by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the military threat images constructed by the defence administration, another problematic issue during the preparation of the government report was that of taking due account of perceived threats to internal security. The working group encountered difficulties in handling these as threat images to be put forward in the report, since, although its members acknowledged the existence of a connection between internal and external threats to the nation's security, they wished in principle to concentrate in the report on external factors posing a threat to Finland. Meanwhile, the defence administration was reminding the working group that internal threats to security should not be dealt with very prominently, as they could not be regarded as belonging to the scope of a security and defence policy report. This led to quite substantial conflicts of interest over the construction of the threat images, not so much between politicians as between the civil servants of the respective branches of the administration. It was indeed partly a question of where the boundary between the threat images should in the opinions of the various actors be drawn in the context of the disputed concept of broad-based security and what the intensity of the threat should be estimated as being in each instance.

The struggle over power and money between the various branches of the administration (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior) was at times very tangibly present in the preparation work, especially since *there were considerable differences of opinion between them with regard to the prioritization of the threat descriptions*. It was a struggle that, on the one hand, could be regarded as a quite normal situation in which each branch attempted to bring to the fore those matters that belonged to its jurisdiction, but on the other hand, it was a demonstration that the whole process of constructing descriptions of perceived threats was bound to particular branches of the administration and that these branches wished to perpetuate the situation – for reasons of power and money. In the course of interviews carried out as part of the present research, representatives of these three branches all attributed this struggle that had arisen in the early years of the new millennium over the allocation of funds to the combating of particular perceived threats to the difficulty of defining the concept of broad-based security. The crucial issue was that *the construction of threat images was no longer restricted to the Ministry of Defence but was taking place more extensively than ever before in other government ministries*, and at the same time it had become a question of each ministry using these threat images to satisfy its need to justify its own activities.

The Ministry of the Interior made active and determined efforts during the process of drawing up the report to emphasize the significance of the threats to internal security that it was identifying. The Minister of the Interior, Kari Rajamäki, and the Permanent Secretary, Ritva Viljanen, perceived that their ministry was being edged out of its role in defining perceived threats and generating the means for controlling these, and thus an attempt was made – by assigning greater priority to perceived threats to the country's internal security – to increase the negotiating power of the Ministry of the Interior to the level enjoyed by the principal actors in the preparation of the government report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry of the Interior was thus attempting to secure a more significant role for itself in both the preparation stage and the eventual government report, which naturally aroused opposition from the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defence. It was, of course, inclined to interpret this opposition as a manifestation of a certain territorial way of thinking: they wanted to keep the preparation of the report very firmly in their own hands and did not want the Ministry of the Interior to be

involved in it. The Ministry of the Interior also attempted to place questions of internal security on the agenda of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, but many of these attempts were frustrated by the Prime Minister, who was responsible for deciding on the committee's agenda. *The Prime Minister's argument was that both the government report and the Cabinet Committee should be dealing with perceived threats that at least to some extent had a foreign policy dimension.* It was only threats of this kind that needed to be discussed by the Cabinet Committee in the presence of the prime minister. There was in fact a great deal of discussion in the Cabinet Committee about whether bird 'flu, trafficking in human beings and organized crime were threat images that called for action in the field of foreign policy, and it was observed that the boundary was an indistinct one and that the committee was not willing to define it any more precisely as far as perceived threats were concerned.

The accent in the proposals made by the Ministry of the Interior was on the security of individual citizens, which was to be the focus of the security discussions and occupy a significant position in Finnish security thinking. The ministry's approach was that external and internal security were closely combined in its threat images, which – in order to promote securitization – were framed with an external dimension. In its opinion the criticism of its perceived threats put forward by the defence administration was attributable to the fact that that administration's own military threat models were outdated, whereas the Ministry of the Interior's models represented real threats that existed in the present. Thus the ministry regarded the defence administration as taking a critical view of all threat definitions that came from instances outside its own sphere and which approached the reality of the threats facing Finland from a different angle from that customarily adopted by the defence administration itself. In the eyes of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior, the defence administration's thinking with regard to threat images was antiquated and set in its ways, while the Ministry of the Interior in turn regarded the Foreign Ministry's commitment to political pressure and concrete measures for reducing the "new threats" as inadequate, which generated friction between the two ministries.

The views of the Foreign Ministry and the defence administration on the nature of the perceived threats were far removed from one another at times during the process of preparing the government report,

although the division of labour between parts I and II of the report was felt on both sides to be a good thing. The differences of opinion were connected with Russia, which was not regarded by the Foreign Ministry as representing any relevant military threat, whereas the defence administration had rather different ideas of the possibility of a military threat and in particular of the need to allow for this possibility in the long term.¹²⁰ Both branches admitted at an early stage in the preparation of the report that the difference in approach towards the evaluation of perceived threats between parts I and II would not make for a particularly logical overall structure, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could also be interpreted as having insisted that the defence administration should not exceed its mandate with respect to the definition of the perceived threats at the preparation stage but should concentrate exclusively on military threat models. At the same time, however, the Foreign Ministry was suspicious of the more pronounced role being adopted by the Ministry of the Interior in the construction of threat descriptions for the report. Meanwhile the defence administration looked on the Foreign Ministry's "peace policy" attitude as one barrier to collaboration, so that it may be interpreted as suspecting that by emphasizing the "new threats" the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior wished to encroach on the position of the defence administration as a source of national security. Conversely, it was felt in the Ministry of the Interior that the work of preparing the government report was very much a matter of a power struggle over threat perceptions between the defence administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry of the Interior's enhanced conviction of its role as a provider of security in the effort to combat the new threats was clearly reflected in the budgetary issues discussed in the report, and thereby came to impinge on relations between that ministry and the defence administration. The working group was aware of the disputes surrounding the financial aspect of the threat images described, but nevertheless adopted a more severe attitude than ever towards the defence administration's financial arguments and the views put

¹²⁰ It was also felt in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the defence administration was doing too much to generate an interest in Finland joining a military alliance, a policy that did not command much support in the Foreign Ministry itself. The difference of opinion on this point further exacerbated the problems affecting cooperation between the two branches, as also did the substantial differences over the relation between military and civilian crisis management.

forward to justify these. The group had considered at one point setting out all the resources to be devoted to means of dealing with the perceived threats in the actual government report, but had decided after much discussion to abandon this plan. An intention to limit the allocation of funds in connections with the defining of perceived threats may nevertheless be seen in a message sent to the working group by the Prime Minister to the effect that the forthcoming government report should not lead to any increase in the security budget.¹²¹ Both the civil servants and the politicians who took part in preparing the report were of the opinion that the definition of perceived threats was at least in part a question of dividing up the available resources and of competition to obtain as large a share of these resources as possible. This competition took place mostly on the administrative level, but also on the political level to some extent.

Internal security had been discussed for the first time in the context of the government reports to Parliament in connection with the 2001 report, in which about four pages had been devoted to the subject. Even at that stage the Ministry of the Interior had drawn attention to the fact that the report was apt to serve as a “cash point” for the defence administration – i.e. the government report provided the defence administration with a high-level political document which set out its budgetary allocations, i.e. the resource base for its activities, for the term of office of that government. When the time came to prepare the 2004 report, the ministry realized that it was necessary to incorporate internal security, the related threat perceptions and the means of combating those threats more firmly into the government report than on previous occasions. The emphasis on the concept of broad-based security, the changes that had taken place in Finland’s security environment and the urgency attached to certain threats facing the country’s internal security (such as terrorism, cybercrime and illegal immigration) were regarded as cogent reasons for extending the discussion of budgetary allocations in this field to other security authorities as well as the defence administration. It was a matter of the political prioritization of perceived threats in the

¹²¹ In simple terms, the working group may be said to have concluded that however they constructed the perceived threats in the government report, no new funding for combating those threats would be forthcoming. In such a situation we may reciprocate by asking to what extent the financial resources determined the perceived threats and to what extent the threats determined the resources allocated. Were the threats at least partially constructed with a view to what security the country could afford?

framework of a general competition for finance, or at least a more even distribution of funding between the relevant branches of the administration. Thus the Ministry of the Interior suggested during the process of drawing up the report that the whole “security budget” should be lumped together and then evaluated politically so that it could be distributed in relation to “the real nature of the threats”. It should be noted, too, that some of the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy were favourably disposed towards this suggestion (which nevertheless remained as nothing more than a suggestion), a fact that could be interpreted as implying that demands may arise in the future for a more egalitarian distribution of budgetary allocations in the field of security that takes other branches of the administration into account. Representatives of the Ministry of the Interior admitted in retrospect that its intention in connection with the 2004 report had been to give expression and added weight to the significance of perceived threats to internal security, partly for budgetary reasons, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and even more obviously the defence administration considered that the Ministry of the Interior had gone too far in this respect.

The defence administration had considerable reservations regarding the activities of the Ministry of the Interior, and particularly of the minister, Kari Rajamäki, and the permanent secretary, Ritva Viljanen, which it looked on as intended to weaken the position of the defence administration and gain access to a share in the defence budget. The Ministry of the Interior, for its own part, considered that the defence administration was stepping on its toes by planning the creation of local defence troops, extending its offers of executing assistance to other authorities and providing a wider range of services to the public; in brief, by extending its activities to include the management of threats other than those of a military character (such as terrorism). This appeared to be a natural course of development as far as the defence administration was concerned, as the Defence Forces already had the personnel and equipment needed for combating threats of that kind, and it emphasized that it was no longer possible in the 21st century to divide perceived threats into internal and external ones. At all events, financial considerations and the context created by the need to contain new threats led to major disagreements between the defence administration and the Ministry of the Interior, especially at the permanent secretary level.

The conflicts over funding are well reflected in the financial tables that were eventually left out of the published version of the government report. The defence administration prepared its own such table for inclusion in the report, on the lines of that published in 2001,¹²² which detailed the financial requirements over the period 2005–2012, with the intention that it should be approved as a part of the report, but this was deemed by the Ministry of the Interior to be a “one-sided” procedure that departed from the normal framework and budget procedure followed in government finances. Nevertheless, the ministry produced a financial table of its own (in the same manner as the defence administration) that was aimed at defining its financial requirements over a longer period than the annual budgetary decisions. Both tables aroused lively discussions both in the working group preparing the government report and in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, until the latter eventually decided, at the instigation of the Minister of Finance, Antti Kalliomäki, that neither table would be printed in the report. This decision meant that the defence administration’s financial table that had already been included in the draft of the report had to be removed. This situation was somewhat annoying as far as the defence administration was concerned, even though it was in general believed that its table had met with the Cabinet Committee’s “tacit approval”, while Ministry of Finance officials regarded it as “multiply ambiguous” for practical purposes, as it left the definition of the financial requirements in the defence sector quite vague and subject to differing interpretations.¹²³ It is notable, however, that the eventual report still contained a table comparing defence expenditure in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark,¹²⁴ showing the low level of this expenditure in Finland relative to the other Nordic countries. In the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the table should not have been there at all, whereas the defence administration regarded it as good evidence of the moderate policy Finland had pursued in matters of defence expenditure.

It is illustrative of the overall situation that financial disagreements between the various branches of the administration that arose from the work of constructing the threat scenarios for the report meant that when the next report was to be prepared the secretary of state at the

¹²² *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliitikka 2001*, p. 50.

¹²³ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliitikka 2004*, pp. 126–127.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 72.

Ministry of Finance was appointed as a member of the working group.¹²⁵ This meant some degree of expert adjudication in matters concerned with the relationship between the perceived threats and the resources available for controlling them, which had been found (by the Cabinet Committee on Security and Foreign Policy and the working group) to be absent from the 2004 report. The financial conflicts that had accompanied the preparation nevertheless remained mostly “beneath the surface”, away from the public eye, in the final, published version. Another consideration in the view of the members of the Cabinet Committee was that the financial resources proposed for combating given threats were related to how well the various branches of the administration and individuals persons within them managed to justify – “frame” – their perceived threats. Likewise, it was estimated in the Ministry of Finance that the budgetary allocations for the defence administration would have been smaller if it had not been for the justifications put forward in the course of constructing the government report.

The Security Policy Monitoring Group

In its own report the parliamentary Security Policy Monitoring Group observed that “this report evaluates the changes in the security environment and raises certain questions that in the monitoring group’s opinion should have been dealt with in the Council of State’s Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy.”¹²⁶ This point of departure may be looked on as a form of political guidance provided by Parliament and a demand that the threat perspectives mentioned by the monitoring group should have been taken into account in the report. One can presume that the perceived threats set out in the report could not have deviated very markedly from those drawn up in parliament (and presented in public before the publication of the report), if only because the report and its perceived threats were to be discussed in Parliament and the memorandum on it approved there. It was thus the report of the parliamentary Security Policy Monitoring Group that constructed the report that eventually came before

¹²⁵ Council of State Information Department, *Uuden turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittisen selonteon valmistelu käynnistyy*, press release 210/2007, 14.8.2007.

¹²⁶ *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, p. 9.

Parliament. The instructions issued by the Prime Minister were that the monitoring group should submit its report in the early spring of 2004, and this it did, handing the document over to the Council of State on 9.3.2004.

The Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy and the political parties represented in Parliament considered the involvement of the Security Policy Monitoring Group in the preparation stage of the report a good move, one that added political value to the document. Above all, it was seen to increase the exercise of power by Parliament itself and to enable the views of a group assembled from various political parties to be taken into account among the ideas put forward by the Council of State.¹²⁷ The parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, on the other hand, was not entirely in favour of the existence of a Security Policy Monitoring Group, and felt that its own influence and powers of decision in matters of security policy would be jeopardized. Likewise it was the general feeling among the civil servants in the various ministries that the monitoring group was not particularly necessary and that it gave rise to a great deal of extra work, as similar reports to those prepared for the working group now had to be prepared for the monitoring group as well. The working group itself and the defence administration, on the other hand, regarded it as a useful body, especially because of the broad representation of political parties on it, so that it could be expected to promote the achieving of a substantial political consensus in favour of the security and defence policy outlines laid down in the eventual government report.

It cannot be denied, however, that the work of the monitoring group overlapped in a sense with that of the working group appointed by the Council of State, and that, in spite of the fact that, as a parliamentary body capable of opening up the discussion of security policy issues, it could be estimated to have supported the emergence of a will to construct a consistent understanding of the perceived threats, it undoubtedly constituted a challenge to the functioning of democracy, for once Parliament had been active in drawing up the report it was unlikely than any very genuine discussion or formulation of opinions

¹²⁷ See, for example, *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö 16.12.2004*, PuVM 1/2004 vp.

would take place after it had been submitted to Parliament.¹²⁸ It is normal parliamentary procedure for the cabinet (Council of State) to place bills before Parliament for discussion and approval, so that the relation between the executive role of the Council of State and the supervisory role of Parliament could be badly confused by the existence of a parliamentary monitoring group, leading to a report that was “a bill that belonged to no one”. Also, the views expressed by the monitoring group in its own report, if they depart to any essential extent from those expressed in the government report, could be looked on as challenges to the authority of the Council of State, and it was in fact the case that certain opinions held by the monitoring group and intended to be brought up during the discussion of the government report in Parliament were voiced in public during the preparation process, a situation which was felt to be somewhat embarrassing for both the working group and the defence administration.

The composition of the monitoring group had been adjusted following the general election of 2003, when Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki demanded that its chairman should be a representative of the Centre Party, which was now the largest party in Parliament, although the Social Democrats would have liked to hold on to the chairmanship. In the end, Liisa Jaakonsaari (Soc. Dem.) was appointed as the first vice-chairman and Ilkka Kanerva (Coalition Party) as the second. Otherwise the composition of the monitoring group was decided by Parliament itself, a situation looked on especially favourably by the True Finns, as it meant their inclusion in the group.¹²⁹ The monitoring group then adopted the name “The Security 2004 Group”, in order to emphasize its direct connection with the 2004 government report. Both in its general activities and in the preparation of its report the group worked with thoroughness and on a broad scale, meeting 24 times in all, calling numerous experts for interviews, consulting with the President of Finland, members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy and other authorities, taking part in two research seminars and making six journeys abroad.¹³⁰ The group also arranged four open discussion

¹²⁸ In other words, if Parliament played a major role in preparing the report, how could one speak any longer of a *government report to Parliament* (which was the official title of the government report in Finnish)?

¹²⁹ See Timo Soini *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa* 28.9.2004, PTK 97/2004 vp.

¹³⁰ See the summary of the group’s activities in *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, app. 2.

sessions in order to inform the public about security policy issues and hear citizens' opinions, and its members felt at the end that the whole operation had been "a thoroughgoing security policy learning process" carried out in a positive spirit – to the extent that they had taken to referring to themselves as a "study circle".

The monitoring group had not received any particular orders or instructions from the Council of State or the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy as to how they should handle the reality of the perceived threats or how they should write about NATO or Russia, for instance, a situation that the members themselves thought slightly odd and surprising (perhaps even an oversight), although they also realized that it gave them an opportunity to examine Finland's security environment and perceived threats without any excessive external guidance. Thus the group's work cannot be said to have been steered in any way by the Council of State, even though collaboration and exchanges of information did place in the form of joint meetings. The principal political guidance received by the group in fact came from the parliamentary political parties, whose views were communicated by their representatives among the group members. Similarly, there were no attempts to dictate ready-made solutions for the group's investigations into the perceived threats; on the contrary, the members were agreed at the outset that they should themselves reach a consensus on what was to be written into the report, as this would put more political weight behind what they had to say. It was admittedly the case, however, that the Council of State had made it known that a unanimous report would be a highly desirable outcome. The great difficulty in achieving unanimity lay in persuading the Left-wing Alliance to commit itself to the report's pro-NATO policy statements.¹³¹

Contacts between the monitoring group and the working group mainly took place through the permanent expert advisors to the monitoring group, Pauli Järvenpää and Markus Lyra, and its secretary, Jaakko Laajava, and it may well be said that it was their presence in the

¹³¹ This applied particularly to the view expressed in the report (p. 51) to the effect that "It is important from a Finnish point of view that membership of NATO should continue to be a *realistic alternative* in terms of security policy." There was a great dealing of discussion over the exact wording of this statement. See also Martti Korhonen, *Ei mitään vikaa liittoutumattomuudessa – Nato voi olla riskitekijä*, 9.3.2004.

monitoring group that made the transmission of information in both directions possible. It was also mainly Järvenpää, Lyra and Laajava who were responsible for deciding who were to be invited to the meetings as expert advisors and for settling on the form in which the final report was to be written. However, neither group regarded itself as having received specific guidance from the other.¹³² It was important for the working group, however, to hear what views the various political parties were putting forward regarding security and perceived threats at the time when the report was in preparation. The monitoring group and working group also held a few joint meetings, at which cooperation was found to proceed smoothly and without any major conflicts, although the monitoring group clearly felt that it was working quite independently on the preparation of its own report, an impression that was reinforced by the fact that its meetings were held behind closed doors and the group had agreed on the principle that their discussions should be treated as confidential.

