



# [694] Paper

## The State, the People and the Armed Forces

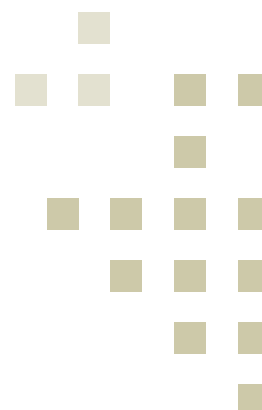
– a Genealogical Outline of the Legitimacy  
of the Armed Forces in Norway

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# The State, the People and the Armed Forces

## – a Genealogical Outline of the Legitimacy of the Armed Forces in Norway

**Karsten Friis**

Most of the empirical material as well as some analytical points in this article is previously published in Norwegian, see Friis (1999). A shorter version of this article is published in Joenniemi (2005). All quotes are translated by the author.

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**[Abstract]** The Norwegian armed forces in the early 21st century is in a phase of rapid change and transition. International missions are about to become its main task, whereas traditional domestic territorial defence is becoming less and less relevant.

Is this transition purely a technical adjustment to a new security environment, or does it also entail more fundamental changes in the relationship between the armed forces, the state and the population? Could the military risk to lose its popular legitimacy?

To grasp the current changes, it is important to understand the foundations of the relationship between the military, the state and the people. As well as how these relations have evolved over time. This is certainly not the first time in history the armed forces are facing fundamental changes.

This article seeks to shed light on some of these developments in Norway over the last centuries. The evolution of the conscript system will be used to illustrate some of these developments. I will argue that the Norwegian authorities to date have been reluctant in addressing the changes, applying what can be described as ‘yesterday’s explanations’ when legitimising military operations of today. If this trend of ignorance continues, the danger of a popular back-lash increases.



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## **Introduction**

The Norwegian armed forces in the early 21st century is in a phase of rapid change and transition. International missions are about to become its main task, whereas traditional domestic territorial defence is becoming less and less relevant. Norwegian security interests are now apparently best secured abroad.

Is this transition purely a technical adjustment to a new security environment, or does it also entail more fundamental changes in the relationship between the armed forces, the state and the population? Could the military risk to lose its popular legitimacy as operations in 'exotic' places become the rule rather than the exception? Does it risk losing touch with the society as it gradually is turning into a foreign policy tool? Can the people be expected to kill and die for something happening on another continent?

These are indeed questions of utmost importance for any contemporary armed force. The modern armed forces in all Western countries are all tied to the wider society in one way or the other. It is resting on a certain level of legitimacy, stemming from the state itself as well as the population. But can this legitimacy always be taken for granted?

To grasp the current changes, it is important to understand the foundations of the relationship between the military, the state and the people. Furthermore, it is necessary also to understand how these relations have evolved over time. This is certainly not the first time in history the armed forces are facing fundamental changes. The relationship between the military, the state and the people has been constantly evolving, sometimes dramatically.

This article seeks to shed light on some of these developments in Norway over the last centuries. The evolution of the conscript system will be used to illustrate some of these developments. This is because the most visible proof of the strong relationship between national Armies and the population is the conscript system, being as it is, based upon active involvement of, and general support from, the civilian population. Without such, evasion would quickly become a problem, as seen in several other countries in times of crisis throughout history.

The aim of this article is to be better able to understand the current events, to grasp the magnitude of the changes, as well as pointing out which changes that have occurred before and which that are radically new today. I will argue that the Norwegian authorities to date have been reluctant in addressing these changes, applying what can be described as 'yesterday's explanations' when legitimising military operations of today. If this trend of ignorance continues, the danger of a popular back-lash increases.

## **Theoretical approach**

Throughout the 1990's most academic studies on the Norwegian armed forces had one implicit ambition: to remind the politicians and the armed forces itself that the end of the Cold War required radical new thinking. The studies criticised the conservatism and the resistance to reform, and revealed how domestic and symbolic issues tended to have a more significant impact on Defence planning than did the new international environment. In this context, it was pointed out that the conscription system was a leftover from

the past, resting on some dubious ideas about the need to unite the nation rather than an effective way to defend the country (see e.g. Neumann and Ulriksen, 1997).

However the situation has changed considerably since the 1990's. The armed forces are in many respect ahead of the political establishment as it has realised that international operations is the future. Broadly speaking, most of the military activity on Norwegian territory appears more and more to be preparation for international missions to come. The romantic references to the Second World War home resistance is long gone as the symbolic backbone of the army. In Nietzschean terminology, the Norwegian armed forces are about to become Warriors rather than just Soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

This development cannot be explained by reference to domestic history, as the studies in the 1990's did. Domestic conservatism and symbolism may explain delays in reform, but not why change is taking place now. At the same time, studies that seek to explain this by reference to the international security system alone, also have a problem explaining why this system is changing. (Neo-)Realist theories tend to take the international anarchy or structure for granted. They thus have problems adapting to an international security situation with non-state actors and where vaguely definitions of risk dominate the discourse. The Western world is not facing a territorial threat or a competing ideological force aspiration to world dominance. A security theory stuck in the world of ever competing similar states can neither grasp the magnitude nor the dynamics of these developments. The very definition of security threats and risks is what is contested today, and this can hardly be grasped with traditional realist theories.

For the purpose of this article, I seek will seek to analyse the Norwegian security discourse with historical lenses. A loosely applied Foucauldian *genealogy* will be the approach.<sup>3</sup> This means, at least in this context, a representation of history that seeks to disclose the foundations, the givens, the deep structures in a society, acknowledging simultaneously that these structures are evolving. The point is to shed light on the dynamics of the current developments by demonstrating how various practices have evolved over time. Such an approach will therefore by necessity focus on the power relations that uphold and transform these structures. The aim is partly to demonstrate that even the 'givens' the 'foundations' and even the 'truths' related to security, conscription and the armed forces of today are historical constructs and therefore changing are bound to change again.

A Clausewitz-inspired triangle of the people, state and army will be applied throughout the article to demonstrate the changes over history. This triangle will be applied as an analytical tool with the purpose of illustrating the shifting relationships of power and the legitimacy of the armed forces.

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2 Nietzsche's contempt for the conscript Army was famously summarised in the sentence 'I see many soldiers, would that I saw many warriors' in 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra'. See Coker (2001:47pp)

3 Loosely in the sense that the format of an article not provides enough space to apply a thorough genealogy in the Foucauldian fashion (see e.g. Foucault, 1997). However, even if the historical narratives presented are broad and somewhat superficial, I will nonetheless claim that most of the empirical material referred to here are widely acknowledged. My contribution is rather to re-present them in a different analytical setting.



I will also seek to demonstrate that various forms of power have been at play, from violent brute force to disciplinary societal structures, causing resistance, patriotism and obedience. These days new power-constellations are about to emerge, forcing those seeking to apply military force to legitimise their reason for doing so in new ways. That may be a challenge.

## **The Absolutist State – Pure Instrumental Power**

### **The State in the 16th – 18th Centuries**

From late in the 14th century and the following four centuries Norway was united with Denmark and basically ruled from Copenhagen. This was mainly a result of royal intermarriages at the time, rather than wars or strategic alliances. Denmark was the economically and politically dominant partner for most of the period. The level of direct rule from Copenhagen or indirect rule through representatives in Norway varied over the centuries, but at times Norway was considered as just another region in Denmark, like Jylland and Fyn (e.g. under the rule of Christian III in the 16th century). Gradually, towards the end of the 18th century, Norway developed its own laws, taxation system and bureaucracy. Nonetheless, as in Europe in general, compared to later standards the state was very weak indeed. The state rule in most of these centuries was limited to taxation, a few laws, and an occasional drafting (Tilly, 1990). As the taxation also basically was aimed at financing wars and the army, the purpose of most state activities was limited to keeping the power.

The peasants in Norway, who were under less harsh rule and control than most of their European counterparts at the time, nonetheless carried most of the burdens of the society, as they were the only ones to be drafted for military service and were those who paid the highest taxes.

The lack of centralised institutions, limited communications, no media and most importantly, no ideological idea of a ‘nation’, indicates that people’s identities and loyalties were local rather than national. The idea of a collective identity based upon a shared history, culture and language was hardly born, and certainly not established among the uneducated and illiterate rural population.