The starting point used by the monitoring group for defining potential threats was the broad concept of security, as reflected in the recommendation made in the covering message to the Council of State when submitting its own report: "The security policy outlines contained in the government report should be drawn up from the perspective of the broad concept of security."¹³³ *A common understanding prevailed in the monitoring group from the outset that both its discussions and its published report should concentrate on the new threats.* As far as external actors were concerned, the aim was to focus on the European Union and Russia, as it was these that were felt to be of the greatest significance for Finland's security and the construction of its threat perceptions, but in the defining of the threat realities the group adopted a fairly critical (or even constructivist) dual approach: "It is difficult to find objective criteria for defining threats, as the acquisition and analysis of data is largely defined by what data are gathered and by whom. Threat images inevitably comprise both real threats and imagined threats."¹³⁴

¹³² The greatest expectations that the working group entertained with regard to the monitoring group concerned the line that the latter would take on Finland's options for a possible military alliance.

¹³³ *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, p. 9.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 22.

The monitoring group's analysis of the security environment (both in its discussions and in the eventual report) may be regarded as threat-centred,¹³⁵ and in general this was characteristic of those threats that were not military ones. Although military threats were also discussed (particularly the probability of a large-scale offensive or the nature of a possible strategic strike), no military threat models were put forward in the monitoring group's report, nor was the relevance of perceived military threats evaluated to any notable extent. This was quite consciously left to the defence administration as part of its preparatory work, which may be regarded as a somewhat extraordinary solution. *The monitoring group was nevertheless of the opinion that the possibility of a military threat did exist* (although of low intensity), and consequently a conclusion was written into the report to the effect that "The traditional military threat in Europe has decreased but has not been totally eradicated. It is still important for Finland to preserve its national defence capability and its territorial defence system."¹³⁶ In order to guard against military threats, therefore, Finland should retain a credible national defence capability, in which defence of the whole national territory should play an important part. It was observed that the consultations with expert advisors had done much to ensure an understanding of the possibility of a military threat, so that the monitoring group scarcely questioned the need for military threat descriptions and unanimous agreement among its members on the existence of such threats (without being any more precise about them or describing them in the report) was achieved fairly easily.¹³⁷ When it came to drawing up the report, however, it was decided to adopt a perspective in which the new threats were examined rather than military threats.

The monitoring group held extensive discussions on the new threats, those related to a broader understanding of security than only military security, and regarded it as something new that such a great amount of attention should be given to these, observing that *the emphasis on the*

¹³⁵ One indication of this is the occurrence of the word *uhka*, "threat", a total of 122 times (in various grammatical forms) in the course of the report. "This report is concerned with perceived threats to security and the ways in which different countries and organizations attempt to respond to these threats and succeed in doing so." *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, p. 19.

¹³⁶ *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, p. 22.

¹³⁷ The existence of a military threat was disputed to some extent by the Left-wing Alliance and the Greens.

new threats was justified in view of their topical relevance, the probability of their realization and their growing intensity (all relative to the military threats). Thus the monitoring group's report carried a clear message for those concerned with producing the government report itself, that "the report should treat the new threats to security in a comprehensive manner," and that "the new threat factors are realities for which the country must be prepared."¹³⁸ One important point here is that in presenting and evaluating the new threats the monitoring group made abundant reference to the EU security strategy. "The content of the European Union's new security strategy forms the major background to this report," and "the new EU security strategy is based on a broad-based concept of security which supports Finland's views and policies."¹³⁹ In other words, *the monitoring group was stating that Finland should build up its own understanding of the threat situation as a part of the threat descriptions set out by the EU.* And this was indeed the case, as the list of new threats contained in the group's report pointed very much in the same direction as the threat images in the EU security strategy: "The new threats include disintegrating states, regional conflicts, terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, cybercrime, pandemics, uncontrolled migrations of population, the state of the environment and the availability of natural resources."¹⁴⁰ These new threats were described as being cross-border phenomena that are common to all the western countries and are apt to emphasize the mutual dependence that exists between these countries. *Particular stress was laid on the threats associated with terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and cybercrime,* although the monitoring group's evaluation of the threats involved did not suggest that it was able to point to any direct connection between these and Finland's security. A consensus regarding the choice of threat images was achieved by dint of extensive discussions, although some of the group's members would have liked to stress the new threats and means for combating them still more and in greater diversity. It was thus emphasized that Finland's security policy, and also its defence policy, was bound up with the new threats, and it was for this reason that the monitoring

¹³⁸ *Turvallisuuspoliittisen seurantaryhmän raportti*, pp. 21–22.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 20, 41.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 20.

group insisted that these threats should be dealt with comprehensively in the government report.

In the case of terrorism the monitoring group noted that the United States' "war on terrorism" and the recent terrorist incidents in Madrid would have had the effect of accentuating the perceived threat from this source on an international scale, but it was clearly recognized as a current, specifically western threat image, the "reality" of which should be duly noted in Finland. Although the terrorist threat was felt in the monitoring group's discussions to be to some extent illogical and improbable as far as Finland was concerned, it was still ranked as more probable than any military threat and manifestations of it were regarded as probable on a European scale. The terrorist threat was framed in the monitoring group's report as permanent, of increasing intensity and associated with globalization and fanatical religious groups.

Similarly the threat image arising from weapons of mass destruction was regarded in the group's report as more of an international than a Finnish-oriented risk factor. It was noted that the threshold for using such weapons (chemical and biological weapons or nuclear weapons) had become lower on an international scale and that the intensity of the threat had increased (owing to the possibility of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists). In the end it was concluded that these posed an "especially serious" threat on account of the wide-ranging consequences that could arise from their use. The threat connected with weapons of mass destruction was also linked with Russia, in which connection it had aroused a lively discussion within the monitoring group. "From a Finnish point of view it is extremely important that good care is taken of the huge and extremely dangerous stock of weapons of mass destruction inherited from the Soviet Union."¹⁴¹ It was also noted that Finland's resources were inadequate to cope with a large-scale strike executed with weapons of this kind.

Cybersecurity threats were felt by the monitoring group to be of current relevance, likely to increase in intensity, capable of being targeted specifically at Finland and potentially able to increase the vulnerability of the Finnish "information society". Virus attacks, disruptions of the electricity distribution grid, incursions into data

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 27.

networks and disinformation campaigns were all presented as threat images that the group associated with the field of cybersecurity in its discussions. These threat images were also associated with two military threat models put forward in the 2001 Government Report: “It is possible that an attempt could be made to destroy the military command system by means of a cyberattack as a part of a strategic strike and/or a political pressurization campaign.”¹⁴²

Practically all the other new threats the monitoring group attributed (directly or indirectly) to Russia. There had in fact been a great deal of discussion on Russia as a source of threats in the group’s meetings, and members were frequently of the opinion that one of the major benefits of the group’s activities was that “for once we can speak of Russia and the extensive security problems that it causes by their proper names.” There was nevertheless a desire to exercise restraint when writing about Russia in the monitoring group’s report. In particular, there was no desire to embark on a discussion of the possibility of a military threat from Russia in the report, and in other respects, too, the group wished to be more cautious in public. In fact it was even decided at the last minute to smooth over the wording of the section on Russia still further, but even so the working group itself was still of the opinion that the section dealing with Russia in the monitoring group’s report was bolder and more critical than the government report proper was able to be, as it was mentioned very poignantly as far as Finland’s security was concerned in connection with both the new and old threats that “in addition to the traditional security issues, Russia is of great importance to Finland for combating the new threats.”¹⁴³ There was also a reference to the possible existence of a military threat when it was said in the report that “*Russia will retain a military capacity* for operations in neighbouring areas.”¹⁴⁴

The monitoring group also spoke together at length about the internal problems affecting Russia, an analysis which was also reflected in its report. The war in Chechnya, the infringement of human rights, the control maintained over the media and the unsteady progress being made in economic and political reforms, i.e. towards democracy, were

¹⁴² Ibid. ps. 30.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 33.

all framed as matters that made it particularly difficult to predict future developments in that country. A general uncertainty surrounding military and political developments in Russia was prominent in the group's deliberations, and it was important to communicate this message to the Council of State as well: "the difficulty of predicting developments in Russia is a factor that will have to be taken into account in an appropriate manner in future planning. The government report should deal comprehensively with the challenges and uncertainties connected with developments in Russia that are likely to affect our security environment."¹⁴⁵

In term of identity policy, the monitoring group linked the perceived threats affecting Finland to those applying to the west in general; i.e. *the significance of the European Union as both a target for securitization and a producer of methods designed to improve security was emphasized and considerable weight was placed on the importance for Finland of good transatlantic relations*. Especially where it came to combating the new threats, it was felt that Finland was acting as a part of a broader European front and in collaboration with the United States, which could be construed as a reference to the existence of geographically distant crises and to an indivisible concept of security brought about by globalization. Thus, although *the target for securitization in the eyes of the monitoring group was the security of the Finnish state*, this was clearly linked to the EU and western culture, at least as far as non-military threats were concerned. It was indeed written into the monitoring group's report that "in connection with the new threats the EU has already proved itself to be an important actor as far as Finnish security is concerned."¹⁴⁶ Similarly, note was taken of the connection with the United States when it came to the defining of threats: "the United States and the EU share the same threats and interests."¹⁴⁷ *The new threats were seen as good tools for use in the cause of Finnish identity policy, i.e. for linking Finland to the western block*. It was thus on the grounds of the new threats that the monitoring group recommended that Finland should take part in all the security and defence policy cooperation that was agreed upon within the EU.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 34.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 39.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p. 44. The differences in emphasis on particular threats between the EU and the United States were nevertheless acknowledged.

There was less discussion within the monitoring group on matters of internal security, if only because *it had been decided at the outset to concentrate on external threat images*, and similarly there was no extensive discussion of methods for improving security or of the allocation of money for actors engaged in such work. As far as means of combating threats were concerned, however, the group did stress the increasing significance of both international cooperation and cooperation between different security agencies within Finland. “In matters of combating threats to security, emphasis should be placed on the adoption of a broad battery of political and economic measures and the importance of emergency strategies that cover all sectors of society.”¹⁴⁸ As far as funding was concerned, the group nevertheless did place one demand on those preparing the government report: “the necessary resources for combating these threats in all branches of the administration should be taken into account in their entirety in the state budget.”¹⁴⁹ This reference to financial resources applied mostly to other security actors rather than to the defence administration, and in any case the monitoring group did not wish to contemplate the question of finance in any detail or put any more precise proposals before the Council of State.¹⁵⁰

The report submitted by the monitoring group may be regarded as having set out certain obligations to be fulfilled in the Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy as drawn up by the Council of State, and it was indeed discussed in depth in the latter’s working group, although it was admittedly already known (through Järvenpää, Lyra and Laajava) that its recommendations were in line with the threat images to be presented in the government report. Once it had been published it was studied in detail at one meeting of the working group, when it was established that the recommendations made in it would for the most part be implemented in the forthcoming government report. Some of the working group members interviewed were nevertheless of the opinion that the monitoring group report had no practical implications for the final government report; the most

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ The monitoring group’s report (p. 46) contained an interesting remark concerning the targeting of defence budget funds, which should, according to the government report, be “evaluated on the basis of the EU security policy priorities, taking into account the new threats to security.” It was also noted that “the new threats should be added to the practical planning” of defence funding.

important thing, they thought, was that Parliament had made its voice heard in the report – for its own sake. At all events, *the working group did not produce any very specific evaluations of the threat images proposed by the monitoring group, nor did it question any of them.* In fact, it had no difficulty in approving the monitoring group's report as it stood. The two groups were of the same opinion regarding the necessity for a broad-based concept of security and the placing of weight on the new threats, but the monitoring group maintained that the threat descriptions in the eventual government report were less precise than they had been in its own version.

Influence of external actors on the perceived threats

The influence of threat images projected by external actors (the UN, the United States, NATO, the EU and Russia) on the perceived threats identified in the government report was recognized in the interviews with members of both the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy and the working group responsible for drafting the report. Neither group had explicitly gone through the potential external threats, but they were undoubtedly reflected in the general threat content of the report, and they had been evaluated in considerable detail by the civil servants attached to the working group who had been responsible for the wording of the report. It is reasonable at this point (before going into the matter in any greater detail) to call attention to three general interpretations of the influence of threat images associated with external actors. Firstly, the politicians and civil servants involved in preparing the government report were aware of the need to start out by laying emphasis on the broad concept of security as generally observed in international circles, and it was acknowledged that the importance of non-military threat images that conformed to this concept of security had increased especially markedly in the western countries, where the presentation of perceived threats had come to be dominated by threat descriptions other than military ones. Thus *it was necessary to understand threat factors in Finland, too, in a broad sense, as arising from various security sectors, partly for the simple reason that other western countries were doing so.* It was also noted that non-military "threat tendencies" conforming to the broad concept of security reflected the spirit of the times; in other words that the awareness of threats that prevailed

internationally was being reflected more easily at the national level, in the content of Finland's perceived threats. This may be regarded as one characteristic of the broad concept of security.

Secondly, *there was no desire to allow the dominant role of the broad concept of security to open the way to a questioning of the existing line of thought in matters of security policy*, namely the principles of military non-alignment and a credible national defence capability. In terms of the preparation of the government report, this led to a reluctance to put forward precise evaluations of military developments in the Baltic region, as these could have led to the "wrong" political conclusions. On the other hand, this point of departure demonstrated the culturally bound nature of the national process of constructing military threat perceptions for Finland, as it was clearly stated in the report that military threat descriptions were still needed. It should also be noted that (on account of the structure imposed on the report) the means of controlling the perceived threats that were detailed in it applied exclusively to the military threats.

Thirdly, *in terms of identity policy, there was a desire that the report should give expression to Finland's commitment to the western bloc and to western values*. It was recognised that the process of constructing threat descriptions for Finland was dependent on western threat perceptions; i.e. there was a conscious desire to identify with the threats perceived by the EU, the United States and NATO. The western nature of the threat content shared by Finland was emphasized especially clearly in connection with the means of combating non-military threats, and through the stress placed on the importance of western interests where relations with Russia were concerned. Telling comments in this respect were those made in public by members of the working group to the effect that "We have to set out from the principle that we share western values. We share a certain notion of what security is," "Alongside this, Finland continues to be concerned about stability in Northern Europe, and that concern is becoming a more complex matter day by day," and "Considering common western interests with respect to Russia, we can undoubtedly make our own views and experiences available for general use."¹⁵¹ *In view of its need*

¹⁵¹ Jaakko Laajava, *Transatlanttiset suhteet*, speech 28.8.2003, Risto Volanen, "Suomi etelän ja lännen välissä", *Helsingin Sanomat* 22.9.2003; Jaakko Laajava, *Alustus Atlantti-seurassa*, 12.4.2003.

for positive association and identification, Finland can be looked on as an adaptable country in relation to western non-military threat perceptions. Thus the construction of non-military threat images for the report was a manifestation of Finland's identification with the perceived threats that prevailed in the western countries in general. Although Finland's perceived threats were stated to be part of a global trend in threat images that united countries in a mutual dependence in security matters, there was a desire in the report to give expression, above all politically, to this country's commitment to the same threat reality shared by all western nations, in the form of non-military threat images that conformed to the broad concept of security. Thus the non-military threat descriptions in the report were very largely a synthesis of those put forward by the EU, the United States and NATO, and also by the United Nations.

Although it is difficult to arrange the external actors that influenced the construction of threat images for the report in any precise order of importance, *the preparation of the report clearly laid more emphasis on the influence of threats perceived by the EU and by Russia*, the former in connection with non-military threats and the latter with military ones. The influence of UN, US and NATO threat images was reflected mainly in the political prioritization of certain individual threat perceptions, e.g. terrorism or climate change. As far as the means for combating the threats were concerned, the intention, based on political grounds, was evidently to create an impression of the primary significance of the EU and the UN.

The European Union

It was generally accepted at the preparation stage (among both the politicians and the civil servants) that the government report should not conflict with the guidelines laid down in the EU security strategy, and this was taken to apply equally well to the threat images set out in that strategy. It was conceded that, as an EU member state, Finland was obliged to commit itself to the perceived threats agreed upon and decided upon jointly by all its members. These EU threat perceptions were indeed of considerable significance when it came to constructing

the non-military threat descriptions for the report.¹⁵² This consideration for the EU dimension was regarded during the preparation stage as the “natural way” of approaching threat factors that were common to all EU member states, and the significance of the EU security strategy and the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe were mentioned by name in the introduction to the report: “The provisions of the European Union’s security strategy, as approved by the European Council in December 2003, and the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, approved by the same body in June 2004, with regard to a common security and defence policy have been crucial in laying down the framework and starting points for this statement of Finland’s own policies.”¹⁵³ Thus *the European Union can be regarded as having provided a major frame of reference for the securitization of Finland’s perceived threats.*¹⁵⁴

The working group was pressurized by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy into taking full account of the significance of the EU in the report, the committee expressing a desire that the EU should be treated as an actor of essential importance in the construction of Finland’s security and should be understood as a participant in constructing that security world-wide and in promoting stability in Finland’s immediate neighbourhood. The natural way of examining common European threat factors that were shared by Finland when constructing the threat descriptions for the report was to take the EU dimension into account; i.e. commitment to the perceived threats arising from terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states and organized crime was regarded as justified by politicians and civil servants alike and was deemed to be in accordance with the direction chosen for Finland’s security policy. Symptomatic in this respect was the view that prevailed among the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of how

¹⁵² Many of the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy observed that Finland “could not afford” politically to ignore the threats perceived by the EU.

¹⁵³ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittikka 2004*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁴ The Internal Security Programme contained a direct reference to a common European threat reality in the observation that “Since Finland is a part of the European Union, all the factors that constitute a threat to the member states of the European Union in general constitute a potential threat to Finland.” *Arjen turvaa. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma*, p. 48.

difficult it would be to imagine drawing up the report without taking account of the perceived threats laid down in the EU security strategy.

The Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy noted that, in the context of the EU, the perceived threats identified in the EU security strategy would in any case affect Finland at least indirectly, and that Finland should be prepared to join a common European front aimed at combating these threats. It regarded the EU threat images as belonging to Finland and the Finns, and felt that Europe and the Europeans were closer to Finland's process of developing its thinking on potential threats than any other international actors and therefore constituted a more straightforward and more logical channel for approaching threats to global security (as far as means of combating these threats were concerned). Meanwhile, the working group affirmed that in its own threat evaluations during the preparation of the report it had had no difficulty in opting for descriptions that were similar to those contained in the EU security strategy. This strategy was also felt to be a document whose content with respect to threat descriptions could be influenced by Finland through its own actions. As an EU country, Finland had been involved in constructing the threat descriptions for that security strategy and had approved them politically. They were therefore common threat perceptions that had been agreed on at a high political level and called for commitment from member states. In spite of this common security strategy, however, it was also recognized at the stage of preparing the report that Finland should reserve the right to define its own national threat perceptions, particularly military ones.