In the triangle of the people, state and army, the first category, the people, did not yet exist. That is to say, there were no ideology uniting people, no popular movement fighting for their rights and nobody representing them as a social category with collective rights and duties. Hence, the state, and later on the army, were the sole representatives of the polity that existed on what is today the Norwegian territory.

### **The Military**

Even if nationally oriented historians have been attempting to write the history of conscription in Norway back to the 10th century, by referring to the so-called ‘leidang’, this represents a questionable anachronism. The ‘leidang’ was for the most part a locally organised and exercised system of self-protection in case of sudden attacks in the late Middle Ages. Communication

through a network of fires on mountaintops and dedicated warriors existed, but the system did not represent a standing army or a centrally organised force. They were all locally organised and remained as protectors of the local community. There are also several examples over the centuries of failed attempts by the king to draft peasants for military adventures outside the home region of the peasants.

This, as well as the technological development of the weaponry in the 14th and 16th century made it more efficient to use mercenaries. They were financed through taxation of peasants, but it was unevenly exercised both in amount and frequency of paying. Hence, for centuries serving in the army was an unfamiliar and alien concept for most men in Norway.

For example, during the Nordic Seven Years War (1563-1570), an attempt was made to draft peasants to re-conquer the Trondheim area from the Swedes. However, threats of hanging were needed before an army could be scrambled. A few years later, in 1567, an attempt was made in Bergen to draft peasants to support Oslo which was conquered by the Swedes. Not until five revolting peasant leaders were beheaded could an army be established. (Bagge and Mykland, 1987:112)

Also under the reign of Christian IV (1588-1648) an attempt was made to draft a large army to fight the Swedes. The attempt failed, and the level of evasion and the refusal to obey orders was so widespread, also among the officers, that the king realised that a more structured and permanent organised military was required. Until then, Norway did not have its own defence with country wide organisation, officers or General Staff.

The draft up to this period took place whenever it was required by the king, it was not regulated by law or regulations, or in any way notified in advance to the draftees. No rule of law secured a fair and evenly distributed system of drafting, pure luck or accident could determine a peasants faith in this respect.

*The First Army Organisation* In the 17th and 18th century, this gradually changed. More laws were introduced, the judicial system improved, and the physical forceful exercise of power became less frequent. The form of governing gradually became regulatory rather than arbitrary.

The first seed to a Norwegian army was sowed in 1628, when the so-called 'legd' system was established. A 'legd' consisted of four farms of a certain size, and at least the central parts of the country were divided into such 'legds'. Each 'legd' was required to produce one soldier for the king (Bagge and Mykland, 1987:139). In 1641 a Norwegian army was established, thus becoming the first state institution of modern times in Norway. The reason was instrumental; experience from the 30 Year's War proved that *ad hoc* drafted armies were inferior to the better trained ones. In other words, the troops needed more practice.

This was a period with several confrontations between Denmark-Norway and Sweden, but despite the improved organisation, the discipline among the drafted peasants remained low. However, exercise of the draftees was introduced also in peacetime, first on Sunday after mass, later once a month. The 'legds' remained the backbone of the system, and the soldiers remained in

their local area when exercising. Hence, the burden was not too heavy on them.

In 1705 the first thoroughly organised draft authority was established, the so-called 'Sessionsvæsen' (Nåvik, 1996:55). A new law was introduced which demanded that two farms now had to equip a soldier, and it was illegal to lease a farm before the military duty was served. It also prescribed life imprisonment or execution in case of desertion during war, but the punishment was less harsh in peacetime. Historical records of the Danish-Norwegian army in the 18th century describes, among other things, that 'desertion was punished with such beating that it often led to death' (Vaupell, 1876:10).

The more organised and structured organisation of the army and the draft was an attempt to ease the tensions between privates and officers and thereby avoid the evasion. Still, the law was never fully implemented, and the use of force remained arbitrary.

Similarly, when the army encountered problems in drafting because the peasant-sons simply left their farms to evade drafting, so-called 'stavnsbånd' was introduced in 1733. It meant that peasants or their sons not could move from their farms until they were 40 years of age (Nåvik, 1996:85; Vaupell, 1876:232). This decree remained until 1799 when drafting became an individual plight.

### **The Power**

Throughout most of this period, the King and his noblemen remained the sole representatives of the state and the Danish-Norwegian polity. The armed forces gradually became better organised and an institution in itself, but the people were still 'unorganised'. The state power at the end of the 18th century still was top-down, from the king to his subjects, even if indirect through the government officials and army officers. Hence, the power was open and instrumental, it was forceful and arbitrary, clearly discernible in terms of locus and focus. It was the king and his noblemen that possessed the power. This power was rarely exercised though, people seldom felt the interference in their daily lives. When it was applied however, like in drafting, it was harsh and demanding and could demand loyalty and sacrifice for months or years (nobody knew in advance of course). The power was in the hands of the elites, and the 'stavnsbånd' system certainly represented a thorough exercise of power over the peasants.

Put bluntly, peasants were forced to serve in the army, the draft system, and the army, was generally not legitimate from the draftee peasant's point of view. It was highly unpopular. As a result, the struggle over the draft at this time was often visible and physical. It was a struggle between ruler and subjects, between individuals who resisted draft and taxation, and the ruling power. It was a violent struggle and a violent army. There was no standing army, it was only scrambled in times of war, and did nothing outside fighting wars.

Nonetheless, a more predictable, regulating and less physical form of rule was emerging. The regulated military draft system proved more efficient than the old arbitrary system and gradually reduced the need for physical

punishment. This trend continued in the 19th century as the state grew stronger and entered more spheres of people's lives.

This, it could be argued, abolished the struggle altogether, since a 'social contract' was established between the ruler and his subjects, legitimising the state and thereby the draft. I will rather argue that the power struggle remained intact in the emerging modern state, but rather than displaying itself visually and violently, it began taking other forms that were far less visible.

## **The Liberal State – The birth of conscription as an idea**

### **The 19th Century State**

At the dawn of the 19th century, Norway did not exist as a realm of its own. Its territorial administration and organisation of counties, military command regions, judicial areas were all highly integrated into the Danish government administration (Bagge and Mykland, 1987:254). That however, did not mean that the public sphere had shrunk, only that all the central institutions were located in Copenhagen and not in Oslo.

The four century long Danish-Norwegian unified state nonetheless ended abruptly, but that was as a result of the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814, and not domestic developments in Norway. Denmark was then forced to abstain Norway to Sweden as war compensation after having been allied with Napoleon. Even if the small Norwegian intelligentsia was taken somewhat off guard, with the help and initiative of the Danish Prince Christian Fredrik, Norwegian officials, noblemen and other representatives hastily met at a manor in Eidsvold north of Oslo, to draft a Norwegian Constitution in 1814. By exploiting this window of opportunity, Norway did regain some of its international subjectivity and was legally equal to Sweden in the new Union that was created. A parliament and a government were also established. Not surprisingly, the Constitution was highly influenced by the French Enlightenment ideas as well as the American Constitution, and was rather liberal in contemporary standards. As a result, the Norwegian state was for the first time resting on a set of political-philosophical ideas which put the sovereignty and equality of the people as its legal basis. Of course, as in the rest of Europe, noble thoughts were far from reflecting the realities on the ground, and the liberal ideas that prevailed in the following decades did not encourage a strong interventionist state to implement the ideas of equality.

In a famous phrase the historian Jens Arup Seip (1963) has labelled this period the 'State of the Government Official', indicating where the real power was located. He argues that from 1814 to 1884, Norway was ruled by the bureaucrats. French revolution, Enlightenment and liberal ideas aside, the power remained in the hand of the few. Nonetheless, compared to earlier times the *rule of law* was established as a basic fundament for ruling, and the exercise of power was less arbitrary, uneven and physical than before. There were simply limits to what these state officials could do in the name of the state.

In the second half of 19th century the Norwegian government also involved itself in numerous new spheres just the same way as most European governments did. Regulation of the fisheries, expanded taxation, trade laws, development of infrastructure and the like, gradually became a state interest. For instance, from 1851 to 1884 the public spending increased from 13 to 41 million 'Kroner', in other words a threefold increase (Try, 1979:474). The state's role as investor also rose, and passed 10% of the national total in the 1870's (Hodne, 1981:300f). The second half of the century also witnessed enormous socio-economical changes. Massive emigration to America, rapidly growing industrialisation, urbanisation, commercialisation and modernisation of the farming, all had huge impact on the society at large.

The first nation-wide organisations emerged, for the most part rural movement hostile to the modernisation process. The main one was the liberal-rural movement that challenged both the modernisation in general and the power of the ruling state officials in particular (Nordby, 1991). Slowly and over the decades the representation in the parliament was altered as a growing number of peasants entered, increasingly rising their voice against the alien culture and activity of the academics, state officials and other representatives of the new era. Gradually this opposition united, gained influence, and managed to make the parliament the main political institution at the expense of the king and the government, most notably by the introduction of the parliamentary system in 1884.

The liberal-rural movement later emerged into the first Norwegian political party, 'Venstre' in 1884. 'Venstre's' ideological foundation would also prove important for the development of the Norwegian national identity as well as for the development within the armed forces, both of which were key factors for the Norwegian independence from Sweden in 1905. Moreover, 'Venstre' was the first main contender of the definition of the Norwegian polity. 'Venstre' begun carrying a force which was about to become the Clausewitzian 'people', a power that would later re-define both the military as well as the state.

### **The People: The Construction of a Nation**

The larger material and physical societal changes the above described modernisation-process represented, was crucial for the changes to come, but is not in itself sufficient to understand the dynamics of the new power structures. Whereas the modernisation of the state somewhat eased the former conflicts between the ruler and the ruled, between the military and the draftees, it did not alter the basic picture. People were still dominated by the state.

Hence, in the context of this article, the emergence of a Norwegian 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991), i.e. a national identity and solidarity comprising the entire territory, would turn out to become an equally important form of power in the years leading up to the independence in 1905. The gradually spreading popular belief in a national identity and a national solidarity brought something qualitatively new into the state: its popular legitimacy.

The Norwegian nationalism was inspired by the wave of Romanticism and the so-called 'National awakenings' that swept Europe in the 19th cen-

ture. The very idea of a nation, of a united people on a territory, of insiders and outsiders, of the cultural traits that defined the nation was, as it developed in Europe, relatively easy to adapt to Norway, as the population was rather stable and had limited influx of people of radically different languages or customs. In short, the drawing of the political and geographical borders of Self and Others was practicable task for those who set out to do this.

The first expressions of nationalism emerged already in the first half of the 19th century (Aarnes, 1980). The urban population then begun seeking their national *roots*, and claimed to find them in the rural population. The Norwegian peasant and his culture were praised as the 'real' Norwegian, and selections of the rural cultures was represented to the urban audience. The rural peasant cultures were used as a dwell from which national symbols could be selected, picked and used by the urban nationalists with the aim of establishing their own cultural heritage. The peasant himself was let out.

Importantly, modern science was used in this process. For instance Asbjørnsen and Moe, two folklorists, systematically zigzagged the valleys of the countryside writing down fairytales and stories. They were inspired by the German Romanticism, the Grimm brothers' and the idea that the nation was some sort of a biological-historical organism with its own 'folk-soul' which needed to be preserved (Aarnes, 1980:141).

Other scientists collected and systematised various objects, such as furniture, tools, cloths and even houses. They were scientifically categorised, studied and placed in museums and exhibitions with the aim of 'preserving the roots'. Also the language was collected. The linguist Ivar Aasen toured the country for years writing down dialects and expressions. With the help of modern grammatical rules he then established an alternative written language which were 'pure Norwegian' and not Danish as was the commonly used written language. Aasen was explicit: 'We never need to cross the borders for a language; we can search our own turf and see what we possess before we begin borrowing from others' (quoted in Nerbøvik, 1994:144).

These processes of representations, of a romantic search for the Norwegian 'core culture' and the application of highly modern scientific methods all sought to draw an identity border that matched the state border. The use of scientific methods functioned as a way of de-politicise the process. The search for the national heritage was considered 'natural' and 'objective' and not explicitly political, even if was all about drawing a border between Norwegians and Others. The growing national emotions and patriotism towards the end of the century leading to the break-up of the Union in 1905 would have been impossible without this 'ammunition', working hand in hand with the growing influence of 'Venstre', the state expansion and the wider socio-economical development. Most importantly in this context, it made a Norwegian army possible.

### **The Military**

*Conscription in the Constitution* An important change in the system of drafting emerged in 1799 when military duty became an individual plight, not any more the duty of a group of farms (the 'legd'). In the previous system it was entirely up to these farms to decide who should represent them,

whereas the state now addressed the individual directly. It also made the state's exercise of power somewhat less arbitrary than before. However, it also implied an increased control by the state over its subjects. It could now track every single (male) and pick and chose as it pleased. Still, this did not mean general conscription. The system only applied to the inland peasants, not the costal population, and of the former only a limited number of men actually were drafted (Nåvik, 1996:90).

The fact that the state now was technically capable of running a register of males, itself a sign of an emerging modernity within the state organisation, was an important precondition for what should turn out to be an important feature of the 1814 Constitution; the inclusion of conscription as a male duty. The text of paragraph 109 in the Constitution read: 'Any Citizen of the state is obliged to serve a certain time to protect the Fatherland, irrespective of birth or wealth'. The majority of the representatives at the Constitutional Assembly considered the conscription to be the very symbol and incarnation of the equality and the sovereignty of the people. It also had to be a duty for all (i.e. conscription not only draft) since the entire foundation of the Constitution was based upon this sovereignty of the Norwegian people. This foundation needed to be substantiated, and by including it in the Constitution it was underlined or even 'proven' that Norway was a unity apart from Sweden and Denmark, and that all the (male) citizens were included and supportive. This way the people was formally bound to the state and the military for the first time.

Still, nobody interpreted the conscription literally; the urban population and academics were explicitly exempted, and everybody were allowed to provide a substitute if it did not suit them to serve personally. In other words, despite a new legal framing it continued to be a draft system. In 1816 a law was passed that was supposed to implement the Constitutionally defined conscription. The result was rather opposite: the army was reduced from 35000 to 12000 men, of which 2000 should be contracted. Only the number of recruits necessary to fill the ranks were drafted, and there were no reservists. The rest were exempted. In effect, fewer men did military service after 1816 than in the 18th century.

The military was also used in operations abroad on several occasions. Most notably the Navy, but also the army was deployed in e.g. Slesvig-Holstein in 1848 (Ulriksen, 2002). This indicates that even if the people formally were a part of the state-military nexus, it was not at the time represented as something utterly connected to the Norwegian territory, as it would be later.

Furthermore, there are clear indications that a harsh discipline was still needed to keep the draftees under control. The military penal code of 1850 was the most detailed regulation of the disciplinary system in the military to that date, and it applied less physical punishment than before. Still, terms like 'dark prison', 'lonely prison', 'prison with water and bread', 'penal servitude' and to some extent 'death penalty' was still in use. However, whipping or cane beating was from then on only allowed on board ships or in the field when ordinary punishment not could be accomplished. There were specific rules that applied to mutiny and revolt, and severe punishment for evasion also in peacetime. This indicates that it still was a challenge to enrol

and discipline the recruits. The state power had become more regulatory than forceful, but the use of force was far from abolished.

The state and the armed forces remained strong and united institutions way into the second half of the 19th century, representing the same polity. The people, if formally a part of the 'contract', remained absent as a political force to be reckoned with.

*The Liberal-Rural Movement and the Armed Forces* Within the liberal-rural movement the scepticism towards the armed forces was high. The army, in their eyes, was the symbol of the King, of the upper classes and the alien government officials. The liberal-rural movement begun rising their voice against this more thoroughly as their influence grew in the second half of the century. They regarded the Officers and the military as representatives of an alien culture and power, the Officers had sworn loyalty to the King, not the people, and were therefore not representatives of the people. The military was regarded as anti-liberal and associated with authoritarian regimes like the Prussian. The leading figure of the movement Johan Sverdrup expressed scepticism towards the 'soldier spirit' which he feared would conflict with the 'civil spirit' if a six months' military service was to be introduced as suggested for the first time in 1866 (NMT, 1927:961). He said that '...the garrison life never could be a good school for the youth' (quoted in Kristiansen, 1966:33). Sverdrup wanted a different military, a military that was anchored locally and in the people, and which not was segregated from the civil society.