The United States

Although the urgency of the threat posed by terrorism that became clear in the process of constructing the government report was also communicated through the EU and NATO, *it was felt that the international role of the United States in constructing the image of a threat from terrorism was still more prominent.* The prioritization of the terrorist threat, for example, was regarded as being very much a matter of a prevailing international trend and a serious disruption of the international system that the United States was anxious to emphasize and which should therefore be reflected in the Finnish

understanding of the threat situation. The terrorist threat was also a prominent theme in international relations involving Finland at the time when the government report was in preparation. Both the 11/9 incident and the terrorist attacks in Madrid were regarded as demonstrating the urgency and high intensity of the threat posed by terrorism, not so much in Finland as in the western countries in general. The events of September 11th 2001 nevertheless appeared to bring the threat of terrorism to the forefront in the Finnish discussion of potential threats regardless of the level of seriousness of the threat to Finnish security. At any rate, the working group treated it as marking a substantial change in the international threat policy environment. Above all, *it was by emphasizing the threat of terrorism that the authors of the report wished to announce to the western countries that Finland was abreast of the times and wished to be included in western anti-terrorist activities, although not in a war as such.* It was noted that the perceived threats as formulated by the United States had their repercussions for the activities of the whole international community and for the threat factors experienced by it. "It is necessary to understand the threat perceptions and security strategies put forward by the United States as they will influence what is brought to the fore in the Finnish context," as one member of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy put it. Once the United States had come to perceive terrorism as a more serious factor than any other threat, it was felt that other countries had to take it into account in a quite different way from previously, and the Finns were anxious to demonstrate to both the EU and the US that they were taking the terrorist threat seriously. The same logic was also reflected, in fact, in the report's attitude towards the spread of weapons of mass destruction (as emphasized by both the EU and the United States) and the activities of unstable governments. Clear references were made to joint western values in this connection, and to the crucial role of the United States in world politics.¹⁵⁵ The way in which the threat of terrorism was framed in the report may be interpreted as one means of expressing solidarity both with the United States and with the other EU member states on whose security agenda the threat of terrorism had gained a position of high political priority, although a further factor lying in the background was undoubtedly the views voiced by

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen: "We will seek our own security and defend western freedoms by appearing genuinely in a joint front with those who share such values with us." *Helsingin Sanomat* 5.4.2004.

the United States regarding the revision of that country's relations with others in the light of their appreciation of the terrorist threat and their commitment to countering it. In this respect relations between Finland and the United States were under scrutiny at the time when the government report was in preparation.¹⁵⁶ It should be remembered that the declared programme of the existing Finnish government, in contrast to those of previous governments, had the intention of strengthening Finland's transatlantic relations built into it.¹⁵⁷ Although the principal idea in the report was to present Finland in an EU context (with respect to combating the threat of terrorism), the formation of a consistent understanding of the threat between the EU and the United States was also represented as being of importance. "The United States and the EU are united by global threat factors ... Europe is by far the United States' most important partner in responding to global challenges."¹⁵⁸ It was also noted that the EU had defined the new threats in just the same way as the United States, so that the threat perceptions put forward by them could be said to complement each other as far as Finland was concerned.

NATO

Being very similar in content, the NATO threat perceptions had the effect of backing up the influence of their EU and US counterparts on those presented in the Finnish government report. NATO was regarded as a western actor whose threat perceptions had been

¹⁵⁶ As Risto Volanen put it, "It is important for the shaping of Finland's security policy environment and for the sake of many economic ties that good bilateral relations should exist between Finland and the United States.", See his "Suomi ennakoi kriisejä lähentymällä Yhdysvaltoja", *Helsingin Sanomat* 18.12.2002.

¹⁵⁷ The foreign and security policy section of the programme contained the following observation: "As a member state of the European Union, Finland will be active in strengthening its common foreign and security policy and promoting transatlantic cooperation." These last words were new to government programmes and represent a desire to indicate that relations between Europe and the United States were also of the utmost importance for Finland. *Pääministeri Matti Vanhasen hallituksen ohjelma* 24.6.2003, p. 4. Cf. the remark by Jaakko Laajava that "Taking the geopolitical realities into account, it may be said that the maintaining of American interest in Europe has always been in accordance with our fundamental interests." Jaakko Laajava, *Transatlanttiset suhteet*, speech 28.8.2003.

¹⁵⁸ See *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittikka* 2004, pp. 47, 56.

instrumental in giving rise to the western understanding of the threat environment. In general terms, it was difficult (and unnecessary) to make clear distinctions between EU, US and NATO threat images, as the members of the working group and those responsible for the wording of the report had decided among themselves that they paralleled each other. Similarly, it was difficult to understand the NATO threat descriptions separately from the United States and EU equivalents. In other words, there had been a substantial degree of interaction between these three actors in the construction of their perceived threats.

There was one respect, however, in which the NATO threat perceptions aroused a notable discussion in the working group, namely it was observed that NATO's aims and field of activities had altered as a consequence of the incursion of 11th September 2001, so that its chief emphasis was now on international crisis management and responding to the new threats. This was perceived by the working group as implying a greater concentration on non-national security issues. *The disappearance of military threats and the threat posed by Russia from NATO's official documents and the threat assessments put forward by NATO leaders was seen by the working group as problematic as far as Finland was concerned*, and this was regarded as making it more difficult to include Finland's own threat response models (both the territorial defence system and universal conscription) in the government report. How could Finland justify its military threat models when even the military alliance had forsaken them and the western world had built up a powerful image of terrorism as the primary threat? At the same time, however, it was recognized in both the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy that some EU countries continued to experience military insecurity on account of Russia. On the other hand, general developments in Europe, and particularly in areas adjacent to Finland (such as the granting of NATO membership to the Baltic States and the views expressed in Sweden regarding the improbability of any military threat and the resulting defence policy solutions arrived at in that country¹⁵⁹) were deemed to support existing Finnish security and

¹⁵⁹ A restructuring of the Swedish armed forces had taken place on the basis of an estimate that no major military attack on that country would take place in the foreseeable future. The principal emphasis in Swedish security policy and the activities of its armed forces was on international operations and participation in international crisis management. See,

defence policy. These developments were regarded as strengthening Finland's interests (as a non-member of NATO) in maintaining strong defence systems of its own, for the sake of its own security and to avoid the creation of a militarily unaligned vacuum in Northern Europe. The removal of the military threat from the NATO agenda may thus be seen as having served as one reason for insisting on the need to include military threat perceptions in the Finnish government report. It must be admitted, of course, that the question of whether or not Finland should join NATO was an essential background factor in all the discussions that took place in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy and in the working group.

The United Nations

As far as the United Nations is concerned, its influence on the threat perceptions included in the government report may be interpreted as having been on the one hand distant and on the other surprisingly strong. The working group was inclined to view the UN as a generator of global security and international security discourses, a general and broader frame of reference for perceived threats which had an influence of its own on the appreciation of global threats. Both the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy set out from the assumption that Finland could discuss its security policy solutions and the perceived threats to be presented in the government report in isolation, without any substantial reference to the state of the world in general or global trends in security. The broad-based understanding of threats that the UN provided – bound up as it was with general security and development, social justice and environmentally sustainable development – was nevertheless reflected in the evaluation of global development and the new threats presented in part I of the report. Above all, it was President Halonen and the Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja, who attempted to build up a close connection between Finland's security and the global threats described

for example, *Vårt framtida försvar*, Regeringens proposition 20/05:5, 23.9.2004, Stockholm, pp. 13–14, 30–36.

by the UN in the course of the construction of the government report.¹⁶⁰

References were made to the UN Millennium Development Goals during the preparation of the government report when discussing the cross-border, mutually interconnected and ubiquitous nature of the non-military threats, and the UN was seen as defining the basic principles for perceived threats, principles that were aimed at guiding international behaviour and to which Finland had committed itself politically. As for threat perceptions, particular reference was made to environmental questions, pandemics, poverty, infringements of human rights and migrations of population, as these were regarded as affecting Finland's security to an increasing extent in spite of the long geographical distances involved. UN views on these threats (and on non-military threats in general) undoubtedly influenced the way in which these phenomena and threats were evaluated, especially in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was a desire, in response to political guidance received by the working group, that the government report should emphasize the role of the UN as an important focus for international cooperation and a producer of means for controlling and combating threats, and the expectation was that elimination of the new threats would require strengthening of the UN role.¹⁶¹ It was also noted with reference to the UN threat perceptions that Finland carried a certain responsibility for the security of the Third World and that control over these threats called for long-term international cooperation.¹⁶² Thus *the threat descriptions put forward by the UN can be seen to have led to the assigning of greater prominence to the broad-based security philosophy and the global nature of the non-military threats when drawing up the government report*; in other words, the UN's global threat perceptions were at work in the background when part I of the report was being prepared.

¹⁶⁰ See also, for example, Tarja Halonen, *YK:n vahvistaminen tärkeämpää kuin koskaan*, speech 3.8.2003; Erkki Tuomioja, *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen toimintaympäristö muutoksessa*, speech 5.2.2004.

¹⁶¹ It was observed in the report that "response to the new threats will lay more emphasis on the flexibility and adaptability of the UN as a multicentred organization." *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 33.

¹⁶² The UN's global policies were directly reflected in the Development Policy Programme dealing with Finland's global policies, which was taken into account when preparing the government report. See Ulkoasiainministeriö, *Kehityspoliittinen ohjelma*, pp. 5–10.

Russia had a very significant influence on the construction of threat images for the report, but this influence was manifested in a different manner from that of the other actors discussed above, not by virtue of the threat perceptions that it put forward in public but in other ways that were not related to the starting point represented by what it had recorded as its national (publicly declared) perceived threats. Russia was regarded as a crucial actor as far as Finland's security was concerned – regardless of how it defined its strategies, goals and threat images. Finland's construction of its own threat images was not felt to be identical to Russia's construction of its (military and non-military) threat images, even though Russia was also known to lay stress on the threat posed by international terrorism, for instance. The perspective from which Russia viewed security and the threats that faced the country was felt to be a very much state-centred (incorporating elements of a juxtaposition of Russia versus the rest of the world), and its perceived threats as expressed in the early years of the 21st century possessed a powerful internal policy dimension and an orientation towards improving the country's international status. The tragedy of the dissolution of the Soviet Union was also seen to continue to affect Russian security thinking and the threat images that were presented, with the result that considerable attention was paid during the preparation of the government report to estimates of military, political, economic, environmental and social development in Russia, although these estimates were admittedly frequently based on sources other than information released by Russia itself. More attention was paid to the monitoring and evaluation of Russia's threat perceptions and security decisions during the preparation of the report than to those of any other external actors.

The crucial starting points when evaluating the threat reality associated with Russia were the geographical location of the two countries as neighbours, Russia's military capability (including its possession of nuclear weapons) and environmental and border security issues. In short, *Finnish thinking on matters of security was seen as being directly connected to Russia's political policies and perceived threats*, something that applied to all sectors of security, and it was necessary for Finland to be able to react appropriately to any changes

that might occur in these political policies.¹⁶³ It may indeed be claimed that during the process of drawing up the government report Finland's security was viewed to a considerable extent from the perspective of estimates regarding developments in Russia, in that any changes that occurred would be interpreted both by the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy and by the civil servants engaged in preparing the report as essentially affecting Finland's evaluations of its own security and the general sense of security experienced within the country. Although Russia was discussed a great deal in connection with non-military threats in the course of the preparation work, the principal emphasis was on military threat models. The central position occupied by Russia in Finnish security thinking was also reflected in the descriptions of the situation regarding that country as put forward in the report. Since it was obvious that these descriptions would have foreign policy repercussions, they acquired their final form only after a long period of discussion and revision in the working group. There were even some differences of opinion between the civil servants responsible as to how clearly certain matters concerned with Russia should be expressed in the report.

The process of drawing up the government report may well be summarized by noting that, although the broad-based security viewpoint emphasized by actors in the west had a very marked influence on the threat images contained in it, both Russia and Finland's geographical position as a neighbour of Russia were well to the fore in the minds of those responsible for producing it – regardless of how directly or indirectly such matters were finally expressed in it. Thus further emphasis came to be placed on the permanent role of Russia as the determining factor in Finland's security environment and security decisions.

¹⁶³ This was seen to be manifested in the fact that, if Russia felt that the expansion of NATO constituted a serious military threat, this would inevitably affect Finnish views on NATO and its expansion.

Non-military threat perceptions related to the broad-based concept of security

*“The major threats to security are terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the risk that they might be used, regional conflicts and the use of military force, organized crime, trafficking in persons and drugs, economic and technological risks, environmental problems, population growth, migrations of population and epidemics.”*¹⁶⁴

In the words of the civil servants involved in the process of drawing up the government report, “we were living through a concretization of threat images of an entirely new kind”. There was evident political pressure on them to adopt a broad-based approach to security when examining the potential threats. *The general discussion at the preparatory stage revolved around the concepts of the “new threats”, threats to broad-based security and non-military threat perceptions,*¹⁶⁵ *which in practise meant everything else except the military threat models related to defence policy that were built into the report.* Thus one essential question during the preparation work was that of striking the right balance between the new threat images and the military ones, as both the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy and the working group set out from the assumption that it was necessary to deal with the new threats more extensively than on previous occasions while at the same time recognizing the need to consider the perceived military threats alongside these. It was also a matter of how the question of Russia should be approached in the report, and of the fact that, if it were to be demonstrated that there was not even any possibility of a military threat in any form, it would be very difficult to justify the defence policy attitudes adopted in the report. At the same time both the committee and the working group were of the opinion that from the perspective of the preservation of national sovereignty the new threat images were in no way comparable to the military threats, even though the latter were admittedly of very low intensity.

¹⁶⁴ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, pp. 5.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. “Our concept of threats to security has altered. ... The traditional threat images associated with wars between nations have been replaced by threats of a new kind, with the consequence that people have begun to speak of perceived threats to broad-based security.” Tuomioja, *Suomen ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka*, pp. 21, 25.

Only the military threat perceptions could be regarded as militarized (and not merely securitized).

Although a clear, shared understanding prevailed among those working on the government report with regard to “hard core” security (the perceived military threats), it was the new, non-military threats that could be said to have dominated the discussions in both the Cabinet Committee and the working group. These were discussed extensively, and they to a great extent dominated the ideas that most of the actors had in their minds with regard to threats. *Alongside the treatment of the military threats, there was an evident desire to convey a powerful impression that the importance of the new threats for Finland’s security had increased.* Some of the members of the working group were even of the opinion that the defence administration was attempting to play down the role of the new threats and prevent their inclusion in the report (at least with any major emphasis).

One highly essential issue that dogged the preparation process throughout was the difficulty encountered in delimiting the new threat images. How should the controversial concept of broad-based security and the threat images derived from it be presented in the report? Or in other words, what was really meant in practise by broad-based security and the new threat perceptions? And in addition to this problem of defining the actual content of the new threat images, a further issue that demanded attention was the choice of such threat images for presentation in the report. The problem of choice criteria aroused a vast amount of discussion in both the Cabinet Committee and the working group, in the course of which they were forced once more to admit how difficult (or perhaps impossible) it was to set precise limits on broad-based security. Fundamentally, it was a question of the actors’ differing opinions on the nature of the new threats and the need to include non-military threat perceptions in a government report on security and defence policy. Both bodies had some members who declared with hindsight that the threats had been allowed to be too broad in content, while others believed that more emphasis should have been placed on the new threat images. In the end the resulting balance between military and non-military threat images was regarded as a negotiated compromise between the broad understanding of security and the views on military threats of those bearing responsibility for defence policy alone.

The point of departure for examining the perceived threats for inclusion in part I of the report, those to be contributed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was that Finland's security should be more closely associated than before with the international security situation and its development.¹⁶⁶ The increased interdependence between globalization and security was regarded as implying that risk factors affecting the international security environment would have more rapid and more serious repercussions for Finland's security and that of its citizens. The picture presented in part I of the report was a dual one, predicting greater stability in the countries bordering on Finland and in Europe as a whole but a more challenging international situation from a Finnish point of view. Finland's security was directly linked to the perceived threats to international security, i.e. *the feeling of being threatened was derived from the broader, global nature of security*. This was a reference to the increased non-national character of threats, the need for a broad-based, humanitarian understanding of security and the emphasis placed on foreign and development policy measures and broad-based international cooperation in the field of controlling and combating perceived threats. The concretization of these threat control strategies was the subject of a large amount of discussion in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.

The non-military threat images in the report were provided with contexts that conformed to the definitions given them by the western countries and the UN, in which the human rights, democracy, economic and constitutional problems experienced by the Third World and the weaker states, together with the conflict of cultures and the actions of extremist religious movements were described as acting as background factors for the threats existing in the international security environment. It should be noted in particular that disintegrating states (as they were referred to in the report) were not mentioned as such as constituting a perceived threat but as a background factor influencing the trend in international security. Their association with many of the new threats was nevertheless quite clear from the wording of the report. Poverty, inequality, population growth, development crises and regional conflicts (mainly framed as internal issues affecting individual states) were seen as sources of instability in the inter-

¹⁶⁶ "Global and transnational problems affect the security of the whole world, Europe, Finnish society and individual citizen." *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 18.

national system and thereby as entailing security implications for Finland. The Foreign Ministry and the working group were aware of this internationally accepted means of framing threats and noted that it had helped to promote the global nature of the examination of threat images in the report. Globalization was regarded as having increased the need for conformity among the western countries in the definition of threat images and as having improved people's general knowledge of non-military threat perceptions and their effects on national security. It was not thought possible for Finland to make its own security policy decisions without taking account of the state of the world at large and its population, on which Finland's security was regarded as being increasingly dependent. The heightened interdependence of nations in terms of security and the strengthening of globalization were seen as the principal grounds for extending the notion of security.

Globally oriented non-military threat perceptions couched in a broad context were generated for the working group by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the extent that section 2.1.6 (Global and cross-border security problems) became extremely long and very much broader in terms of the threat images dealt with than was the case in the eventual report, i.e. these threat descriptions were limited and shortened quite considerably in the final stage of producing the report. *The main problem with the global threats to security as far as the working group was concerned lay in establishing a concrete connection with Finland's security:* how could the overall effects of global security be expressed as effects on Finnish security, as positive efforts had to be made in the report to find a Finnish perspective from which to view global security.¹⁶⁷ It should be noted that the object to be securitized was defined in the report as being the security of Finland and the Finnish people, for which the Finnish government regarded itself as primarily responsible.¹⁶⁸ The working group did indeed attempt to emphasize the importance of adjacent areas in its examination of the new threats, which made it easier to demonstrate

¹⁶⁷ The Foreign Ministry was of the opinion afterwards that the report had not scrutinized the combining of development policy with security policy as widely as it should have done, in spite of the efforts made to place more weight on it.