The movement even establish their own alternative quasi- or para-military organisation, called the 'People's Armament'. These were formally sporting clubs or a sort of rifle clubs, but their close association with the liberal-rural political movement made them a power tool for the latter. During the peak of the conflict with the King and government in 1884, when the parliamentary system was introduced and 'Venstre' established, these clubs were strongly present as they were urged to establish a defending ring around the parliament. These forces represented a (in the movement's eyes) far more legitimate army than the official one. 1884 represented a turning-point as a political movement of the people had gained control over a main state institution (the parliament). This became a platform for the continued struggle for the realisation of its vision of the Norwegian polity, a vision that certainly diverged from the one held by the King in Stockholm. The change in 1884 also had an impact on the military.

Already in 1887 a new army organisation was introduced, highly flavoured by the strength of 'Venstre'. Troops dedicated to the national-territorial defence were strengthened at the expense of the troops that also were deployable abroad, and contracted troops were abolished. Already a decade earlier, the joint exercises with the Swedish troops had ended. The national-territorial ideal of 'Venstre' was closer to realisation. 'Venstre' kept arguing for the inclusion of the 'People's Armament' into the military, to strengthen the civil spirit. This was harshly opposed by the officers who claimed that discipline, hierarchy and a division between privates and officers were crucial for an army to be efficient.



However, this mood within the officers in the armed forces changed rather rapidly in 1895. Norway had been demanding from Sweden a separate international Consular Service, due to the huge shipping industry. When this demand was met with Swedish mobilisation and threats of military reprisals, the Norwegian defence budget was increased significantly. Fortresses were built along the border, the Navy got new ships and the conscription period was increased from 9 to 14 years. At the same time, the Ministry of Defence gradually took over the control of the armed forces from the King in Sweden. The younger generation of Officers were also much more nationally oriented than the older, and these begun to fill more important positions within the military. The common perception of Sweden as a potential enemy, as an Other, therefore functioned to change the armed forces internally as well as legitimise it in the civil society.

The growing national emotions, the de-politicised and ‘natural’ national spirit had begun taking hold in the wider part of the population, and the moment the military was accepted and included in this represented a watershed in the national development. Gradually ‘Venstre’ abandoned the demand for the ‘People’s Armament’ knowing that a modern army needed more professional training and equipment. As long as the military was national and not representing the Other, these movements again became just sports and rifle clubs, whereas the military was included as part of the national discourse.

If we compare the military penal codes of 1850 and 1902, we see that the latter had become even more detailed, but that the punishment had become less physical. The use of whip was abolished, and evasion was only punished by imprisonment, also at times of war. Capital punishment was limited to the most exceedingly aggravating circumstances at times of war (Militær Straffelov, 1902). The need for use of force to discipline the troops was apparently rarely required. The men in uniform were simply more motivated. They had a cause.

Hence, for the first time in history, the military was representing the people rather than just the state. As a matter of fact, it became opposed to the state, represented by the Swedish authorities, and loyal to the Norwegian authorities that claimed to be representing the people.

When the Union with Sweden dissolved in 1905, Norwegian patriotism was at a boiling point. There were concerns of war, but the optimism and self confidence was dominant. Prime Minister Christian Michelsen said for example: ‘The situation was that the independence of the country and Constitution had to be protected, no matter the price. I heard no fear of war’ (quoted in Gulbranson 1936:239). Also, when later explaining about the negotiations with Sweden the then Prime Minister Jørgen Løvland said: ‘During the negotiations we knew that the spirit in the Norwegian army was excellent, we knew, that from the officers to the privates there was courage, will to sacrifice...’ (quoted in Gulbranson, 1936:239). Even if the Norwegian mobilised army was only 23000 men, and the Swedes were twice as many, he did not fear a Swedish invasion in case the negotiations failed, because the ‘will to defence’ was so strong in Norway (Berg, 1995:35). The union was dismantled in a peaceful way (only a few shots were fired), and Norwegian self confidence was bolstered. In a referendum 99.9 % of the participants voted in favour of independence.

With the armed forces as the very symbol of the nation, conscription was not only accepted and normalised, it had become the realisation of the liberation, of the free will of the people: ‘We are one people, one country, one soul, one will, and that is: Now Norway shall be free, free, free! There is only one heartbeat in the entire people’ wrote Captain Angell (1905:7). Furthermore: ‘To give, to sacrifice, to suffer for a holy cause - that brings pleasure, sincere, deep felt; we feel closely united, strongly together, the ‘fatherland’ is no longer an empty word, it becomes like God himself. And the fight for the fatherland, that becomes the ‘holy war’ the fulfilment of Gods Fourth Commandment’ (Angell, 1905:31f). Captain Angell was a central person in the national movement for the enlightenment of the people at the time, and his patriotism typical for the emotions of 1905 (Strøm, 1995).

### **The Power**

Compared to the earlier times, the 19th century witnessed a revolutionary development in the relationship between the population and the armed forces. From being an institution in the hands of the king and government, it became the very institution carrying the spirit of the people. From being a top-down power instrument it became a bottom-up liberation movement. The perception was that the power was with the people, they had liberated themselves from both Danes and Swedes, and were finally free.

The peak of the nationalist era, the independence in 1905, was considered ‘natural’, a ‘right’ and ‘liberation’. The power was considered more democratically founded, it was bottom-up rather than top-down.

However, never had the state interfered more in everyday life of its citizens, never had it regulated more, demanded more taxes or had as widely applied draft system. The ‘liberation’ therefore, was not on an individual, but on a collective level. The ‘Norwegian people’ had ‘freed’ themselves and joined the international order of nation states.

The key here is not if this was a ‘true’ interpretation of the events, what matters is that this was a commonly held view. Further, the aim is not to ‘reveal’ the power of domination ‘really’ was somewhere else (in the control of the upper classes or something else), but to indicate that the power nexus which upheld the idea of liberation was a strong one, ‘true’ or not. The power in this system was not one of class domination, or hierarchical domination, but a discursive one. It was a mix of theories (the sovereignty of the people), of political practice (the liberal-rural movement), the socio-economical development (industrialisation, state expansion), the international developments, and organisation of the armed forces.

The result of this was that individual men in Norway considered legitimate to be a soldier, and hence to mobilise and possibly fight, kill and die for the state and the nation without being forced to do so. That was a revolutionary development.

The national-patriotic representation of the people had prevailed, by first defining the Nation, then redefined the legitimate fundament of the army, and finally conquered the state itself. Some term this liberation, I choose to define it as a new set power-constellations. It was nonetheless not to last for very long.

## The Early 20th Century; Contested Security Perceptions

### The State and Nation

The national honeymoon of 1905 should turn out to be short lived. The old political differences remained and new ones were emerging and again re-politising the national symbols. The lack of a basic political consensus in the first decades of the century threatened the entire political system, as ‘the nation-state not was an overarching frame of identity for Norwegian citizens’ (Fure, 1996:27).

The liberation struggle from Sweden had united the people, but few were interested in engaging in any other international relations or conflicts. Already in 1905 Foreign Minister Jørgen Løvland said, ‘...we will not have any foreign policy’, meaning that Norway should seek to avoid being involved in international crisis and wars, but solely protect its neutrality. The focus was domestic and no new enemy was uniting the people.

But the state expanded. The first years of the new century witnessed an industrial boom, modernisation in production and farming, urbanisation and a rapidly growing labour class. It soon became apparent that the traditional passive, liberal state not was suited for the new challenges. This became most evident during World War I when high inflation but limited resources forced the government to take action. A programme so interventionist that it was later labelled by Furre (1982) as ‘War Communism’, introduced food rationing, price regulation and import control, whereas the national budget was expanded with 50% from 1913 to 1918, (Furre, 1982:90).

In the 1920’s the state also continued the nation building programmes it had initiated before the dissolution of the Union. Public titles, places, the written language were all altered to become ‘more Norwegian’ and ‘less Danish’.<sup>4</sup> The government introduced a unified and nationally oriented education system and invested in infrastructure that contributed in uniting the people.

Still, this was not enough to keep the people together. The industrialisation brought numerous new political parties on the stage; National Patriotic parties, Christian-Democrats and of course labour parties. To a large extent these parties diverged not only over policy and the organisation of the state, but also when it came to national identity. They had different positions about what the national was, who it was and where the social borders were to be drawn. ‘When people said Norway they meant very different things’ writes Dahl (1975:24). It was a fight over who and what that should represent the nation, the Self, as well as over who and what the Other was.

### The Labour Party and the National

Despite the international failure to unite against the emerging war in 1914, the working class movement and the Labour parties remained strong in the 1920’s, not least after the Russian revolution in 1917. The Norwegian Labour Party was a radical party. It was anti-militaristic and anti-national and rejected and scorned the ‘bourgeois’ national symbols, such as the flag, the

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4 The 400 years with Denmark had left more linguistic and cultural traits than the 90 years with Sweden.

national anthem or the Constitutional day (Dahl, 1975:29). The traditional romantic, retroactive nationalism was rejected as it was considered irrelevant for the emerging class struggle. Leading ideologist deemed the entire concept of a 'nation' as *passé*, predicting it would disappear when the class-war was over.

Not all labour leaders considered the nation as dead, however, some claimed that what was needed was rather to 'renew the national identity and give it positive contents' (Koht quoted in Dahl, 1969:27). They argued that the nationalism as represented by the right-wing parties not was the *real* nationalism, since it was flavoured by the narrow interest of the ruling class. The national ideas had to be conquered by the labour class and the peasants, it was argued. Hence, the struggle within the labour movement was over the *representation* of the national. Should they reject the national identity entirely or conquer the symbols and renew them?

As labour grew and formed government from the mid-1930's on, it became less radical, making the latter option prevail. This implied a return to the state as the main frame for identity in contrast to an international frame. The party went from being a revolutionary class party to become a national party, seeking not a revolutionary change of system, but a different government policy. The slogan 'All the people at work' signified this change, the party spoke on behalf of all Norwegians, not only the industrial working class, it wanted jobs, not revolution (Dahl, 1969:68). Hence, the labour party begun using the Norwegian flag and singing the national anthem on Labour Day and on other occasions. The labour had conquered the national symbols, but nonetheless also changed itself over the years, moving closer to some of the democratic values the national symbols represented, values that not had been highlighted to the same extent in the right-wing representation of the national symbols.

Another development which contributed in turning the Labour party towards a more national platform was the rise of fascism in Germany. This made it clear to the labour movement that the most threatening Other was not the brownish Norwegian parties but another state, even if the confrontations with the former continued. Hence, it was an international Other, a threat from the international arena that emerged. Until then, the international scene had been more or less ignored in Norway.

### **The Struggle over the Military**

That the nation not was a unifying concept in the 1920's is clearly illustrated with the emergence of several para-military organisations that reflected the political opponents. There were 'red' and 'white' guards, partly organised in a military manner, partly armed with side arms (Ørvik, 1961). Some, like the 'Society Aid' and the 'Society Guard' were so-called 'emergency' groups organised by the right-wing parties, prepared to mobilise in case of war or revolution. The 'Society Aid' became quasi-public and was supposed to support the police and organise strike-breakers. Another, more militant group called the 'Society Guard', became a reserve police force in 1927, an emergency support in case of demonstrations by the working class. Later a special organisation was established by the right-wing Minister of Defence,

Vidkun Quisling, which was supposed to train and educate volunteers for the rear defence, as well as support the training of the conscripts and give people 'enthusiasm for the armed forces'.

The Labour party, which had been pacifistically oriented since before World War One, broke with this ideology in the 1930's and organised 'Labour Protection Groups' to counter the various organisation on right-wing side. The Labour was fearing that the rightist parties were preparing for a domestic violent show-down.

When the national high court banned the 'Labour Protection Groups' in 1933 it did not improve the mutual confidence, not least in the light of the growth of fascism throughout Europe. This made the Labour movement unite tighter.

The labour party had a deep lack of confidence in the armed forces, claiming that the officers and the organisation at large were controlled by the Others, i.e. the upper classes. From 1906 the party wanted disarmament of the military. This was partly due to the pacifistic currents within the party, partly the revolutionary ideas, since most officers were of middle-class background and many belonged on the political right-wing.

Few doubted that the military could and would be used domestically, to support the police if so required, and there were several historical examples of such activity. In the 1920's the army was mobilised at several strikes and confrontations between workers and the police. Even if few shots were fired at these mobilisations, the very presence of the army in full combat gear at strikes sent a very clear political signal about where it belonged politically (Furre, 1982; Hoel, 1966; Strømme, 1978).

The Labour party suggested in 1933 to replace the existing armed forces with a 'neutrality guard' (Ørvik, 1961). The aim was to establish a 'more democratic army' to recruit officers from the wide public, and to get rid of the untrustworthy officers. The parallel to the scepticism of 'Venstre' 50 years earlier is striking. The army did not reflect the people, as represented by the labour movement at the time.

It was also believed that international arbitration could end a possible occupation quickly, making military resistance against the big powers unnecessary. In 1923 the military service was only 38 days, and in 1926 a lottery system was introduced, revealing 1/3 off their duty. From 1920 to 1933 the defence budget was halved.

The political strains in the population were therefore very visible within the armed forces. There were different perceptions about who was Self and who was Other. Was the Other another social class or another state? If the latter, was it Germany or the Soviet Union? If the former, or a combination, who could be trusted nationally in case of an alien invasion? Would the right-wing rise against a German aggression or would labour resist the Soviet Union? The distrust was indeed deep.

The radical downsizing of the military budgets and the number of draftees probably reduced the chances of an armed confrontation between the various socio-political groups in Norway. The military became a relatively peripheral institution in the Norwegian society, thereby avoiding being the main field for confrontations between the groups.

Not until 1937, when the Labour party had conquered the national symbols as well as established a more nationally oriented platform, did the defence budget again increase. Then Franco had already won the Civil War in Spain, and Austria was annexed by Hitler. States were interpreted as the main actors in international politics and fascism the predominant ideological enemy. In 1940 Norway was occupied by Germany.

### **The Power**

The people that were united and 'liberated' in 1905 were split in competing visions of itself a few years later. The mutual distrust between the labour movement and the bourgeoisie due to their radically different representations of Self and Others, of threat and security as well as the international system, threatened to undermine the common state institutions.

The impact on the armed forces was significant, at least when it came the competing interpretations of its role and function. The various para-military groups indicate a serious lack of trust in the state as the sole provider of security.

If the people had felt liberated in 1905, these developments demonstrated that the power-relationships between social groups and classes continued to evolve, and that even national ideas are open for various interpretations and power-struggles.

When the Labour party turned national in the mid-1930's, it somehow symbolises the beginning of the end of some of these power-struggles. The labour movement identified itself as a national rather than international movement. It represented Norway, which was a subject in the international order of states. This order, it was to be discovered, could not be ruled by arbitrations, as the international system was now considered to be anarchical, and nobody could chose to remain outside the games at play.

At the same time the Labour party had redefined the national, the people, in a more modern and future-focussed fashion. The armed forces were nonetheless the last institution to gain trust from the labour. Whereas the state and the people gradually were establishing a new modality in their power-relationship, the military was not included in this until after 1945.

## **Cold War Norway: A Unified Security Discourse**

### **The Creation of a Nation-State**

The international economical growth and industrial boom after the Second World War was significant in Norway as in the rest of Europe. The state expanded, economically, institutionally and politically. A collective spirit of solidarity and future optimism was accompanying the intensive investment in industry and infrastructure after the war. The first aim was to re-build what the war had destroyed, the second to modernize the country. Keynesian social economical planning and intensive public investment helped both aims being realised. The industrial sector developed rapidly, contributing to an economical growth without any significant set-backs from 1945 to the international oil-crisis in 1973.