¹⁶⁸ "Finnish security and defence policy is aimed at protecting Finnish independence and democratic constitutional values and promoting the security and welfare of the country's citizens." *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 77. See also p. 30, where it is stated that "every state is primarily responsible for the security of its own citizens."

the impact of these threats on Finland's security, and the defence administration similarly criticized the Foreign Ministry's description of the country's security environment that placed emphasis almost exclusively on global issues, so that the threats were shifted far away from Finland itself. On the other hand, the closer one came to Finland, the greater caution and deliberation the various actors may be interpreted as having shown in their attitudes towards the framing of perceived threats. Another difficulty attached to global threats was that of framing any detailed impacts on security, as the statements made by experts tended to vary greatly in their estimates of the influence of the threat factors, e.g. environmental threats, on security policy.

Considerable differences of opinion arose between the Foreign Ministry and the defence administration when defining the background factors lying behind the new threats, e.g. with regard to limitation and taxation of the arms trade. Partly on account of its critical attitude towards the United States, the Foreign Ministry attempted to build into the report an impression of the arms trade as a threat to global security, whereas the defence administration (and particularly Pauli Järvenpää) attempted to dispel this criticism and to brand the Foreign Ministry's suggestion that arms deals concluded by the Finnish defence industry should be taxed as something that did not belong to the scope of the government report. In the end matters connected with the arms trade were discussed in a neutral manner in the report.

The emphasis placed on the new threats also came to the fore in an appeal made by certain citizens' organizations to the working group responsible for preparing the report. Although the working group did not actually take papers of this kind from outside instances for discussion in its meetings, they did have some measure of impact on the background material for part I of the report that was worked up by the secretaries to the working group. At the sub-unit level, members of the working group were aware of appeals made by pressure groups at least as far as the Peace Organizations' Security and Defence Policy Report of 2004 and a statement on behalf of global security and non-violent philosophy were concerned.¹⁶⁹ These documents laid stress on

¹⁶⁹ Suomen Rauhanliiton ja Suomen Sadankomitealiiton turvallisuuspoliittinen työryhmä, *Rauhanjärjestöjen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selonteko 2004*, Helsinki 2004, *Vetoamus Selonteko-työryhmälle*, Lääkärien sosiaalinen vastuu, Kasvattajat rauhan

the significance of globalization for the emphasis being placed on the new threats, the importance of a humane concept of security, the utter improbability of any military threat and the existence of non-military means of controlling perceived threats, e.g. through development policy measures. The target of securitization in these appeals by citizens' organizations was usually something broader than national security, and the threat descriptions were constructed in an international context and referred to structural factors arising out of such a context. On the other hand, the report by the Peace Organizations included a commendable attempt at defining the limits of perceived security policy threats within a broad-based concept of security.¹⁷⁰ In other words any excessive extension of the concept of security or securitization of perceived threats was regarded as detrimental. In this sense the emphasis on the new threats may be interpreted as a means of stimulating criticism of military threat perceptions and military responses to them.

Non-military threat perceptions in the report

The threats of terrorism and the spread or use of weapons of mass destruction gained a prominent position in the eventual report. Terrorism was framed as specifically a threat to the western countries, a threat that, in the context of the EU (by virtue of the principle of joint responsibility and its possible consequences), also posed a threat to Finland. Thus *identification with the west was a crucial element in defining terrorism as a perceived threat to Finland and the definition itself followed the western model*. The events of 11th September were regarded as having established terrorism as part of the western threat reality, the seriousness and European focus of which was only confirmed by the subsequent terrorist attacks in Madrid. The working

puolesta, PAND, Psy-kologinen sosiaalinen vastuu, Rauhankasvatusinstituutti, Suomen kristillinen rauhanliike, Tek-niikka elämää palvelemaan, 1.6.2004.

¹⁷⁰ "For the concept of security policy to remain clearly bounded, it is important for its scope to be defined in such a way that it concerns threats of violence that have a political purpose behind them and which can be contained by security policy measures." *Rauhanjärjestöjen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittinen selonteko 2004*, p. 10. The Peace Organizations' report also warned of the excessive militarization of perceived threats, a reference to the mission of the armed forces (p. 22): "The army should not be given a mandate to extend its field of activity beyond that of the defence of the national territory by force of arms."

group also received messages during the preparation of the report to the effect that Finland could be the target of a terrorist incident, although in general the probability of this being the case was regarded as being relatively remote at that time. The terrorist threat was also emphasized in certain internal threat images recorded in chapter six of the report, in connection with which the role of the police in combating terrorism was underlined. All told, a great deal of weight was assigned to the perceived threat of terrorism in the report, even though the extent to which it was framed was reduced somewhat and the emphasis lightened by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.

The threat attached to weapons of mass destruction was similarly framed as increasing in intensity, i.e. the risk of their use was regarded as greater than earlier.¹⁷¹ Weapons of mass destruction were looked on as posing a threat to Europe that could quite clearly be said to reflect upon Finland. Public statements made by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister concurred with the general tones to be heard in the west, laying emphasis on the passage of such weapons into terrorist hands as a result of the actions of unstable nations as the most serious international threat scenario of all.¹⁷² The threat of the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction may be regarded as having been treated as one of the major trends in western threat images at that time, and one that without doubt belonged to the content of the report. On the other hand, reference was made to Russia's weapons of mass destruction only as far as their dismantling or safe storage was concerned.¹⁷³

Threat images connected with uncertainty factors such as organized and cyber crime, trafficking in persons and drugs, uncontrolled migrations of population and illegal immigration (border security), epidemics (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis etc.) and technological developments were quoted in the report both as international threats (associated with globalization) and threats to internal security. In the case of epidemics, migrations of population and organized crime,

¹⁷¹ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 22.

¹⁷² See, for example, Matti Vanhanen, "The Peacekeeping law should not tie Finland's hands", *Verkkouutiset*, 16.11.2004; Erkki Tuomioja, *Turvallisuuspoliittinen selonteko – suuntaviivat tulevalle*, speech 20.8.2004.

¹⁷³ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 24.

fairly clear allusions were made to Russian sources, although the threats involved under the first two of these headings were not regarded as particularly serious. In spite of the fact that there was in general little desire to place the non-military threat images in any kind of order of priority, it was clear that organized crime (combined with trafficking in drugs and human beings, prostitution, various financial crimes and terrorist connections) and threats to computer systems (especially with reference to electricity and energy supplies and the use and maintenance of data systems) occupied a prominent place in the report at its preparation stage. There was a desire to project these threats as ones that were increasing in intensity. The growing reliance of Finnish society on technical systems was felt to be giving rise to security threats of a new kind and necessitating more distinct means of threat control. Descriptions of threats to electronic data and communications systems were framed in the report in connection with both the examination of the international security environment and the internal security of Finnish society.

Alongside terrorism, it was organized crime and immigration questions¹⁷⁴ that were felt by the Cabinet Committee and the working group to be the threats (arising from Russia) that the Ministry of the Interior was pushing forward for inclusion and special emphasis in the report.¹⁷⁵ The ministry attached great importance to the securitization of these perceived threats and placed emphasis on a broad-based understanding of threats in accordance with the concept of overall security and on concretization of the new threats rather than simply a listing of them. It should be noted that the same non-military threats were described in the second chapter of the report, that prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the sixth chapter, that prepared by the Ministry of the Interior and the seventh chapter, the writing of which was coordinated by the Security and Defence Committee.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Immigrant groups were framed at two levels in the report: as potential objects of recruitment for terrorist activities and from the point of view of large-scale (uncontrolled) movements of population.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Kari Rajamäki, *Puhe selonteon 2004 yleisötilaisuudessa*, Joensuu 8.11.2004.

¹⁷⁶ In the case of internal security and the perceived threats detailed in the SFVS Strategy, a solution had been reached in which both topics received "sufficiently brief" sections of their own in the report. The following words on limitation of the extent of the perceived threats to internal security were included in chapter 6 "This chapter will examine mainly areas of internal security that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and are of central importance for the Security and Defence Policy Report as a whole." The

One conspicuous feature of the eventual government report was the partially militarized understanding of the perceived threats from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and of those connected with data systems and information warfare, in that the combating of these threats was largely entrusted to the defence administration,¹⁷⁷ which in turn saw the handling of non-military threats as requiring more efficient deployment of the Defence Forces' knowhow and equipment, an idea that was not especially well received by the Ministry of Interior. Further complications were envisaged in that some of the new threats were also perceived to be crucial factors in the creation of threat situations that would called for military action.

The question of drawing attention to threats to environmental security in the government report aroused much discussion in the working group. This was largely a question of delimitation: is climate change to be regarded as a security policy threat or not? The necessity for taking account of the security implications of environmental threats in the report's examination of broad-based security was recognized, but it was thought desirable to frame them as having a dual nature. Gradually accumulating environmental hazards (such as climate change, eutrophication of the Baltic Sea or the exhaustion of natural resources) were felt to be difficult to counteract but of increasing intensity and security impact. More serious attention had to be paid, however, to sudden accidents or environmental disasters, such as those potentially associated with the increased transportation of oil and chemical products in the Gulf of Finland. These latter threats were assigned a significant weight in the framing process: "the most probable environmental risk, and a constantly increasing one, is the rising volume of oil transportation via the Baltic Sea."¹⁷⁸ Other major catastrophes were also regarded as serious threats (above all accidents

perceived threats concerned were those arising from serious and organized crime, cybercrime, terrorism, immigration and threats to border security and the environment. Chapter seven, on the securitization of functions vital to society, followed the SFVS Strategy in concentrating on questions of securing essential supplies and emphasizing electronic communications systems, transportation and threat factors associated with radiation, chemicals and contagious diseases. See *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, pp. 129–147.

¹⁷⁷ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, pp. 9, 123. The report called for further development of the executive assistance functions of the Defence Forces to cope with other new threats (without defining them any more precisely).

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 137.

at nuclear power stations). It was also the case that, contrary to most of the other new threats, the environmental threats were ones in which the area immediately adjacent to Finland was seriously implicated, since Russia's inadequate infrastructure, the environmental loading from its industry and the poor safety standards of its nuclear power stations were seen as constituting threat factors for Finland. Prediction of the effects of these environmental threats was felt to be central to Finland's security policy.

As a general observation, it may be said that the new, non-military threats put forward in the report were in accordance with the western trend in the framing of threats in the early years of the 21st century, although they admittedly had national points of emphasis attached to them, e.g. in references to areas immediately adjacent to Finland, particularly Russia. It was also significant as far as the new threats were concerned (as also with the military threat models) that apart from the President and the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister and to some extent the Minister of the Interior, the members of the Cabinet Committee on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy had no chance to influence the construction of the threat descriptions until after the actual wording had been produced for them by the working group – and it is also notable that, partly for this reason, no major changes were made by the Cabinet Committee to the wording concerning the new threats. The decisions with regard to the inclusion and framing of the new threats had very largely been made during the administrative preparation of the project, under the political guidance of the security policy elite, and the role of the Cabinet Committee was mainly one of polishing the wording used in the framing and approving the threat images for publication in the report. The other committee members in many cases mentioned that they had not felt able (partly through shortage of time) to indulge in any serious criticism of the threat images submitted to the committee for discussion. Even so, the new threats were discussed in the committee to a greater extent than were the military threat models. The differences of opinion between the actors that arose in the discussions over the non-military threats pointed to both differences in world-view and differences in the decisions reached on the basis of the threat evaluations presented to them. A consensus regarding the eventual manner in which the new threat images were to be framed was nevertheless reported by all the committee members to have been reached relatively easily, even though some were of the opinion that

too much weight was given to directions of thought that were to the fore at the moment of writing rather than the fruits of their evaluation at the national level.

The military threat models

“Security policy is naturally also a question of being prepared for the less probable threats materializing. It is not enough simply to estimate that it is improbable that a certain threat might be realized; it is necessary to ask whether it is conceivably possible. When a country is planning its defence it has to recognize not only threats but also potential threats, as it may take ten years to construct the necessary defences to cope with these.”¹⁷⁹

The military threat models written into the government report and employed in defence planning¹⁸⁰ were constructed in the defence administration, mostly in the General Headquarters of the Finnish Defence Forces, *as continuations of the military threat models and situation descriptions included in the previous Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy (2001) and in the SFVS Strategy of 2003*. It should be noted that the defence administration did not attach very much weight to the description of the security environment provided in part I of the report, but rather the threat models and defence policies were defined in a certain sense independently of the security environment evaluations presented there.¹⁸¹ In fact, the military threat models were framed before the defence administration had any knowledge of the security environment evaluations produced for part I. Thus it may be said that *the military threat models in the report were constructed without any obvious administrative connection with the description of the security environment included*

¹⁷⁹ Matti Vanhanen, *Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan ajankohtaiset haasteet*, speech 4.11.2003.

¹⁸⁰ The report did not actually speak of military threat images but rather military threat models. This concept was used in order to emphasize the fact that the military threats were described on a very general level rather than with any detailed evaluations.

¹⁸¹ One exception to this concerned sections 2.6–2.8, the writing of which took place in close collaboration with the defence administration. The wording of section 2.6, on Russia, which had largely been produced by the defence administration, was nevertheless alleviated somewhat by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy.

in the government report. In the defence administration, and particularly in the Defence Forces, part I of the report, that produced in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was regarded as “one perspective on security and the threat situation” which was secondary to the “real, true threats that faced the Finnish nation”. The defence administration observed that part I had concentrated on global issues and the threat images that came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, images that were excessively idealistic, so that instead of providing a realistic security analysis, they described the world as the authors hoped it would become. Thus the defence administration did not attach much significance to part I in connection with its own work of constructing the military threat models but took its principal aim to be that of gaining political approval for the policies laid down in chapter five, “Development of the National Defence”.

It was a source of some annoyance to the defence administration in the course of the preparation of the report that messages were received from both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior accusing the defence administration of over-emphasizing the importance of the military threats and the state of uncertainty that prevailed in Russia at a time when the probability of a military threat was an extremely far-fetched idea. “People in Finland will die for quite different reasons, which have nothing to do with rifle bullets.” The messages questioned whether military threat models were necessary at all. The defence administration, for its own part, saw its mission, through its military threat models and Finland’s territorial defence system, as being to make adequate preparations for the more serious alternatives among the eventualities that could be envisaged, although at the same time it remained conscious of the increased need to steer the activities of the Defence Forces more than ever towards the provision of executive assistance in combating the new threats and towards international crisis management operations. *The construction of military threat models was grounded in the notion of Russia,* especially in evaluations of that country’s military capability, its ways of acting and the probability attached to the military threat it posed. Interviews with representatives of the defence administration suggest that this was something on which complete unanimity prevailed. The basis for the threat models to be included in the government report, on the other hand, lay in a technique of producing “publishable” models that were sufficiently loosely phrased and avoided pointing a finger at anyone in particular. Similarly the members of the working group and

the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy were disinclined to open up the content of the threat models, insisting instead that they should be framed in superficial and generalized terms. It was felt politically to be important that the threat models should not be targeted in any specific direction. For the defence administration, the loose form in which the models were presented was also a good thing as far as their functionality was concerned.

The defence administration was well aware during the work of preparing the government report of the general security discourse prevailing in the western countries which maintained that no actual threats existed, and this was perceived as increasing social pressure to justify Finland's persistent references to military threat models and defence policy decisions (e.g. the maintenance of a territorial defence system and universal male conscription).¹⁸² *It was also clear to the Finnish Defence Forces that the military threat images that were to be constructed (and the resulting defence policy recommendations) would contribute towards justifying and legitimizing the existence of the Defence Forces and the allocation of budgetary funds to the defence administration.* Both the Minister of Defence and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces emphasized the funding aspect and the resource needs of the defence administration in numerous speeches during the preparation of the report. "Although we have a good defence system, even that will not function without money."¹⁸³ "There are few privileges to be granted in the distribution of government money. The defence budget is in a state of open competition with other categories of government expenditure."¹⁸⁴ It was also the case, of course, that the military threat posed by Russia *was felt to be* more serious because of the political decision to remain outside NATO.

¹⁸² Cf. Juhani Kaskeala, *Puolustusvoimilla on kykyä ja valmiutta sopeutua turvalisuusympäristön muutoksiin*, speech at the opening of the 168th National Defence Course, Puhe 168. Maanpuolustuskurssin avajaisissa 22.9.2003.

¹⁸³ Juhani Kaskeala, *Suomella ei ole tarvetta muuttaa omintakeista puolustusjärjestelmäänsä*, 8.3.2004.

¹⁸⁴ Seppo Kääriäinen, *Tervehdys maanpuolustuskurssin avajaisissa*, 22.9.2003.

Construction of the military threat models for the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy may be regarded as having begun immediately after the publication of the previous report, since monitoring of the situation with regard to Russia and updating of the estimated threats was a continuous process taking place in the Operations Division and intelligence arms of the Defence Forces' General Headquarters and it was from these sources that the military threat models were extracted. The monitoring was based above all on evaluations of military capability and to some extent the will to use this capability; i.e. what military action could be taken against Finland and how likely this was. Such evaluations were not made public, but they were used to draw up threat models couched in general terms that were intended for publication, and discussions with broadly the same content (what Russia was militarily capable of and what the likelihood was that it would resort to military force) also took place within the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy in the course of preparing the 2004 report. The outcome was a clear desire to indicate in the report that Russia was still the most significant military power in the areas adjacent to Finland and that it retained the capability to deploy traditional military forces.¹⁸⁵

The threat models for the report were produced in the Operations Division of the General Headquarters as part of the Defence Forces' normal operational planning. Although it was realized in the Operations Division at a relatively early stage that there was little need for any major changes to be made to the military threat models included in the 2001 government report, discussions did take place there and in the General Headquarters as a whole regarding the content of the models as they were to be presented in the new report and especially the manner in which the descriptions were to be made. In the words of the headquarters staff who took part in constructing the models, they were based on a protracted and thoroughgoing underlying assessment of the existing situation, from which they could be derived relatively easily. The Operations Division did not produce any actual alternative models, although various alternatives were discussed in the initial stages. The draft models were then evaluated in the General Headquarters, with the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Operations,

¹⁸⁵ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 68.

together with the Commander-in-Chief, exercising the greatest influence on their final framing. The wording of the models and the descriptions of their content were weighed up very carefully in the General Headquarters, but no specific political guidance was provided during this process, not even by the Minister of Defence, so that the models may be understood as having been constructed entirely within the Headquarters of the Defence Forces. It is true, however, that the Commander-in-Chief discussed the threat models and the principles underlying them through both official and unofficial channels with the President of Finland in particular and also with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence. The guidance received from the Ministry of Defence, on the other hand, concerned other parts of the government report that were to be prepared in the General Headquarters more than it did the military threat models.¹⁸⁶

The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, Admiral Juhani Kaskela, played a central role in the construction of the military threat models, taking an active part in their evaluation and in working up their content and in practising granting his approval to the models produced by the General Headquarters before they were passed on for political discussion. In fact it is possible in a sense to view the models as statements of the will of the Commander-in-Chief, whose authority in these matters it is very difficult to question in the political arena.