Politically the Labour party had absolute majority in the parliament almost without interruption from 1945 till 1965. The state took charge, it improved life for the vast majority of citizens, provided infrastructure, education and healthcare. The state was more or less run by the Labour Party, leaving limited space for opposition, and creating a sometimes blurry distinction between party and state. However, the political climate had changed dramatically since the 1930's. There was an immense, and historically unique, national consensus over key issues.

The experience of the 1920's and 30's, when the people had been split to such an extent that the defence from foreign threats was neglected (at least that was a predominant interpretation after the Second World War), made national consolidation a key priority for the government. This had already begun in the late 1930's but the spirit in the post-war era was well suited for nation-building as well as state-building. A united people that regarded itself as one nation, who shared the main values and societal goals, were actively promoted by the state. A massive nation-building programme was initiated, including the egalitarian educational system, cultural policy, the national media, the district and regional policy, and more or less all other projects the state was involved in. This way the socio-economical gap between the classes was decreased significantly and a political stable environment created. Domestic stability was regarded a key to security, both internally and against international threats.

The Nation-building discourse met little resistance until at last the 1970's, when the radical left forces grew. The national symbolism and ideology of the nation state continued as before the war; in a strong belief in modernity, in industrialisation and progress. The Norwegian national identity looked to the future, not the past.

Importantly, the united Self was also strengthened by a common Other, the communists (Furre, 1991). Especially in the early years after the War were the Norwegian communists considered a challenge to the very foundations of the Labour Party. They were opposing its recipe for a prosperous society, they challenged the national identity (as defined by the majority at the time) and generally the widespread socio-political consensus. They were Others on the Inside, and considered potential traitors in case of war. As the Cold War settled these groups remained marginal, and the main security focus was abroad. The Soviet Union became the dominant security threat in the discourse, a threat few questioned. As such it served the role Sweden did prior to 1905, it united the nation.

However, this acknowledgment of the danger of potential enemies, domestically or abroad, never militarised Norway. The international humanism, the pacifist tradition and the belief in strong international institutions remained a part of the national identity. This forced the military to keep a very defensive and domestic focus, to secure strong national control of the armed forces and least but not last, to introduce a conscript system that secured a democratic defence.

### **The Military: 'Never Again 9th April'<sup>5</sup>**

In the National Military Commission of 1946 it was clearly stated that societal groups opposed to the defence was a danger. It was declared that this had to be avoided through positive and negative means. A national 'will to defence' was to be created. After having experienced invasion and occupation, hearts and minds of the people had one wish when it came to security: never again shall we be occupied; never again shall the international anarchy surprise us. The aim of the national security after the Second World War was frequently summarized in one phrase: 'Never again 9th April' (the date on the Nazi invasion 1940).

The international developments were certainly important for the Norwegian security policy. The failure of the negotiations over Germany's future, the communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and not least Stalin's military 'offer' to Finland, made Norway enter the Cold War by choosing side. The government approached the United Kingdom and the United States for support, and simultaneously increased the defence budget with 50% (Kristiansen, 1996:41). In 1949 Norway signed the Atlantic Treaty (later NATO), thereby avoiding a bilateral relation with the Soviet Union of the Finnish kind (Berggrav, 1996:67). The need for a strong Defence was widely accepted, as well as the need for alliance with the Great Powers. The previous belief that Norway could avoid being dragged into in a European War theatre was gone. Neutralism was abandoned.

These conclusions were far from evident at the outset, however. There was strong resistance to NATO membership in labour to begin with, as well as to anything that smelled of offensive capacities within the military. Typically, the most accepted and widely recognised part of the military was the new so-called home guard which was established in 1947. The aim of the home guard was to provide quick local mobilisation of lightly armed infantry in case of a surprise attack. The traditions of the 'People's Armament' and the resistance movement during the war was evident. This was in reality a second army, a reserve in addition to the conscript army, with no offensive power. It was locally organised and indeed tactically oriented. From its establishment the home guard had numerous volunteers, and was widely recognised as an army of the people.

Labour also put a great effort into bringing the state (and thereby the people) in control of the armed forces. During the Cold War the military came under more political scrutiny and control than ever before in history. In the same vein, a unique 'Base Policy' was developed which prohibited permanent Allied presence in Norway in peace-time. The purpose of this was mainly to ease the Norwegian public opinion, not the Soviet Union. The government was afraid to push and provoke the pacifically, isolationist, or left-oriented portions of the population too far.

The concept of 'total defence' was introduced, preparing Norway for the kind of total war the rest of Europe had fought for decades already. The state and the nation thereby joined the armed forces in defending the territory. The conscription system was expanded, improved and modernised. In 1948 12 months' service was introduced, later expanded to between 9 and 15

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5 The empirical material in this part mostly stems from Ulriksen, 2002 Chapter 4, unless otherwise stated.



months depending on defence wing. During most of the Cold War, for the first time in history, conscription, defined as a universally applied draft with widespread legitimacy, was applied in Norway. The reason for the large number of conscripts was just as much political as military, however. Norwegian security policy was to a large extent based upon active nation-building, and the conscript system was regarded as a primary institution in this regard. Through conscription it was believed that the military would secure its legitimacy in the people.

Over the years, the armed forces also played down the violent aspects of the military and became almost like any other public sphere. Demands for over-time and additional pay during military exercises, the introduction of organisational language from the economical and private enterprise sphere, illustrates this. All of Europe became increasingly anti-militaristic towards the end of the Cold War and after, playing down heroism and military virtue as an ideal for the 21st Century. Humanism and political integration was replacing the gun. This fit the Norwegian tradition well.

From the early 1950's on the defence was focussed on the northern counties close to the border with the Soviet Union. The defence strategy was rather simple. It was about exhaustion. The Norwegian conscript army was to resist the Soviet invasion as long as possible and try to exhaust them and delay their progress further south. The aim was to resist until allied troops could come to rescue.

In other words, even if the Cold War and the Soviet threat was the basic framework in which the Norwegian defence planning took place, it nonetheless had a domestic twist to its implementation. The point of reference was the Second World War and the Nazi occupation, and national support was rallied around the symbolism of the heroic 'boys in the forest', i.e. the home resistance.

Furthermore, even if Norway had joined an international alliance (NATO) to guarantee its security, even this was interpreted as a domestic asset. Norway was considered a net-receiver of allied help, not a provider. In case of war, Norway expected allied reinforcement, but not to send troops abroad to aid allies. So even if Norway formally was prepared to aid any allied country, the *de facto* military planning never considered this an option. If it came to war with the Soviet Union it would be on all fronts. To remove or weaken the Norwegian northern frontline would not be an option in such a scenario, since the idea of a limited war was ruled out.

Norway was an allied partner like the rest of NATO but this was only legally. Politically, popularly and militarily it was just another way of securing the national territory.

### **The Power**

Modernity entered Norway with full force after the Second World War. With it came industry, the strong state, the infrastructure, the national identity and the solidarity. The state, the people and the military were united and the power was lying in this very nexus. None of the three entities dominated the other, but constituted a unique 'Norwegian imagined community' embracing

almost all Norwegians. The few outsiders never represented a threat to this web but rather served to reinforce it.

The united people gave the state and the military legitimacy, the state strengthened the people and the military, whereas the military united the people through conscription and reinforced the strong state through its combination of a domestic focus and the international alliance in NATO.

The power lay in the consensus, and the consensus was not primarily a result of the containment of the opposition in the fringes. The national consensus stemmed from shared attitudes and interpretations of the recent experience of the threat the international lack of order could represent. This was based on a widespread solidarity emerging from the common suffering during the Nazi occupation and from a common belief in modernity and democratic standards. The people, united in a nation was closely connected to the state, it was the very legitimising foundation of everything the state did, at the same time as it was the state that was the main nation-building actor.

As a result, the power of dominance was almost entirely replaced with a power of widespread legitimacy. The military was united with the state and the people through a shared identity. This constellation of power remained more or less intact till the end of the Cold War. After the Cold War and into the 1990's it also remained relatively unchallenged, even if the radical changes in the world politics begun to have an impact on all three entities.

### **21st Century Norway: An Open-Ended Security Discourse**

At the early 21st century the Norwegian armed forces are no longer mainly a national territorial defence force, but is about to become predominantly internationally oriented. Territorial defence of Norway seems more or less irrelevant since there is no visible threat to the territory. The Norwegian military now has to prove its relevance, domestically as well as to the allies, and this is done through missions abroad. Such an international orientation is not new; as mentioned above, Norwegian ships and troops have operated abroad before. However, it is the first time since the people become the main legitimising factor of the military. The consent of the people was of a far lesser concern in the 19th century than it is now. These days it appears that the state, people and the military, which were united in one identity during the Cold War, again are about to drift apart.

### **The State and the People**

The post-Cold War international order remains in limbo. No new discernible enemy has emerged over the horizon and united the West, nor Norway, into a single unified defensive actor prepared to sacrifice itself if need be. The global economy is becoming increasingly integrated, and regional (if not global) political institutions are emerging to cope with it. The state is forced to surrender sovereignty to over- and inter-national bodies like the EU and WTO, but the state nonetheless remains the key political body for the citizens. The Norwegian state, despite not being member of the EU, is as integrated into the economical sphere and shares the very same security concerns as the rest of the European continent.

What is strikingly new in the 21st century Europe is that state security (i.e. threats to the territorial sovereignty of the state) is about to become irrelevant. The chances of being occupied by a foreign power are minimal. The reason is not solely the disappearance of the Soviet Union or any similar geo-political threat, but that territorial control no longer is the only key to economical and political power. Even a possible future ‘evil dictator’ or a generally unstable regime in Europe will have problems occupying the territory of another country since the gains achieved from it is far less than the expenses; that being political and economical. Territorial control or the state is simply not the sole key to power anymore (Cooper, 2003).

Furthermore, the lack of a global ideological rift accompanied with military assets has also vanished. The existential threat of an Armageddon has more or less disappeared. The Western political discourse is now largely about protecting *status quo* against various *risks* (Beck, 1992). In security terms it means that ‘War is no longer used to advance ‘goods’, but managing ‘bads’ (Coker, 2001:56). The end of grand ideologies and metaphysics leaves us (the West) with mainly one reason to fight wars: to protect what we have.<sup>6</sup>

As a result, in the security discourse state security has now been supplied with such concepts as ‘societal security’ and ‘human security’ indicating a shift in focus from defending sovereignty and territory to protecting the civil population and central institutions from anything from pollution to terrorist attacks. Since nobody knows where and when this threat might strike, a security debate is constantly on-going and the state is to a lesser degree the sole actor to define threats and to respond to them. The discourse defining threats – and the appropriate response – is global and regional, and involves a wide variety of actors.

The appropriate way of applying military force against such invisible enemies is hard to determine, and will also always be contested. International police cooperation appears to be just as important to combat e.g. terrorism, making the state searching for relevant uses of its armed forces.

At the same time the people, which at least since World War II was equivalent to the nation in Norway, has over the last decades become more fragmented and pluralistic. People are migrating, travelling and communicating, and refugees and immigrants are settling. This has led to various local, regional and de-territorialized identities. As a result, the Norwegian ‘imagined community’ is not as dominant and stable an identity as it used to be. The nation has far from vanished but other collective identities play more significant roles in many people’s life. With different identities often comes somewhat different values and different solidarity. The extent of these differences has until now remained limited, however, as most Norwegians share the basic democratic values, and trust the state institutions. But it cannot be ruled out that the state at some point will need to more explicitly define what values it is based on, in other words which values and principles that ties the people to the state. The nation may no longer be sufficient.

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6 Robert Kagan and others however, argue that this is mainly a European trend, whereas the United States still considers itself to have a ‘ideological mission’ for instance to promote democracy. See e.g. Kagan (2003) and Mead (2004).

Despite of a growing societal diversity, no deep ideological conflicts appear to be emerging. A part of the reason for this may be that the perception of social differences today not primarily follow economical lines like it did in the 1920's and 30's. The lack of a strong ideological alternative to the current liberal-democratic capitalist welfare state is also significant. Thus, in spite of immigration and identity mixes, the society remains more united than it was before 1940. The domestic stability and security is currently not threatened. The majority wants to protect the *status quo* in one fashion or the other.

Still, a number of societal changes are currently taking place in most Western societies, including Norway. Such things as secularisation, less respect for authority, increased individualisation, single parenthood replacing the nuclear family, altered relationship between the sexes and changes in the male and female identity, all play a role in the relationship between the people and the military. First and foremost, it makes the people less united and willing to sacrifice themselves for others. Individualisation, meaning for instance self-realisation, career and personal identity, has over the last decades become a prime concern for most people. This however, also makes the will to sacrifice for something 'higher' a more obsolete thought (Cooper 2003:51). Smaller families, better living conditions and higher life expectancies have the same effects. One result is 'zero-tolerance' when it comes to casualties in war. As Coker (2001) points out, not only must the wars today have a humanitarian legitimacy, they also need to be fought in a humane way so that casualties are avoided – on both sides. Public opinion is crucial in today's warfare, and the post-material and post-industrial public feel uneasy about blood and violence.

An increasingly fragmented population, with de-territorialized identities in flux, with international as well as national networks, focused on their own personal life and career, and with relatively high knowledge about developments in other parts of the world, cannot anymore be expected to provide the state a *carte blanche* in conducting international military operations. The state therefore needs to seek legitimacy, actively and constantly. The power of the people appears to be increasing in relation to the state, even if the people as such are becoming more fragmented. There is a constantly on-going discourse, over both what and who that constitutes a danger and over what to eventually do to face that risk. Hence, what signifies the contemporary security situation is its dynamics, the never-ending discourse and power-struggle over the definition of risks and thereby the legitimacy of use of military (as well as judicial) force.

### **The Armed Forces; Security Policy**

The Norwegian armed forces have also changed dramatically over the last years. From being a rigid, passive, mass mobilisation army, it has become a much more dynamic and operational organisation. It is first and foremost the international operations that have provided the basis of the armed forces' new identity. However, the state's ability to anchor this transformation in a new security concept has been rather awkward. Since it no longer is obvious and universally accepted what and who that represents a security threat, the

government has chosen to downplay the military and security related aspects of the international missions Norway has participated in.

Instead, in most of the international operations over the last 10 years, the Norwegian state has been stressing the *humanitarian* side of the operations. The concept 'humanitarian intervention' as it developed in the 1990's fitted well into Norway's anti-militaristic self proclaimed non-oppressive humanitarian tradition. This was, and is, non-controversial and leans on the deep UN-foundations of the people and the pacifist and non-aggressive traditions from the 19th century. It also draws attention away from the long-term political consequences any military intervention has.

A prime example is the Norwegian participation in NATO's war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. This represented a challenge for the government since the war had no UN-mandate, and thereby undermining the above mentioned image. The government therefore refused to label the bombardment 'war', insisting instead it was a 'humanitarian intervention' and a 'limited military operation'. It feared to provoke the anti-militaristic, pacifist sphere of the public as well as undermining the strong UN-orientation in the Norwegian foreign policy self-image. It took four years after the end of the Yugoslavia war before the Prime Minister admitted that it had actually been a war.

In Iraq Norway participated with troops until July 2004, but did not consider itself as part of the occupational force. Humanitarian objectives were again put at the forefront to legitimise the mission. After having formally opposed the war, to significant public dismay by the US ambassador in Norway, the government was the first non-combatant state to join the peace-keeping forces after the war. In all the subsequent debate the government was keen on downplaying the military aspects of the army stationed in Iraq, referring to it as a humanitarian mission, with a clearly different and 'softer' mandate than the occupational force. It is reasonable to believe that the purpose of the government's urgency to send troops was to bridge the relations with the USA after having abandoned it during the war. But that was never stated publicly.

In Afghanistan the humanitarian aspect of the engagement was more convincing, since ISAF has a clear UN mandate. However, in Operation Allied Force, which is the US' 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan and beyond, Norwegian participation was far more controversial from an international law perspective. Special forces and a wing of F-16's were nonetheless deployed with hardly any public or parliamentary debate. These missions took place with a high level of operational secrecy thereby probably avoiding too much public interest in, and questioning about, the operations.