The hand of the Commander-in-Chief was perhaps most distinctly to be seen in the deletion (as a separate model) of the threat of a large-scale offensive directed at Finland. The decision to abandon this scenario was taken in the Commander-in-Chief's own office, on the grounds that he no longer regarded its manner of presentation as credible and believed that the quoting of this outdated model would only arouse criticism in political circles; i.e. the model was difficult to justify or "sell" to the politicians. He regarded the words "large-scale offensive" as old-fashioned, and it had in any case been concluded in the General Headquarters that as a threat this was extremely improbable. Although it remained in existence as far as defence

¹⁸⁶ The civil servants in the Ministry of Defence expressed a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the independent manner in which the General Headquarters set about preparing material for the government report, both the military threat models and the other defence policy sections for which the defence administration was responsible.

planning was concerned, the idea was that it should be framed in quite a different form for the government report, partly in order to demonstrate that the Defence Forces were abreast with the times and prepared to make changes even to military threat models that had been regarded as more or less permanent. A more important goal was that the possibility of military force being deployed should be retained in the threat models. There were admittedly some people in the General Headquarters who were critical of the decision to leave out the reference to a large-scale offensive, but it should in all fairness be noted that the idea behind this threat model was not actually removed from the report; it was merely expressed in a different manner from previously.

One place that became an important venue for internal discussions within the defence administration was the Guards' Cabinet, where the Minister of Defence, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces and the Chief of Staff used to meet together with the aim of increasing the opportunities for open discussion between the leadership of the ministry and the armed forces and creating a body of parallel and coincident opinion. A great deal of discussion took place there on the military threat models, as also on other aspects of the government report that had been entrusted to the defence administration, and it was there, in the Guards' Cabinet, that approval was sought from the leadership of the Ministry of Defence, and above all from the minister himself,¹⁸⁷ for the models produced by the General Headquarters before they were sent on to the working group and eventually to the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. Unanimity with regard to the threat models was achieved relatively easily in that forum, and no changes were made to them other than a few adjustments to the wording.

The preparatory work in the General Headquarters and the negotiations in the Guards' Cabinet led eventually to the presentation of three threat models for inclusion in the report. The first of these was the *Regional Crisis* model, which referred to a situation in which a

¹⁸⁷ The staff of the Ministry of Defence, and more particularly the General Headquarters of the Defence Forces, had reservations regarding the views of the Minister of Defence, Seppo Kääriäinen, who was known to place more weight on government policies, to be dubious of the "opinions of the generals" and to take regional policy issues very seriously even in matters of defence.

crisis affecting a geographically restricted area lying outside the borders of Finland were to have repercussions for Finland itself. The second was that of *Political, Economic and Military Pressure*, with an associated threat of the use of military force and possibly its actual use on a limited scale. This presupposed that another state or an actor of some other kind were to attempt to influence decisions made by the sovereign government of Finland. Both of these models were put forward in the same manner as they had appeared in the corresponding report of 2001. The third model was that involving *Use of Military Force, implying either a strategic strike or an incursion beginning with a strategic strike and intended to occupy some area or areas of Finnish territory*. This was in effect a combination of the Strategic Strike and Large-scale Offensive models of the 2001 report, and it was noted that events consistent with the model could lead to a large-scale offensive. In addition, it was stated in Finnish defence planning that preparations should be made to prevent or restrict *all attempts to use the methods of asymmetrical warfare*. Asymmetrical warfare was not put forward as a threat model of its own, however, but was treated as a feature that could be combined with the other military threat models or with precautions taken in all branches of the administration within Finnish society.¹⁸⁸

As far as the military threat models were concerned it should be noted that the core mission of the Defence Forces continued to be to maintain “the capacity to defend their own area against military aggression or the threat of this”¹⁸⁹; in other words, to provide security for the territory of Finland in the face of a military threat. This statement of policy may be regarded as indicative of both recognition of the possibility of a military threat and political acceptance of the threat models put forward.

¹⁸⁸ It was written into the report that “the principal asymmetrical threats are regarded as being terrorism and sabotage, the spread or use of weapons of mass destruction and information warfare.” *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 101. The military threat models have also aroused criticism within the Defence Forces. “The image of war that prevails today in Finland, for example, is based to a high degree on experiences gained during the Second World War and operational models, equipment and organizational structures dating from the Cold War era.” Raitasalo & Sipilä, “Näkökulma sotaan”, p. 8.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p.75.

Discussion of the threat models by the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy

The working group and the Committee on Foreign and Security Policy made no changes to the content of the military threat models as drawn up in the General Headquarters of the Defence Forces and confirmed in the Guards' Cabinet, so that they were written into the report in the form in which they had been framed by the defence administration. They did discuss the models at length, however, especially on account of the low probabilities attached to them, and again the Defence Forces exercised a substantial influence on these discussions and on the political acceptance achieved by the models. The papers presented to the working group by the Chief of Staff, Chief of Operations and Chief of Intelligence at the General Headquarters on the necessity for the military threat models and the nature of the models themselves were regarded by the members of the group as having been highly convincing, so that it may be concluded that the Defence Forces, by dint of their expertise and the information that they provided, had a considerable influence on the working group's evaluations of the military threats, i.e. the working group believed in the facts presented by the Defence Forces. Some of the members of that group were nevertheless critical of the manner in which the military threats had been framed in the report itself, regarding the models as outdated and attributable more to the Second World War and the Cold War era.¹⁹⁰ Certain tensions were introduced into the working group's discussions by the differences in outlook between those members who wished to emphasize the "topical" (i.e. new) threat images and those whose evaluations favoured long-term (i.e. military) threat factors. Although the working group was well aware of the uniqueness of the Finnish estimate of the military threat, which deviated markedly from the western frame of reference, and found it necessary to ponder over the term "strategic strike", it did not seriously challenge either the existence or the content of the military threat models. In the end the group came to the conclusion that one should not put too much trust in the generally accepted favourable trend in Finland's security environment.

¹⁹⁰ Some members of the working group were also highly critical of the means put forward for countering the threats referred to in the models. One member, for instance, observed that "the territorial defence system belongs in the same class as an open-air museum."

The President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence were in a better position to evaluate the military threat models placed before them than were the other members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, as the defence administration was in the habit of holding a separate information session once or twice a year to brief these members of the security policy elite on strategic developments in the areas bordering on Finland, the principles on which the defence administration was conducting its operative planning, other military defence matters and military threat factors and the models based on these that were being used in defence planning. More emphasis than ever was placed on these contacts and the openness with which information was exchanged during Juhani Kaskeala's term of office as Commander-in-Chief. In addition, the Commander-in-Chief held regular meetings with the President and the Minister of Defence. It was thus natural that the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence should be the best informed members of the Cabinet Committee with regard to Russia's military capabilities and the backgrounds to the threat models, although the other members were also in principle familiar with these matters. In this way it may very well be said that political acceptance had already been obtained for the military threat models contained in the report, especially since the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence made it clear in meetings of the committee that they regarded the models proposed for inclusion in the report as being appropriate for the purpose. This meant, of course, that the other members felt that against this background they could scarcely set out to criticize the military threat models, which were consequently ratified in the Cabinet Committee without any changes.

One significant fact about the political confirmation of the military threat models was that *scarcely any attempt was made during the preparation process to question the threat evaluations put forward by the Defence Forces*, i.e. the members of the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy had the utmost confidence in them. The Cabinet Committee members felt that the defence administration was best equipped and suitably trained to evaluate military threat factors, and thus even in this forum the discussions paid less attention to the military threat models and concentrated instead on the new perceived threats. Thus the Cabinet Committee did not actually doubt the necessity for the military threat models nor did it dispute their existence (nor that of the territorial

defence system, for instance), but it was of the opinion that the new threats would be more likely to demand increased attention in the future, including work on defining means of combating them. It was also felt in the Cabinet Committee that the published military threat models should to some extent be couched in guarded terms, a view with which the defence administration concurred. Thus the representatives of the Finnish Defence Forces who were interviewed for the purposes of this work consistently maintained that the military threat models came as close to the truth as they conceivably could given the nature of the report as a public and essentially political document.

How was retention of the military threat models justified?

It is true that the chances of any of the threat models put forward in the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy being realized were regarded in general (in both the defence administration and the working group and Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy) as very slight, and both the Minister of Defence and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces stated in public on numerous occasions that there was no real military threat aimed at Finland.¹⁹¹ At the same time the civil servants and politicians engaged in preparing the report were well aware that the perceived military threats had faded somewhat in the western countries and the threat posed by terrorism had increased and understood the securitization pressures created by the new threats, which they regarded as making the traditional defence policy conclusions set out in the document more difficult to accept. Indeed, the defence administration, too, had observed that the justifications for its military threat models had become less acceptable both to politicians and to Finnish society in general, and admitted that the arguments for the existence of a defence force contained in this report had to be grounded more firmly than previously in duties related to international crisis management and the provision of executive assistance to other authorities.¹⁹² One pertinent question regarding the military threat

¹⁹¹ See, for example, Seppo Kääriäinen, *Puhe Reserviläisliiton maanpuolustusjuhlassa*, 24.11.2003; Juhani Kaskeala, *Puolustusvoimien toiminta kansainvälisen rauhan ja turvallisuuden tukena*, 24.11.2004.

¹⁹² Cf. *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, pp. 92, 101–102, 123.

models is therefore what facts were felt to constitute the principal justifications for the retention of the military threat models at the stage of preparing the government report.

The defence administration was well informed about the positive attitude of the major political parties towards the retention of the basic outlines of Finland's defence policy (e.g. universal male conscription) and their views on the *possibility* of a military threat in the future. On the other hand (against this background) it was also felt within the defence administration – on account of the need to justify the threat models – that the general nature of these models (e.g. the fact that they did not name any specific external actor) and their widely recognized low intensity made it difficult to justify their inclusion. Thinking along the same lines, it was stated by a representative of the Defence Forces that “it would have been very much easier to formulate perceived military threats in a manner that would have gained the acceptance of both politicians and ordinary citizens if there had been a clearly defined external factor to point to” and that “a very small probability attached to a military threat doesn't attract attention.” Although the defence administration was agreed that no sources of possible military threats should be named in the government report, it was nevertheless felt that this facelessness of the threats made them more difficult to legitimate.¹⁹³ The interviews carried out for the present work suggest that the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy in particular adopted a responsible attitude up to a certain point towards the national defence and the seriousness of the military threat models. Although they conceded that the risk of a military threat was small, they nevertheless wished to support the defence policy solutions put forward in the report as a matter of Finland's security: “we must always take care of our defence,” as one committee member put it.

The views put forward in the defence administration, the working group and the Cabinet Committee regarding the necessity for retaining the military threat models and the manner in which the perceived

¹⁹³ As far as legitimization of the military threat models was concerned, the Defence Forces regarded the regional and national defence courses as playing an especially important role, as the models were discussed in these in greater detail than in the government report. On the influence of the defence courses, see Peter Ekholm, *Ymmärrystä yli rajojen: Valtakunnallisten maanpuolustuskurssien vaikuttavuus*, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Strategian laitos, julkaisusarja 2, No. 32, Helsinki 2006.

threats should be framed may be interpreted as comprising four entities which complement and reinforce each other:

1) *The continued existence of a military capability in the area adjacent to Finland*, a reference to the Russians' military capacity and the potential threat posed by it. In such circumstances Finland should possess sufficient military resources, as "an attempt should be made by means of a credible national defence capability to pre-empt the development of a security risk focused on the territory of Finland."¹⁹⁴ It should be possible to respond to military capacity with military capacity; in other words, the Defence Forces should be in a position to demonstrate a sufficient performance capability to deter the use, or threat of use, of armed forces against Finland. This was a matter of a "fire insurance" intended to prevent and safeguard against the most serious threats to Finnish security that could be envisaged. The decline in the probability attached to such a military threat was not regarded as altering the basic starting point, the fact that Russia was a neighbouring state with which Finland did not have a relationship of equality in terms of military capacity. The military capacity remaining in the areas adjacent to Finland was estimated to be such that realization of the military threats was conceivable at some time in the future: "Russia remains the most significant military power in the areas bordering on Finland, and although it is going through a critical stage of development in military terms, it is still capable of deploying conventional forces in the region."¹⁹⁵ *Thus Russia's military capacity served as a major justification for the military threat models.* This was above all a matter of *awareness of the possibility of a military threat*, and the existence of the possibility of military threats was not called into question during the preparation of the government report, even though widely differing views were expressed regarding the probabilities attached to their realization.

2) *Uncertainty about developments in Russia.* At the same time as those preparing the report were aware of the military capacity existing in the area adjacent to Finland, they were also aware of a certain anxiety and uncertainty regarding future developments in Russia and in the global situation and relations between the superpowers as a whole. Although Finland's security environment was felt to have

¹⁹⁴ *Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004*, p. 85.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 68.

become more stable and the probability of the use of military force against Finnish territory to have diminished, future developments in the security situation were approached with caution. Illustrative of this were the comment by one member of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy that “we cannot know with any certainty what our security environment may be like in ten years’ time” and the view expressed by the Prime Minister that “in spite of the favourable developments in our immediate environment in the last few years, it is important that we should be prepared for military crisis situations of various kinds.”¹⁹⁶ This may be taken as a reference to possible changes in the state of political will lying behind the deployment of military force: “Who would remember any longer that only ten years ago there were still Russian troops stationed in the Baltic States?”¹⁹⁷ Future uncertainties were also alluded to in order to justify the long-term development of the Finnish Defence Forces: “Run-down military capacity and diminutive armed forces cannot be revived overnight.”¹⁹⁸

3) *Finland’s geographical location.* Reference was frequently made when framing the military threat factors to the geographical proximity of Finland to Russia, and to the long common boundary between the two states. It was accepted that Finland’s security evaluations and conclusions were inevitably affected by “geographical realities”, and that the situation was different for states that “in view of their geographical location are able to adopt other defence policy solutions.”¹⁹⁹ Another geographical aspect, of course, was the difference in territorial size between Finland and Russia.

4) *The lessons of history.* The members of the Cabinet Committee felt that the whole task of constructing the perceived military threats was hampered by a certain historical handicap which on the other hand

¹⁹⁶ Matti Vanhanen, *Puhe turvallisuus- ja puolustuspoliittisen selonteon lähetekeskustelussa*, 28.9.2004.

¹⁹⁷ Juhani Kaskeala, *Suomella ei ole tarvetta muuttaa omintakeista puolustusjärjestelmäänsä*, 8.3.2004.

¹⁹⁸ Seppo Kääriäinen, *Puhe 169. maanpuolustuskurssin avajaisissa*, 10.11.2003.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Tarja Halonen, who observed in public that “We have a fairly large territory to defend, and we are in a geographical situation that means we can choose the Swedish option of leaving defence to our neighbours.” *Helsingin Sanomat* 28.4.2004; see also the view of the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, “We should not set out to make changes just because other people are doing so.” Kaskeala, *Suomella ei ole tarvetta muuttaa omintakeista puolustusjärjestelmäänsä*..

was regarded as a necessary component when evaluating both the possibility of a military threat and the uncertainty regarding future developments. "Finland has faced challenges of many kinds during its history, and a readiness to defend itself has proved decisive at moments of crisis."²⁰⁰ History was seen as reminding the Finns that they had had to rely on military force previously to ensure their freedom of action as an independent state, and the continued presence of war veterans in Finnish society was seen constructing a mood of acceptance of the existence of a military threat and a feeling that the country might be subjected to such a threat in the future. In the course of the interviews the military threat models were often accentuated by placing them within a historical framework.

Parliamentary approval of the perceived threats

The Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy was subjected to a very thorough discussion in Parliament, which was informed of its arrival on 24.9.2004 and held its preliminary debate on the subject (before the committee stage), which attracted no less than 206 speeches, on 28.9.2004. Particularly vehement opinions were put forward regarding the parliamentary committee in which it should be discussed, the Defence Committee or the Foreign Affairs Committee, and it was emphasized in many speeches that this was a question of who should determine the basic parliamentary outlines of Finland's future security and defence policy. Those in favour of the Foreign Affairs Committee stressed the relationship between ends and means, concluding that it was the task of that committee to define Parliament's line of argument on security policy, on the basis of which its defence policy could be developed.²⁰¹ It was nevertheless decided after a vote on the matter to uphold the view of the speaker's council and ask the Defence Committee to prepare the actual parliamentary evaluation of the report, while the Foreign Affairs, Treasury and Administrative Committees could submit statements of their own.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Matti Vanhanen, *Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan ajankohtaiset haasteet*, 4.1.2003.

²⁰¹ See, for example, Liisa Jaakonsaari *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa 28.9.2004*, PTK 97/2004 vp; Heidi Hautala *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa 29.9.2004*, PTK 98/2004 vp.

²⁰² The comprehensiveness of the committee stage is reflected well in the work done by the Defence Committee alone, which held 31 meetings on this topic, questioned 141 expert advisors and even made journeys abroad to examine certain issues first-hand. It is

Many of the speakers in the preliminary hearing predicted that the Defence Committee would be more inclined to support the defence policy outlines contained in the report than would the Foreign Affairs Committee. All in all, the hearing gave the impression of a state of competition between the two committees which reflected the dichotomy between the military and non-military concepts of security. At least it may be said that the content of the document approved by Parliament as an evaluation of the Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy was influenced to a considerable degree by the choice of committee to draw up that document. As far as the broadening of the concept of security was concerned, one issue that arose out of the preliminary hearing was the suggestion that Parliament should have a separate Security Committee.

Before the approval of the Defence Committee's evaluation and the five statements appended to it on 21.12.2004 (after which these documents were sent to the Council of State for appropriate action to be taken), a feedback discussion was held in a plenary session of Parliament at which a further 162 speeches were made. Given that the part played by Parliament in the production of the Government Report also included the work of the Monitoring Group during its preparation, it may be said to have discussed the report extensively. The manner in which the report had been prepared was generally praised in Parliament, and it was noted that the Monitoring Group had formed a useful parliamentary bridge at the preparation stage, and one in which the voice of the opposition parties could be heard as well. It was also noted in the feedback discussion that the suggestions made by the Monitoring Group had been taken into account to a creditable extent in the eventual report. Thus the final statement on the Government Report as approved by Parliament included the provision that the same preparation procedure should be adopted in the case of the 2008 report.²⁰³ There was not a single speech in Parliament in which a return to the procedure involving parliamentary defence committees was advocated; on the contrary, it was agreed that the government report procedure as it stood had proved to be a suitable

significant as far as the use of expert advisors was concerned that the majority of these were on the staff of the Defence Forces or interest groups with links to the national defence. The committee's procedure thus involved consultations with a large number of experts, the information provided by whom will have greatly influence the content of their evaluation.

²⁰³ *Eduskunnan kirjelmä 21.12.2004*, EK 35/2004 vp.

means of evaluating Finland's security environment, security and defence policies and defence budget at regular intervals. The report was criticized for its excessive breadth, its descriptive use of language and its "all-embracing nature", and particularly lively discussions took place in Parliament (in connection with the perceived threats) over the assignment of budgetary funds to the various branches of security and the determination of priorities between these branches.

The discussion of the Government Report in Parliament may be seen to have been inspired by a broad understanding of the threats involved, in which the representatives' various opinions and world-views were eventually reconciled to create a relatively unanimous basis for action. Given the frank and open atmosphere that prevailed in Parliament, this security policy consensus may be said to have been achieved precisely through critical discussion, and the parliamentary discussions and committee work clearly formed a major public arena in which to construct a truly Finnish (national) line of thought on perceived threats, thereby demolishing the hegemony of the security policy elite that had been criticized earlier. The openness of the discussion was much praised in Parliament: "Now everybody can join in the discussion, even those who do not think on the same lines as our foreign policy leaders."²⁰⁴ It was noted that the handling of the process of approving the Government Report in Parliament had given rise to "an unprecedentedly lively bout of public discussion,"²⁰⁵ and that the threat images for which the Council of State had sought parliamentary approval had been subjected to a broad-based critical evaluation. This also meant, however, that other motives such as regional policy or party-political ones could easily have become associated with these images.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the active debate that took place over the perceived threats can be seen to have created a good foundation for the preparing of the next such report, enabling a consensus to be achieved within the political decision-making system and increasing confidence in the nature of jointly defined threat images.

²⁰⁴ Outi Ojala *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelussa 20.12.2004*, PTK 143/2004 vp.

²⁰⁵ Suvi-Anne Siimes *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelussa 20.12.2004*, PTK 143/2004 vp.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, Mia-Petra Kumpula *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa 28.9.2004*, PTK 97/2004 vp; Markus Mustajärvi *Eduskunnan palautekeskustelussa 20.12.2004*, PTK 143/2004 vp.

Four general remarks need to be made concerning the parliamentary handling of the Government Report. 1) Although one can see that the report (and the expectations associated with it in advance) provided a wealth of material for extensive, profound discussions on the nature of security and perceived threats, the actual parliamentary discussion remained relatively meagre in this respect, especially where the evaluations of the security environment and critical examinations of the threat images presented in the report were concerned.²⁰⁷ 2) The discussions in Parliament were dominated by the anti-personnel mines issue, the line adopted in the report with regard to NATO and the concept of military non-alignment. Also, the discussions on matters of defence policy frequently became centred around regional policy considerations. 3) The extensive parliamentary handling of the report tended to promote the politicization of security and the perceived threats. The remark made by the Prime Minister when placing the report before Parliament that “security and defence policy in Finland are political matters”²⁰⁸ was referred to in many of the subsequent contributions to the discussion and was interpreted as increasing the politicization of security, and this in turn led other contributors to speak of the growing political nature of security and of the need to recognize that *the defining of security and perceived threats is a part of politics just as other political actions are*.²⁰⁹ This may be understood as suggesting that the political room for manoeuvre in the defining of perceived threats had broadened, so that these threats could be more freely interpreted in different ways. Members of parliament occupied a political vantage point when it came to observing the politicization of security and perceived threats, but at the same time they were themselves promoting this trend. 4) The discussions of the report in Parliament may be seen to have enlivened the already fairly high profile of the largest opposition party at that time, the conservative Coalition Party, in matters of security and defence policy.

²⁰⁷ The members of the working group were in fact slightly disappointed with the discussion of the report in Parliament.

²⁰⁸ Matti Vanhanen *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa* 28.9.2004, PTK 97/2004 vp.

²⁰⁹ See, for example, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Suvi-Anne Siimes and Lauri Oinonen *Eduskunnan lähetekeskustelussa* 28.9.2004, PTK 97/2004 vp.

Conclusions

The consensus principle, guarded language and frank discussion

The descriptions of the “new” perceived threats included in the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy that had been defined in accordance with the broad-based concept of security were produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to some extent by the Ministry of the Interior, while the military threat models were provided by the defence administration. In all cases the final framing and political approval was the responsibility of the working group and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. The evaluation document issued by Parliament after its extensive discussion of the report was drawn up by the Parliamentary Defence Committee. In view of the above, it is understandable that the threat descriptions contained in the government report itself and in the parliamentary evaluation should be *couched in guarded terms* on account of their highly political nature and the seriousness of their content.

The construction of the perceived threats for the report was guided by a desire to achieve a consensus, a politically achieved state of unanimity. Both the working group and the Cabinet Committee, and indeed also the Monitoring Group, regarded it as highly important that unanimity should be achieved on the elements of security and defence policy that were put forward, and also on the threat descriptions, and this consensus arrived at in the course of preparing the report was praised after the event.²¹⁰ There was similarly a conscious desire to express the perceived threats in a neutral, generalized manner, which would facilitate the reaching of a political understanding over them and, given that they served as clues to the direction of Finnish foreign policy, would obviate any needless damage to foreign relations. Thus the military threat models may be seen as a kind of compromise between a public declaration and a covert agenda: there was a genuine desire to bring them to the fore in the report, but only as generalized models that were not targeted at any specific actors. It is highly improbable, in fact, that any true concealed agenda of perceived

²¹⁰ See Erkki Tuomioja, Seppo Kääriäinen, ”Konsensusta kannattaa tavoitella”, *Helsingin Sanomat* 10.10.2007.

threats that departed markedly in content from that published in the report ever existed.

The consensus principle was a cultural factor that undoubtedly influenced the process of constructing the threat perceptions, a tradition, as it were, that governed the formulation of security and defence policies. The threat images for the report were constructed in such a way that it would be as easy as possible for all the political parties and actors involved to approve them, and therefore they may be described as essentially functional, and also innocuous. The desire to achieve a broad political consensus may be regarded as having influenced the development of a generalized and comprehensive framing technique, just as it may also be thought to have introduced a certain permanence and acceptability into the military threat models in particular. On the other hand, the drive for a consensus meant that the report as a whole adopted a more declarative perspective that was adapted to the realities of the security environment rather than providing a clear description of the (purposeful) will of the Finnish people with regard to security policy. The threat perceptions set out in the report should be looked on as compromises, matters agreed on politically through processes of preparation and discussion. The composition of the government of the time cannot be taken as having exercised any substantial influence on the threat images constructed for the report, even though the close participation of certain actors such as the Foreign Minister did affect the ways in which the new threats were framed. It can nevertheless be assumed that differently constituted governments will inevitably introduce different emphases into the content of the threat descriptions in their reports.

The parliamentary Security Policy Monitoring Group may be said to have assisted greatly in the forming of a consensus, as one of the purposes of the group was to ensure that the views of all the parties represented in Parliament regarding the content of the country's security and defence policies came to the attention of those responsible for preparing the report and in this way to expedite the unanimous approval of the report when it came to be discussed in Parliament. It is surprising, therefore, that the parliamentary discussion of the perceived threats was fairly critical in its tone, a fact which must be taken as an indication of *the atmosphere of frankness that prevailed in the discussion and the demand for proper justifications for the perceived threats*. Although it is possible to

conclude from the parliamentary discussion that it had become more difficult to achieve a consensus among the Finns regarding their threat perceptions at the same time as the *open* politicization of the threat images had increased, it should be noted that the discrepancies between the views of the major parties on the threats largely concerned differences in emphasis, primarily between the new threats and the military threats. At any rate, in spite of the contrasting views put forward in Parliament and the lively discussions held there, the general impression remains of a powerful desire to achieve a broader national unanimity in matters of security policy. The expression of critical views and differing opinions in Parliament was not seen as detracting from the consensus principle but rather as strengthening it. The parliamentary approval gained by the report and the associated broad-based, frank political discussion may be regarded as a good thing as far as Finnish threat perception policy is concerned.

The power of experts and the belief in authorities

The construction of the threat images for the report may be viewed as a field of activity in which political power came face to face with the power of the civil service. The structure of the preparation process (particularly the role and composition of the working group) provided the civil servants with an excellent starting point for influencing the perceived threats to be put forward, while the principal political actors involved in the process were the President of Finland, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defence, which meant in practice that although the administration exercised a considerable influence in this respect, all the most significant decisions were taken under guidance from the security policy elite and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. In the last resort it fell to the Cabinet Committee to determine how the threat images were to be presented in the final text of the report and what degrees of emphasis should be placed on the individual images. Thus the perceived threats for the report were the product of preparatory work by the civil servants combined with political approval.

The influence of civil servants and experts was greatest in the case of the military threat models. These models were produced by the defence administration and the arguments behind them relied very

firmly on experts from that quarter who were summoned before the Cabinet Committee, the working group and the Parliamentary Defence Committee. Thus the construction of the military threat models may be said to have been guided by a certain belief in the authority of the defence administration, above all the Defence Forces. On the other hand, many of the political actors, including some of the members of the Cabinet Committee, felt that they were insufficiently well equipped to question the content of the threat models set before them, or else were not desirous of doing so. Thus the military threat models were not really questioned at all in the course of preparing the report, although they were in Parliament, especially by members of the Green and Left-wing parties. Political influence came into play to a greater extent in the case of the non-military threats, however, and the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were especially active in laying emphasis on a broad-based concept of security and in guiding the construction of threat images for part I of the report. The new threats were also looked on by many as being politically “easier” to examine and discuss, an impression that was compounded by the complexity of the operational environments involved and the concentration of means of combating the threats. Far more non-military threat descriptions were produced by the civil servants at the preparation stage than were actually included in the report, and the choice of those to be put forward for securitization was clearly a matter for political deliberation. Apart from this delimitation problem, however, these threat images could not be said to have been questioned politically in the course of the preparation work. All in all, the government report may be regarded as have been to a significant extent an administratively constructed document.

Changes in the perceived threats

The construction of perceived threats for the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy was not so much a matter of actual securitization (the definition of entirely new threat images) as of adjusting the content descriptions and intensities of threat images put forward previously in the corresponding report of 2001. Developments in the international security environment, globalization and increased interdependence between states in matters of security

were felt in general to have accelerated the increase in the impact of non-military threats on the security of Finland and the Finnish people; i.e. *the intensity of the new threats was framed in the 2004 report as having grown while that of the military threats models had declined*. This was a question of laying emphasis on the indivisibility and broad-based nature of the concept of security. Terrorism, the spread and deployment of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and threats to environmental and cyber security were those described in the report as having increased in intensity most of all. Of these, the perceived threats to environmental security and those arising from organized crime were closely associated with Russia (the latter connection not having been made in the 2001 government report), while the others belonged for the most part to the global security environment, although epidemics and threats to nuclear security, shipping and border security were also attributed more clearly to Russia than elsewhere. Similarly, emphasis was laid on the enhanced connection between internal and external security and the diversification of means of combating threats. A more significant role was constructed for internal security than in previous reports.

The 2004 report depicted a closer link between Finland's perceived threats and those defined for the European Union than on previous occasions and emphasized the country's growing obligations as an EU member to accept responsibility for international security and control over globalization. It also provided quite comprehensive descriptions of the factors lying behind the global threats, such as poverty and clashes of cultures. At the same time, more emphasis than in the 2001 report was placed on the significance of overseas development policy as one aspect of security policy. Especially noticeable was the significant prioritization of terrorism among the perceived threats,²¹¹ although not so much as a threat to Finland as to the western countries in general. The events of September 11th 2001 and the terrorist attacks in Madrid had served to underline the significance of the threat posed by terrorism, and many other threats (such as those associated with weapons of mass destruction and disintegrating states) were linked to terrorism in the report, as was common amongst other western actors.

²¹¹ Illustrative of this was the fact that where the word for terrorism (in its various grammatical forms) occurred only 13 times in the 2001 report, it appeared 177 times in the 2004 version.

The major alteration to the military threat models concerned the omission of the model of a large-scale invasion of Finnish territory contained in the 2001 report and its re-framing as part of a new model entailing the use of military force, along with the threat of a strategic strike, which had similarly been a separate model in earlier times. This did not mark any change in the principles of defence planning but was merely a means of gaining political approval for the threat models by means of shaping their content in a new, up-to-date way. Another new feature of the military threat descriptions was the mention of means of combating asymmetrical warfare, whereas the regional crisis and political, economic and/or military pressure models remained unchanged.

It was characteristic of the formulation of the threat perceptions, both military and non-military, that they were “superimposed on” those contained in the 2001 report, with or without alterations in their presentation. In other words, those perceived threats that had already been securitized in the previous report had a certain built-in value and seal of approval, so that deletion of one or more previously perceived threats or securitization of an entirely new perceived threat in the course of the preparation process proved considerably more difficult than the re-formulation of existing ones.

Disputable threat perceptions

The disputes over threat perceptions in connection with the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy can be regarded as having arisen for three reasons:

a) Problems with defining the concept of broad-based security

A substantial problem affecting the definition of threats for the report concerned the fact that although the concept of broad-base security was well established in political parlance, it had never been properly defined, leading to difficulties in defining and delimiting the related concepts of broad-based and “new” perceived threats. Given that the question of what threat perceptions should be taken into account in the security and defence policy report, and to what extent, was constantly to the fore in the process of producing the report, it is clear that the

disputes over these perceptions were frequently connected with the problem of delimitation and the failure to define the concepts rather than the threats themselves or their content. It should be noted that the accepted target of securitization laid down for the government report, “the country’s independence and basic democratic values and the security and welfare of its citizens”,²¹² made it possible to set out to examine threats at the level of the individual citizen, which may be seen as implying an extension of the conventional concept of security but accepting personal welfare as a part of national security policy. This means that the definition of security must encompass everything from the use of military force to environmental disasters and the alienation of individuals from society.

Thus the failure to set out from proper definitions of broad-based security and the “new threats” made it possible to bring a wide variety of interests and objectives to bear on the perceived threats that were to be presented in the report. This led to conflicts at the administrative level (between the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence) over the content of the threat perceptions, and more particularly over the relative priorities to be assigned to them and the budgetary requirements associated with controlling or combating them. The failure to define the necessary concepts meant that the non-military threat perceptions in general became politicized still further, partly on account of the weaker cultural continuity attached to them (by comparison with the militarized threat models) and partly because resistance to the threats was possible through routine channels, without resorting to emergency measures of the kind envisaged in terms of security theory. The indeterminacy of the concepts left them open to broad-scale political exploitation; i.e. they could be defined and interpreted as demanded by political expediency. It was true, of course, that it was very much easier, and politically more apposite, for political actors to understand and discuss the new threats than the military threat models, which called for a great deal more specialized knowledge. And so it was that broad-based security and the new threats, even if only as concepts, were objects of lively discussion throughout the process of constructing the government report.

²¹² Suomen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka 2004, p. 77.

b) The dichotomous nature of the report and its problematical status as a security document

The dual nature of the report, the illogical relationship between its two parts, devoted respectively to security and defence, surrounded the threat perceptions in an air of controversy in spite of the powerful general principle of political consensus that lay behind them. The internal structure of the report – the description of the security environment prepared primarily by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the defence policy section provided by the Ministry of Defence – did not bind together to form a logical entity. In other words, it was difficult to construct a logical connection between the predominantly global, non-military description of the security environment set out in part I and the defence policy outlines and means of control as set out in part II. This meant that the overall picture created by the report was a dichotomous one: on the one hand the government was prepared to approve and commit itself to perceived threats to broad-based security but the instruments for combating these were not brought forward in its report (no measures were recommended for responding to the new threats), while on the other hand, the defence policy section concentrated almost exclusively on military threat models and development of the defence administration to respond to them even though attempts were being made at the same time to strengthen the Defence Forces' capabilities for combating non-military threats (such as terrorism). The internal inconsistency in the report should not be attributed to a weakness in its preparation but rather to the structure created for carrying out the preparation work, which inevitably led to such an outcome.

This existence of “two reports in one volume” led to much unnecessary criticism of the threat perceptions and consideration of these in opposition to each other during the preparation process, even though it was primarily a matter of differences in the means for controlling and combating the various threats. *The distorted structure of the report clearly led to a state of competition between the threat perceptions associated with internal, national and constitutional security on the one hand and those associated with international security on the other, as reflected in the difficulty of reconciling these threat perceptions with each other.* The protracted discussion over which parliamentary committee should draft the evaluation document was a direct consequence of the dual nature of the report itself and its

power to steer the parliamentary discussion away from the real substance of the report.

It may indeed be claimed that the procedure of producing government security and defence policy reports to parliament is problematical from the point of view of constructing threat perceptions. Certainly the procedure in itself led to the emergence of differences of opinion between branches of the administration with regard to perceived threats and the assignment of responsibility for security issues. Although a multidimensional coincidence of security interests prevailed between the government report discussed here, the SFVS strategy and the Internal Security Programme, the report's status as the principal Finnish security document and the only one to be binding on the instance responsible for allocating budgetary funds for security matters, the defence administration, meant that all interests were focused in its direction. Since the political guidance received was exerting pressure towards increasing the emphasis on broad-based security and non-military threat perceptions in the report, it was natural for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and still more so for the Ministry of the Interior, to attempt to append "their own views of security and perceived threats" to the report in order to ensure that these would be taken into account when allocating funds for combating or controlling such threats. This led, of course, to disputes between those ministries and the defence administration over the relative weights to be attached to particular threat images, which served to accentuate further the internal illogicality of the report, allowing such matters as the allocation of resources and the balance of power between branches of the administration to affect the construction of the threat perceptions. Thus the choice of a government report to parliament as the procedure for setting out the nation's security and defence policy – at a time when increased emphasis was being placed on broad-based security and comprehensive solutions for coping with the related perceived threats – may be regarded as having promoted the formation of distinct approaches to security in the various branches of the administration rather than coordination between them. Since, in addition, it had proved impossible in the report to provide clear definitions of broad-based security and the new threats (as far as the presentation of threat

perceptions was concerned),²¹³ we may be justified in claiming that the whole procedure (of government reports to parliament) is outdated and even contrary to the spirit of the times, i.e. the political philosophy of security. It would be important with reference to the future to ask what purpose these government reports on security and defence policy are intended to serve and what kinds of perceived threats they should concentrate on; or better still, how the various Finnish security documents could be successfully combined to yield an overall philosophy of national security.

c) Coping with the new threats: the “problem” of Russia

Both the administrative and the political threat perception discourse during the period when the government report was in preparation was dominated by the new, non-military threats, as *these were felt to be more immediate and the military threats to be more remote*, a way of thinking that was confirmed to a substantial degree by the western understanding of threats. Although some of the perceived non-military threats were associated with neighbouring areas, i.e. Russia, the emphasis among the new threats was more clearly than ever before on joint international responsibility and Finland’s role in this. The need for intensifying Finnish participation in joint action (through western alliances and especially the EU) was justified not so much on military threat model grounds as in the context of the new threats. In other words, *the references to the new threats and broad-based security were built up into a device for pointing to a new and rapidly strengthening desire for international cooperation*. At the same time the report gave a clearer impression, although admittedly left somewhat indeterminate by the wording, of a direct connection between international security, together with the new threats, and Finland’s national security. Finland wished to be involved in combating the new threats primarily for reasons of national security, in which international, and especially western, cooperation (but not military integration) was presented as the correct way of acting. Thus

²¹³ Chapters 6 and 7 of the report, on the development of internal security and the safeguarding of functions of vital importance to society, respectively, may be regarded as manifestations of the failure to define boundaries between threat perceptions and of a “territorial struggle” between branches of the administration. One may well ask why these chapters were included in the report in the first place.

the object of securitization, even in the case of the new threats, can be seen to be the Finnish nation and its society.

The emphasis on the new threats nevertheless posed a challenge to the primacy of the state-centred concept of security. As the descriptions of the new threats reflected their complex nature that spanned the borders of nation-states, they constituted a proposal that both global security and the security of the individual should be taken into account more positively in Finland's thinking on security matters. The concept of national security thus became something far more complex, as threats existing at the international, national and individual levels became mixed up together until it became difficult to tell them apart. At the same time, emphasis was being placed on non-military measures for combating the new threats as they became more urgent. Also, the emphasis placed on the new threats in the course of producing the government report can be regarded as having brought the whole matter of security closer to everyday life; it was no longer necessarily connected with war or military threat models but with factors arising from various sectors that constituted threats to the individual and/or to the broader international community.

Military threats occupied a strong position in spite of the emphasis on the new threats, as they could not be ousted by non-military threats as factors actually threatening the existence of the Finnish state. Awareness of the possibility of a military threat combined with awareness of Finland's geopolitical location and the military "otherness" of Russia remained the principal point of departure for the construction of the threat models and the gaining of political acceptance for them. The western pressures for the attenuation of military threat perceptions and the general feeling of a very low probability attached to military threats persuaded politicians and many civil servants outside the defence administration to question the necessity of the military threat models to some extent, and especially the financial and defence policy decisions related to combating these threats. Thus it may be said that *the political, and especially parliamentary, legitimacy of the military threat models was by no means indisputable.*

The weakness of the military threat models presented in the report may be said to lie in the lack of justification for them, which may be attributed to the difficulty of talking about Russia. There was a desire

to be very cautious in these evaluations of Russia that were to be made public, even though it was that country that was the obvious source of the perceived military threat. The low intensity of that military threat did indeed arouse increasing demands in Parliament for formal justifications; the “fire insurance” theory or the value of a defence capability as a military deterrent was not enough of a justification in the eyes of some members. The military threat models were nevertheless not seriously challenged at any stage in the process of preparing the report, as the “logic of preparing for the worst” that they represented was held to be acceptable for national reasons. It should also be noted with regard to the military threat models that military security was kept strictly apart from non-military security throughout the process of preparing and discussing the report, even though this made it more difficult to link threat perceptions together or find a balance between the old and new threats. The ultimate fact was, however, that the military threat models had a powerful element of national culture associated with them, the fear of Russia.

4. The government report at the heart of Finnish threat perception policy

The Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy may be likened to the political window of opportunity in Kingdon's agenda-setting theory. The government report procedure that became established in the post-Cold War period for defining Finnish security and defence policy has been such that each government has produced one report during its term of office, so that these have appeared approximately once every four years. This has meant in practise that the Finnish security policy window has been opened at regular intervals to allow broader discussion of potential threats and an updating of the threat perceptions. As a result, great store has been laid by the report as a national security document and considerable political pressure has been exerted on the process of producing it. The perceived threats to Finnish security are traced out anew in each report, which allows them to be re-evaluated and re-securitized. The opening of this threat window, away from the public eye during the preparation process and in public during the parliamentary discussion of the report, provides actors with an opportunity to influence the content and framing of the threat descriptions. At the same time, of course, this report procedure forces the government to open its security policy threat perceptions to scrutiny and to reconstruct them politically at regular intervals, at which points they are also open to public evaluation and comment. One favourable aspect of this may be regarded as being the attempt to achieve a broad political consensus on each occasion, regarding both the threat perceptions themselves and the general outlines of security and defence policy.

An attempt is made via these reports to construct a unanimous understanding of the threats facing Finland and to answer the question posed at the beginning of this study, "What are the threats that face Finland?" Although this consensus tradition in matters of security policy was emphatically present during the construction of the 2004 government report, the improbability attached to the military threats, the stress laid on non-military threats and the concept of broad-based security and the more frank political atmosphere that surrounded the discussion of the threats made it difficult to achieve the same kind of

consensus as at the beginning of the new millennium. This change was manifested in a need to securitize different things and an increase in the politically irreconcilable nature common to many of the perceived threats. In particular it was the broadening of the concept of security that led to a questioning of both of the premises governing Finnish threat perception policy: what things should be defined as security policy threats and how those threats should be framed. The questionability of these premises emerged very clearly both at the stage of preparing the 2004 government report and during its discussion in Parliament.

The fact that the security policy window is opened relatively rarely through the medium of a government report has led to a situation in which it is politically difficult to make any substantial changes to the definitions of the perceived threats or the means of managing these. As the threat perceptions are constructed at four-year intervals, it may be that any significant change to them would seem politically too radical, especially bearing in mind the tradition of continuity and caution that exists within the Finnish practise of formally constructing threat perceptions. Any notable change in a perceived threat relative to the previous government report would imply a highly significant alteration in the security environment, a “dramatic event” in the terms of agenda setting theory. Thus *the government report procedure in itself may be said to strengthen the continuity of threat images*, so that once a threat image has been securitized in a government report it becomes difficult to remove. The government reports on security and defence policy have indeed been characterized by continuity rather than change, the perceived threats detailed in them and the means suggested for managing these being framed by honouring the permanence of those in previous reports or setting out to develop them. Thus the government report procedure may be thought of as limiting or even preventing any renewal of the set of Finnish perceived threats.

Where the implication in the security policy agendas drawn up in the Cold War era, e.g. the reports of the parliamentary defence committees, was that the security environment should be controlled almost entirely through military action, it is evident from the descriptions of security environments provided in the government reports that this is no longer possible in the 21st century. The changes in the perceived threats mentioned on security policy agendas between the 1970s and

the early years of this new century point to a pronounced securitization of non-military threat perceptions, particularly around the mid-1990s, although some increase in the use of an extended concept of security was in evidence even in the 1980s. From the 1995 government security policy report onwards there has been political pressure for the grounding of Finnish security policy in a broad, comprehensive concept of security, and a substantial number of new threat perceptions were securitized in the reports of 1995 and 1997, marking the real transition to broad-based security. The non-military threat perceptions in the reports produced in the early years of the new century then mark a continuation of the trend that began in the 1990s and of the general development in securitization that was made possible by the introduction of the government report procedure. The turn of the century was simply marked by an extension of both the notion of security and the list of perceived threats. The continuity of the military threat models, on the other hand, is derived directly from the Cold War period. The military threat perceptions have always been typically permanent and institutionalized, so that it is very difficult to remove them from any security policy agenda.

The government reports also reflect permanence through the security perspective to which they give expression. Their establishment as a regular procedure and the considerable political weight attached to the construction of security in this manner have meant the emergence of a custom for the formulation of perceived threats from a certain perspective, a situation that has been justifiably criticized in Parliament. One tradition that has survived from the Cold War era is that of concentrating only on means of counteracting perceived threats that belong to the scope of military security (as criticized in connection with the parliamentary discussion of every government report), even though the descriptions of the security environment have been altered considerably to place more emphasis on non-military threat perceptions. Especially where the “new threats” are concerned, the present-day government reports do not achieve a balance between their description of the security environment and the measures recommended on the basis of this. *The government reports of the early years of the new millennium convey the impression of changes in the security environment and the perceived threats but not in the means for responding to the threats.*

As far as the description of the security environment presented in part I of the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy is concerned, it would have been more natural to include the SFVS strategy as part II, as this attempts to allow for preparations to be made to face broader-based threat factors than were envisaged in the military threat perceptions by means of cooperation between branches of the administration and strict control over the division of responsibilities. Conclusions reached on the basis of the description of the security environment provided in the government report go a long way towards conforming with the SFVS strategy as far as the control measures are concerned, whereas the defence policy section of the report itself does not. Also, the influence of the report in guiding further developments is unevenly distributed between the branches of the administration concerned, whereas it is clear that, on account of the adoption of a broad-based concept of security and the powerful political pressure applied in that direction, the report, or preferably a more comprehensive security strategy than that allowed for in the report, should be directed more evenly than at present at developing all the branches of the administration that have functions lying within the field of security. On the other hand, if a desire were to exist in the future to concentrate in a security and defence policy report on defining means of combating and controlling perceived threats exclusively in the field of defence policy, the description of the security environment contained in that report should be geared more towards serving the needs of defence policy evaluations and objectives. The views put forward above, together with the justifiable need to update the description of the security environment more frequently than at present, force us to consider the overall functionality of the security and defence policy report procedure in its current form.

It can be concluded from the above that *the threat perceptions and measures for controlling or combating the threats themselves provide an illogical impression of Finland's security policy*. This illogicality results to a considerable degree from the established procedure for drawing up the government report, in which the part devoted to security policy is prepared in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the part concerned with defence policy in the defence administration. Each branch of the government administration examines the security considerations, threat perceptions and proposals for combating the threats from its own perspective, and experience has shown that these perspectives (associated with perceived non-military foreign policy

threat scenarios, military defence policy threat scenarios and internal security scenarios) are difficult to reconcile. It should also be noted that although each government report to date has been drawn up in a different way (since determination of the way in which the report is to be drawn up is part of the political power struggle), the outcome has always suffered from this inconsistency. On the other hand, it is possible to regard the different approaches to the threat perceptions adopted by the various branches of the administration as a positive feature, since the different dimensions of security are manifestations of one and the same "security generation process". In this case the crucial question is whether efforts to control or combat the perceived threats can be coordinated in such a way as to correspond to comprehensively presented threat perceptions.

The non-military threat perceptions, which add both breadth and depth to the state-centred military and political understanding of security, pose a challenge for the current procedure for constructing these government reports, a procedure which was found in the early years of the new millennium to be no longer capable of responding to the politically weighted challenges of overall security. Many of the new threats to security are such that they cannot be controlled by traditional military means, and the effect of a government report in guiding future policies has begun to be concentrated to an increasing extent on branches of the administration other than defence, principally foreign and internal affairs. Since, in spite of changes in the descriptions of the security environment, the government reports have failed to put forward any proposals for measures to counteract the perceived non-military threats, other security documents were produced in Finland during those years which both present threat perceptions and define means of responding to them. The relations of these government-level programmes and strategies to the security and defence policy reports (in terms of directing future actions) have nevertheless remained unclear.

As far as its proposals for coping with the perceived threats are concerned, the Strategy for Securing Functions Vital to Society may be regarded as complementary to the Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy, and it may be estimated on the basis of the present research that *Finland is gradually shifting towards a security model aimed at protecting the (broad-based) essential functions of society*. Correspondingly, the extension of the concepts of

security and threats in Finnish society to apply more specifically to internal and individual security has resulted in an attempt to define means of responding to perceived threats to this security through the medium of the Internal Security Programme. Both this latter programme and the SFVS strategy were products of the early years of the millennium and reflect the Finnish understanding of security and threats to it, but at the same time they also reflect a transitional period in terms of national security documents and *the lack of a security strategy* that might unite “all the various securities”. The division of the field of security among a number of documents would be justified if it meant that each one could concentrate on threat perceptions at a particular level, but in practise our security discourse gives expression to the difficulty of determining the boundaries between perceived threats to international, national and internal security and to the need for coordinating the measures taken in response to those threats and in general for cooperation between the various branches of the administration. The present situation creates an unnecessary conflict that stands in the way of the construction of an overall security system and introduces tensions into the practical implementation of Finnish security policy.

The broad-based concept of security that has become established as a part of Finnish security policy and within Finnish society as a whole has proved problematic with regard to the construction of both threat perceptions and overall security. In the first place it is a question of *the difficulty encountered in delimiting the securitization of the new threats*. Very many things have been framed as perceived threats, at least in political parlance, and have gradually come to be securitized through the various security documents that have been issued – in fact the production of new security documents is an illustrative example of this trend – and attempts have been made to enhance the political weight of some of these things by referring to them as threat perceptions. Indeed, it may be claimed that *Finnish security discourse in the early years of the 21st century was guided by a threat-centred approach, a conscious diversification of the range of perceived threats and increase in their number, and in this way by an emphasis on the politicization of threat images*.

Secondly, the broadening of the scope of the perceived threats and the increase in their complexity have made it more difficult to delimit them and assign them to different security documents and branches of

the administration. One of the most crucial and most intensively disputed issues concerning the process of constructing the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy was the decision as to which threat perceptions should be discussed in the report and how broad-based the concept of security accepted in it should be. It proved impossible to give a clear answer to this question, as shown by the difficulties encountered in defining the perceived threats and the conflicts between the branches of the administration. *Particular attention should be paid in future government reports on security and defence policy to providing more precise conceptual points of departure for the construction of threat perceptions.* It is essential to set out from the content of the concepts of “security” and “threat”, as these affect both the means and the objectives of the security policy that is to be elaborated. Conceptual clarity can help to promote logicity in terms of policy and consistency in administration, and it is an absolute requirement for efficient action in controlling and combating threats. One may ask, of course, how broad a concept of security is needed to provide an appropriate and logical basis for a security policy analysis and properly defined threat perceptions – and how this concept should be formulated. The government report nowadays covers virtually all the institutional dimensions of security in Finnish society, so that (if the intention is to continue with this government report procedure) *attention should be paid not so much to securitization as to desecuritization.*

The explaining of concepts is not simply an academic matter, for their accurate definition can be of considerable significance in the field of concrete political action (e.g. the defining of broad-based security, non-military threats and the new threats in the context of the present government report). A failure to analyse one's concepts or to define them properly can lay the process of constructing perceived threats open to political controversy and increase the likelihood that all manner of things may be defined as threat images that fall within the scope of security policy and all manner of political interests may be associated with them. Similarly, if there is a need to make substantial changes or extensions to perceived threats that form a part of the government's security policy, it should be possible to update the concept of security policy. It is possible to ask, for example, to what extent development policy and the threat perceptions connected with it belong within the scope of security policy. Clarification of the concepts involved can help in the analysis and discussion of security

policy, in that it can ensure that the actors are speaking about the same things. Clearly defined concepts are also useful when dividing the responsibility for action between various actors, especially in connection with the recommendation of means for responding to perceived threats.

When attempting to clarify concepts it is nevertheless necessary to avoid linking threat perceptions too closely with particular branches of the administration. Although it is in part justifiable to “distribute” these perceptions among a number of branches and a number of security documents, this can easily lead to power struggles or tussles over the allocation of funding between the authorities concerned. This was clearly the case with the 2004 government report, when a certain degree of competition was detectable between the perceived international, national and internal security threats both during the construction of the report and in connection with its discussion in Parliament. It is natural, of course, for each branch of the administration to attempt to lay emphasis on the need to preserve or increase the political weight behind its own threat perceptions, leading to a situation in which it is difficult to develop an overall security policy (which is able to take account of and combine all the dimensions of security) or measures to cope with perceived threats that involve collaboration between branches of the administration. Correspondingly, the increased complexity of the threats and the progressively more difficult task of perceiving the reality behind them clearly necessitate closer cooperation between the various branches of the administration in responding to them. This enjoins us to examine critically the structure of the set of Finnish security documents that were produced in the early years of the 21st century: did they really promote the drive for total security or did they make it more difficult to achieve?

Security has to be built up in a comprehensive manner – in the form of total security. By analogy with the concept of total defence of the territory of Finland,²¹⁴ which of course is in itself too closely linked to the defence administration, it should be a matter of collaboration between all the actors involved in generating security. One crucial question for Finland at that time was *how the threat perceptions that*

²¹⁴ Fin. *kokonaismaanpuolustus*, see *Valtioneuvoston ohjesääntö*, 262/2003, perustelumuistio 16 §.

were formulated could be handled administratively without clashes over resources or jurisdiction. The umbrella concept of total security naturally calls for a comprehensive security strategy, an overall Council of State policy that consists of a security document that takes all dimensions into account and accommodates all the means available in the various branches of the administration for responding to the perceived threats. It also calls for the foundation of a body comparable to the Security and Defence Committee that could coordinate the work of all the various actors engaged in combating the perceived threats, either by creating a new institution for this purpose or by releasing an existing committee from its ties to a particular branch of the administration. The important thing is that there should be an understanding of the construction of security as a single entity – total security as an interactive symbiosis of innumerable contributory factors and dimensions.

Also connected with the construction and categorization of perceived threats to Finland in the early years of the 21st century was the prevailing manner of framing threat images, the custom of speaking of new, broad-based security or old, traditional security and of new, non-military threat perceptions or military threat perceptions. These framing patterns that allude to the social construction of dichotomies in security and perceived threats were markedly to the fore at the preparation stage leading to the 2004 government report and in its discussion in Parliament, and also in the report of the Security Policy Monitoring Group. It was a question of finding a balance between the threats described as military and non-military, of seeking some kind of political prioritization and of sensing a certain incompatibility between these perceived threats. Concepts were used to construct and maintain an unnecessary dichotomy, and may be seen to have fostered instances of threat perception competition between the branches of the administration. Talk of the broad-based nature of security was frequently used in the threat perception discourse in a conscious attempt to establish a conceptual distinction vis-à-vis the old (military) form of security, although *in reality military security is simply one part of the entity known as broad-based security.*

Questions of budgetary funding are an essential element in Finnish threat perception policy. It is the prevailing concept of security together with the politically prioritized and legitimated threat perceptions that guide the determination of response measures – and the

allocation of budgetary funds for this purpose. The latter, financial aspect had in fact become a more challenging and complicated issue than ever by 2004. The expanding of the concept of security and the securitization of the new threats had meant at the same time that more threat perceptions than ever before were being put forward by instances other than the defence administration. Since every threat perception is drawn up in a particular branch of the administration, it is handled administratively as a matter raised by that branch, which thereby becomes responsible for its political legitimization and for ensuring a sufficiency of financial resources for responding to it. This has meant that *a pronounced sectorization has been visible in Finnish threat perception policy since the beginning of the new millennium, in spite of the fact that the perceptions themselves have shown precisely the opposite trend, the diffusion of security issues among sectors and across the boundaries between branches of the administration*. The background factors leading to this situation have included *the more severe competition between threat perceptions over the distribution of the limited budgetary funds available for securitization purposes*. On the other hand, it has also been a question of a power struggle between the branches or ministries themselves, with each trying to defend its own “threat territory” and lay emphasis on the functions for which it is responsible as means for combating threats.

Questions of the allocation of funding were prominent at the preparation stage in the case of the 2004 government report and during the discussion of the report in Parliament. What was at issue was differences of opinion between branches of the administration and between individual politicians regarding the political prioritization of the various threat perceptions and the means proposed for counteracting the threats – and the consequent distribution of government funds. This threat perception competition was particularly severe between the Ministry of the Interior and the defence administration, i.e. between the internal security and military threat models, but it should be noted that the competition was not a controversy over the content of the perceived threats as such but was connected with the status of the government report as the only security document that directly affected the allocation of government money. Above all, an inconsistency was noted by the Ministry of the Interior in the fact that, given the political emphasis on the broad-based concept of security and the growing intensity of the perceived non-military threats, the government report confirmed the allocation of resources only in the

case of the defence administration. The truth was that the Internal Security Programme did not have the same status of authorizing the distribution of funding. The Ministry of the Interior had attempted to securitize its perceived threats in the context of the report in order to increase their political weight and guarantee sufficient long-term funding for them, but the indeterminacy that surrounded some of the concepts in the report at the preparation stage led to conflicting interpretations as to which perceived threats should be discussed in it. Although the threat perceptions constructed by the Foreign Ministry did not carry with them the same expectations of funding, the ministry did attempt during the preparation stage (while underlining the political weight carried by the report as a security document) to emphasize its international threat images and those that could be responded to by means of foreign policy measures. In the case of the defence administration, the procedure by which the government placed security and defence policy reports before Parliament would seem to have been highly significant and necessary, as its politically approved policy outlines guaranteed the defence administration the funding that it needed (even from one government's term of office to the next) and legitimated its operational and developmental plans on the basis of the perceived threats that had been approved.

The procedure of setting out Finland's security and defence policy in the form of a government report to Parliament has undoubtedly been instrumental in promoting a struggle over the allocation of funds. This (needless) competition between threat perceptions over the allocation of funds does not reflect upon the perceptions as such as much as on the weakness of the structure of government security documents. From the viewpoint of the defence administration, however, a procedure of this kind that enables long-term development plans to be made can be regarded as justified. But then the military threat models were the only ones among those securitized in the report that received funding for their control, increasing numbers of non-military threats have been securitized in government reports but no funding has been allocated for their management. Thus the perceived threats detailed in the report are of unequal status, and it is quite natural that other branches of the administration should attempt to improve the political priority attached to their own threat perceptions relative to the military threat models. The government report procedure in its present form thus promotes sectorization, and it is clear that *the extension of the concepts of security and threat and the increased political weight*

attached to non-military threat perceptions give rise to a need for securitization funding to be more equally distributed. This is again a question of building up total security, which will require not only joint coordination of the distribution of security funding but also the partial reversal of the recent sectorization of security and the intensification and clarification of cooperation between branches of the administration.

The financial resources to be allocated, or available for allocation, to the construction of security also affect the general construction of the perceived threats and the threat reality to be described. It is difficult to imagine a situation in which a (public) government report were to put forward perceived threats to the existence of the Finnish state without a response in the form of an allocation of funds (or with only a very small such additional allocation). It is possible, of course, for quite serious struggles over the combating of threats and their compatibility with the available resources to take place at the preparation stage for a report (away from the public eye), but in the eventual report that outlines Finland's security and defence policy they will appear in a mutually balanced form. On the other hand, if political guidelines regarding the financial framework are laid down at the preparatory stage, as was the case with the 2004 government report, the resources for responding to the perceived threats will have been defined before the threats themselves and may by implication be interpreted as having affected the construction of the threat descriptions. In other words, *if the perceived threats are to be fitted to predetermined budgetary allocations, they will have to be constructed in such a way as to be affordable.* This will mean that the threat reality in the report will be built up from the inside outwards, i.e. internal factors (financial constraints) will affect the description of the security environment and the ways in which the threat perceptions are framed. Thus the logic of resource-based construction of the threat reality will lead to the construction of the perceived threats on financial grounds.

It is evident from the above that the theoretical frame of reference for the interpretation attempted here requires to be filled out with an element that takes account of the allocation of budgetary funds as part of the political context. Economic resources affect the construction of perceived threats, and they can similarly help us to interpret the ways in which the threat perceptions have been framed, the constructive

relativity involved in this, the political interests lying behind the securitization proposals and the conflicts between threat perceptions.

The social relativity introduced into the political construction of threat images when combined with the research aspect also comes to the fore when images have to be rejected, i.e. it affects the art of saying “no”. *The threat reality is constructed not only by proposing perceived threats but also by opting not to propose them.* Finland’s economic and material resources do not permit preparations to be made for all eventualities. Politically speaking, it is very difficult on a published security policy agenda to put forward a perceived threat and then indicate that insufficient resources are available to provide protection against it. Thus it was decided in the preparation of the 2004 report to leave the nuclear threat to Finland outside the set of perceived threats to be presented, primarily on resource grounds, although admittedly the decision was also influenced by the association of this threat with Russia.

One thing that attracts attention in the administrative preparation of the 2004 report in addition to the controversies surrounding some of the perceived threats is the lack of political controversy in the case of the military threats. The military threat models drawn up by the defence administration were accepted for securitization in the report with relatively little difficulty, even though it is these that may be regarded as being the most indeterminately framed of all. The typology of framing set out in the theoretical section (4.3) would in fact be open to some adjustment on this point. The fact was that the politicians had an implicit belief in the threat models produced by the defence administration, regarding the Defence Forces and their high-ranking officers (who in addition were in the powerful position of acting as expert advisors) as reliable constructors of threat models, the views put forwards by whom were difficult for the members of the working group to contradict, and still more so for the members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy. This may be regarded as one rather unusual feature of the preparatory work for the report: the defence administration found it relatively easy to securitize its threat models without any appreciable political debate or demand that their models should be identified to particular sources. This ease of acceptance and lack of justification at the preparation stage was very much at variance with the discussion of the report in Parliament, where numerous members questioned the validity of the models and

their current relevance. Similarly, the general public opinion regarding the low probabilities attached to these models could be interpreted as suggesting that better justifications would have been in order.

Also connected with the securitization of the military threat models was the influence exercised by factual information during the preparation stage. The Defence Forces were assumed on the basis of the military threat models to be in possession of information which, on account of its sensitivity or confidential nature, could not even be divulged to all of the Cabinet Committee members. The President of Finland, the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister had been informed by the Defence Forces of the “background information” to the military threat models, and those that they were prepared to legitimate were difficult for the other actors to contest (if only on the grounds of the procedure for preparing the report and the powerful position of these people in the initiating of new legislation (influence of the institutional context). This manner in which the military threat models were securitized bears some similarities to the Finnish concept of security, in which, in spite of the emphasis placed on non-military threats, the principal dimension on which a threat to the existence of the Finnish state is perceived is that of military security. It is felt essential to face up to the military threats, for however improbable they may be, their consequences would be extremely serious. Where securitization of the military threat models is concerned there is also the question of their powerful institutionalized position: it would be politically extremely difficult to “cut off” the long temporal continuum that these threat models represent. It is easier to keep them on the security policy agenda “just in case”. At the same time, of course, there is no need to frame a highly institutionalized threat model that is closely associated with the whole Finnish culture of external threats in a manner that will arouse fear. The defence administration in its re-framing of the military threat models has indeed attempted to bring them up to date, so that the re-framed model of a large-scale offensive contained in the 2004 report, in which the old threat model was expressed in a new form, may be regarded as a conscious effort to ensure its political legitimation.

Although military threat models occupy a strong position in the Finnish understanding of security, their legitimacy has been somewhat undermined by the lack of justification given for them in the 2004 report and their indeterminate framing. It can be noted, however, that

demands for the justification of the military threat models have been gaining in strength within Finnish society since the early years of the 21st century. The dominant position of non-military threat perceptions, the open atmosphere for threat perception policy discussion, the western threat reality and the weakening of the support provided by historical experiences in the course of time have gradually come to pose a more serious challenge to the political consensus regarding the military threat models, making it more difficult to maintain these in Finnish society. This trend can be expected to continue and gain momentum, provided no major changes occur in Finland's security environment. The veil of secrecy surrounding the military threat models and the reluctance to discuss them in public have also become problematic for the political elite, detracting from the credibility of their security policy argumentation on account of the absence of justifications, or at least their insufficiency, and at the same time the general public's belief in the authenticity of the threat models is apt to decline. With the strengthening of the political priority assigned to non-military threat perceptions and the waning of the dominant position enjoyed by those in the military security sector, politicians can easily find themselves faced with a choice as to whether it would be more expedient to channel some of the budgetary allocation for defence towards the management of threats that are more distinctly framed and are closer to the everyday experience of the voters. The party platforms examined for the purposes of the present research, for example, included demands for more developmental policy resources and for internal security measures but not for combating military threats. This state of affairs challenges the defence administration to justify its threat models more openly in future. If the threat models are indistinctly framed, it is difficult to convey a true picture of the resources required for responding to the threats.

As it is, the perceived threats put forward in the security and defence policy report as a whole are expressed in a guarded form of political language. The desire to achieve a consensus in favour of approving the threat perceptions, the principle of "offending no one" and the indeterminacy of the broad concept of security have led to an indistinct and generalized style of framing them, a fear of describing the threats in too much detail. There are so many political and ministerial interests hidden behind the threat perceptions, so many identity policy aspirations and so many attempts to reconcile differing

interpretations. In this sense the present research may be regarded as having brought forward a new understanding and interpretation of the manner in which the perceptions were prepared for use in the government report and of the factors influencing their construction.

The report may to a significant degree be regarded as an administratively constructed document in the compilation of which civil servants and expert advisors have played a prominent part. In spite of this major administrative contribution, however, the perceived threats themselves always represented in the last resort the outcomes of political choices, compromises and decisions. Although the structure of the preparation process gave the civil servants considerable power, influence and opportunities, the securitization of perceived threats was a politically regulated and supervised process. *Some of the policies were decided upon politically in advance and in the early stages of the preparatory work, which placed constraints on the civil servants when it came to putting forward and weighing up various alternatives – in the case of the perceived threats as elsewhere.* This means that a critical evaluation should also be made of the rationality and applicability of the ponderous administrative preparation process.

The structure and legal framework of that process allowed certain political actors to exercise a considerable amount of personal influence on the construction of the threat perceptions. It is clear, for instance, that the threat interpretations put forward by the President of Finland, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defence had better chances of contributing to the threat reality as presented in the report than did those of other actors, especially since these members of the elite were able to influence the construction of the threat images not only directly (above all through decisions taken in the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy) but also indirectly (through the civil servants who represented them in the working group). It was the structure created for the preparation of the 2004 government report that made this indirect channel of influence available (and ensured that it was available), since the working group was to construct the report under close political supervision from the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Defence Minister. This was one reason why the fingerprints of the Foreign Minister were clearly visible in the non-military threat perceptions, whereas it was the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces who played a major role in the construction, and particularly the framing,

of the military threat models. Thus evidence of influence exercised by both individual persons or branches of the administration and overall normative factors are to be detected in the threat perceptions. Indeed, the construction of Finnish threat perceptions in general is to a great extent a matter of variations in the relative weights carried by these sources of influence in interaction with trends in the security environment and with the international threat discourse.

The public threat reality built into the government reports and other Finnish security documents is to be understood as a politically flexible expedient that permits the making of political choices. *The perceived threats can be constructed and adapted in accordance with political interests and aspirations.* Politics in the sense in which it is conceptualized in this work is always present where the process of constructing perceived threats is an interactive one. The threat images serve as tools for the exercise of security politics, which implies that threat perception policy can be used to construct a Finnish security and defence policy that has a certain content – the content that one would wish for. The crucial issue in threat perception policy is how and why perceived threats are constructed politically and certain things are securitized.

The constructivist and political nature of threat perceptions calls for constant critical evaluation of both the perceived threats themselves and the way in which particular things are securitized. It was in fact the case in the early years of the 21st century that increasing numbers of the perceived threats put forward by the government administration were questioned in public, and this more open, discursive atmosphere meant that *the structure of the threat reality was more open to differences in viewpoint* and that actors were under more pressure to justify the threat images that they proposed. This open, critical discussion within society at large should be seen as a factor capable of promoting a consistent understanding of the threat situation. Although extensive political discussions of perceived threats are an important part of democracy, their excessive politicization could lead to the erratic generation of responses to the threats – in view of the sometimes short-term nature of political interests. At the same time it should be remembered that there is no single, ready-made, permanent truth that governs the specification of security and perceived threats.

Epilogue: threat perceptions as a means of constructing both security and insecurity

When we construct a description of the threat reality that surrounds us we are at the same time constructing insecurity. Insecurity is easier to recognize and understand than security, so that threat perceptions can be expected to foster a sense of insecurity regardless of what the threats might be. The representation of certain things in the form of threat perceptions, as framed threats, and the securitization of these in Council of State security documents is bound to give rise to insecurity even if the threats do not call for any exceptional counter-measures. The Finns did indeed feel a sense of insecurity in the early years of the new millennium, on account of a deduction achieved through interaction between the individual and the collectivity regarding the existence of threatening factors, an anxiety to be guarded against both individually and collectively. It is possible to respond to threats that generate insecurity by taking actions that generate security, with the objective of achieving freedom from the threats, or more precisely, striving towards a situation in which the threats are felt to be under control and reasonable provisions have been for responding to them. It is possible to generate this security by constructing threat perceptions of the right kind, ones that can be brought under control, although all of this is relative, of course: a balancing act between feelings of security and insecurity.

The construction of threat perceptions is thus a two-edged sword, creating security on the one hand and insecurity on the other. The exposure of a threat is at the same time both desirable and undesirable. *Politically, however, issues gain greater weight if they are presented in the form of threats, and still more so if others can be persuaded to believe in the reality and seriousness of those threats.* Threat perceptions are not constructed solely on the basis of material factors but essentially through the correct process of framing within the social reality. Through politics these structures are combined to form a political threat reality, as manifested in the threat perceptions contained in the government reports on Finnish security and defence policy, for example. Jointly approved, political securitized threat perceptions entitle the actors who present them to take measures to control or combat the threats concerned – on the grounds that a threat calls for a response. Security, the opposite of insecurity, can be seen to imply the existence of sufficient resources for protecting those things

that are regarded as important and controlling the factors that constitute threats. A feeling of security can be achieved better when sufficient resources are directed to towards controlling the threat in each case, although the sufficiency of resources is in itself a relative and politically highly disputable matter. It is impossible, for instance, to determine in absolute terms at what point Finland's defence capability becomes credible, or when sufficient measures have been taken to bring the threat of terrorism under control. *It is extremely difficult in the context of threat perceptions to define any unambiguous measures of the production of security, i.e. control over a specific threat.*

One should take a very critical view of excessive securitization (in which almost everything becomes a perceived threat) and thereby of the construction of a burgeoning threat culture. By no means all things and phenomena should be regarded in a security context as perceived threats; on the contrary, there is a need to try and reduce the number of things to be securitized and to emphasize the role of normal political decision-making procedures without reference to the security or insecurity aspect. Securitization should be a carefully considered process, and more emphasis than at present should be laid on desecuritization. *New threats were frequently produced in Finland in the early years of the 21st century simply because perceived threats were a good way of directing the allocation of resources, maintaining or improving the political power of the actor responsible and increasing the political and social weight assigned to certain matters.* One essential, although very difficult, question, however, concerns the commensurability of threat perceptions and their political prioritization. To what extent does organized crime pose a threat to the existence of the Finnish state, or to what extent should resources be devoted to military threat models that are regarded as extremely improbable? If some of the threat perceptions are intentionally "forgotten", will this generate insecurity or security? Given that we are still engaged in increasingly heated discussions on how to define the object of securitization, the nature of threat perceptions and the means of responding to threats, it may be concluded that threat perception policy has been very much to the fore in Finnish society during this early part of the 21st century.

Finland's threat perception policy in recent times can be seen in the light of the present research to have been strongly influenced by an

uncontrolled broadening of the concept of security and the resulting difficulties experienced in combining the various dimensions of security and the resulting disputes between branches of the administration with regard to their perceived threats. The threat perceptions have been allowed to compete with each other, as it were, in the context of a broader-based concept of security in which both national and international influences have been brought to bear on their construction. This competition between threat perceptions was to be seen in the 2004 Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy both at the administrative preparation stage and in its public political discussion in Parliament. The difficulty of achieving commensurability and political prioritization among the threat perceptions led to instances of competition between them, a situation confirmed by the structure of Finnish security documents during the same period. The broadening of the threat perceptions (whether this is regarded as a good thing or not) and their increasing complexity are features that have become a social reality, and we are obliged to live in the midst of that reality.

If security changes, then the threat perceptions will change; and if the threat perceptions change, the means for responding to the threats will change, or at least will need to be changed. From a threat perception policy perspective, *the principal requirement for the future may be seen to be the production of means of responding that span the boundaries between branches of the administration and are targeted at constructing a state of total security.* This would imply a broader, more integrated understanding of the generation of security than that which prevails at present, a single entity constructed by all the actors *together* in response to the various threat perceptions.

The construction of security and insecurity is a continuous process. The threats tell us what we should be afraid of and guide us towards guarding against those things. When a threat reality of that kind is developed through human interaction an element of threat perception policy, or threat perception politics, is always present, since an almost infinite number of interpretations of the material and social reality may exist for the same threat. We are obliged to live amidst these interpretations – securely or insecurely. Finally it should be remembered that we have been dealing here with threat perceptions as a political concept, and it is worth noting that *where threat perceptions*

can be turned into politics, politics can be turned into threat perceptions.

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