Strategic security has been a precondition all these interventions, but in Norway that has been played down publicly. The reason why Western powers intervened in the Balkans, in Afghanistan and Iraq is mainly because they considered the situation in these areas to be a crucial risk for their own societal security. The crises in these societies were regarded to have a direct impact on Western security (refugees, crime, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction etc). The reason for the reluctant interest in the many crises on the African continent is the same; they are not considered to be directly linked to Western (societal) security (Ignatieff, 2003).

However, the strategic objective for the Norwegian state in the early 21st century appears simply to remain close to these allies; i.e. to participate in all major NATO (and increasingly EU-) operations and to particularly nurse the so-called 'Atlantic relationship', i.e. with the USA and the UK. It uncertain times, to keep up the good relations with our international allies appears to be the sole strategic security policy of Norway. Within the discourse, this is legitimised in two ways. The traditional version is that we need to go abroad to secure allied support for a future defence of Norway. The internationalisation of the military therefore basically is just a means to secure a traditional objective; the Norwegian sovereignty. It is state security with other means, or realism under a humanitarian veil. The futuristic version is that Norway now is an integral part of Western societal security environment and therefore need to protect it wherever a threat is emerging. Territory is irrelevant in this perspective. Such lines of argumentation however, are very rare in the Norwegian security discourse.

That Norway now needs to go abroad, that Norwegians have to kill and die on another continent to secure national strategic security, appears to have been difficult to state publicly for the government. The humanitarian version is safer and less controversial. This is summarised in a slogan in the armed forces: 'National defence, international commitment'. The security is still something domestic, and we go abroad to be show solidarity and to indirectly secure our national territorial defence. The concept of societal security remains more or less absent in the Norwegian discourse.

### **The New Military Identity**

The armed forces has gone a long way in redefining its role over the last five to ten years. The new buzz words are hi-tech, such as 'net-centric warfare', where the aim is to use information technology to make the organisation more operational, flexible and dynamic. The armed forces aim at being a result-oriented, effective and modern organisation, capable of co-operating with allied forces with the latest technology and operational tactics.

Within the armed forces themselves, the anti-thesis to this model is considered to be the Norwegian Cold War conscript army. Within the ranks, the Cold War army is regarded to have been rigid, passive, a slow organisation with desk-officers without combat experience. The romantic reference to the WWII resistance is no longer the back bone of the armed forces as it was during the Cold War. As a result, the reference to the people, to the romantic images of local resistance and a widely applied conscription, is also severely weakened within the military ranks. The armed forces are not nation-builders anymore.

The military today wish to prove itself through action. Only through international missions can it prove to be truly professional. It cannot wait in the garrisons as before. The means thereby becomes the end for the military itself. Only through the international missions, from Bosnia to Kosovo to Afghanistan and to Iraq can the military now legitimise and demonstrate its relevance.

Norwegian soldiers in these missions are for the most parts contracted conscripts. Conscription, according to the latest official strategic documents

from the Government,<sup>7</sup> is to remain the back-bone of the military. The purpose is twofold; to recruit personnel and to anchor the military with the people. According to the MoD and the military, conscription is needed for the military to get in touch with a wide selection of the young generation and hence thereby recruit them either to the military schools or to a contract for international missions. However, the conscription is limited in the sense that only those required by the military actually are drafted. The rest is let off with no duty at all. In a way, it is therefore 'back to normal', to the decades and the century before the Cold War, when the universality of the conscription never was practiced. Only 40- 50% of the men are now drafted annually (44% in 2003, i.e. ca. 11000 men and some 400 volunteer women). Limited applications probably reduce the tensions significantly, since those opposed to the service are let off, just like they were in the 1920's and 30's. However, this time it is not the deep socio-economic-ideological divisions in the society that has the potential of causing internal problems, but the above-mentioned de-militarization of society and hence a lack of feeling of existential threats within the people.

The second official reason for conscription, that conscription secures ties between the people and the military is obviously weakened by the very limited number of actual draftees, and the fact that the focus is vague and international rather than clearly defined and national. This nevertheless point at an aspect which probably will become increasingly significant in the years to come. No matter how the military organise itself, the relationship to the civil society will be of crucial significance for it to survive. The need to anchor the military to the people is also increased by the fact that mandatory service abroad is about to be introduced for all officers, as the volunteering system not anymore is considered sufficient to guarantee enough personnel for the international missions. The result could be that the personnel on the international missions would be less enthusiastic than today. The popular legitimacy of the mission itself will therefore be of crucial importance.

As mentioned above, the strategy thus far has to a large extent been to play the humanitarian card to appease the wider public. The humanitarian legitimacy may work for a while in the civilian population, but the military itself has realised that the reality is somewhat different. In Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq the dangers differ, but is constantly present. The local population can be hostile due to anything from impatience of lack of socio-economical progress, to being opposed to presence of what they consider to be the neo-colonial rulers or occupiers (Ignatieff, 2003: 24-25).

Soldiers are not humanitarian workers. Soldiers cannot, like e.g. the Red Cross, intervene in a conflict without also interfering politically. Any military intervention is by definition political, since it imposes a new power in the war theatre. The armed forces know that the missions not are only humanitarian, they feel the power they are imposing every day. They also know that where there is power there is resistance, and potential danger. They wish to be acknowledged for the order they provide and for their professional job and not to be labelled humanitarian workers.

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7 See 'St.prp.nr. 42 – Den videre moderniseringen av Forsvaret i perioden 2005-2008' Ch. 6.3.

Hence the post-Cold War generation of officers and soldiers are developing a kind of warrior ethos. They are proud of their profession as soldiers, of their professionalism in their work. In the military schools traditional 'knight ethos' are introduced aimed at building the character of the soldiers. The aim is to not lose control and degenerate into the methods of a 'barbarian enemy', to keep the moral high ground and develop a warrior's virtue of justice, self-restraint and wisdom (Brunstad, 2004).

What signifies soldiers compared to other professions, is the ability to use force. The military is supposed to be the last resort, the tool applied when everything else fails, in other words when the people and the state are facing existential threats. Only when threats are existential can soldiers be expected to kill and die to combat it. As demonstrated in the above pages, the definition of what is existential and to whom has varied over time, depending on the power relations in the society. What modernity brought is the idea and principle that this power ultimately rests with the people and is effectuated by the state. That has not vanished in the post-industrial society. Rather to the contrary, the armed forces are under constant scrutiny by the media and the public even at the most remote places in the world. Humane methods must be applied and the missions need a humanitarian anchor.

But is humanism considered to be existential? Can Norwegian soldiers, having turned into warriors and combatants, sustain long-time stress and casualties in missions the state claims are humanitarian rather than existential?

### **The Power**

In the early 21st century, the legitimising power for the application of the armed forces still formally rests with the people. There are limits to what the state could use the armed forces to without meeting severe popular resistance. The principle of conscription remains as a back-bone of the Norwegian defence concept, even if those conscripts who actually serves in the operations that defines the armed forces of today, are contracted. But despite conscription and compulsory international service for the officers, without public support, international military operations are impossible. Brute force can not be applied to discipline the armed forces, so popular legitimacy both from within the ranks as well as from the people remains crucial. Furthermore, the people are highly engaged in a security discourse which plays a crucial role in defining what represent a security risk, and the media provide them with news about (mostly negative) developments in the theatre. The power of the people is potentially immense, but the people are not what they used to be. It is split in different trans-national identities, individualistically and humanistic oriented, accepting no casualties and no use of excessive force.

The state on its side is now in a position when security is no longer primarily about the protection of the state's integrity and territorial sovereignty, but about protecting an international *status quo*, an international order based on shared Western values, from various *risks*. The introduction of societal security and human security as new concepts brings the definition of security closer to the people, but the people are no longer territorially defined. This is



a historically new situation, and it could alter the relationship between the state and the military. That the armed forces not mainly are a tool for the protection of the state and its territory has never before been the case. Furthermore, even if the state remains responsible for the application of armed forces, it is thoroughly weakened when it comes to defining legitimate targets for the force.

The military has again become an active player, it defines possibilities and limitations, and develops its own profession identity, its ethos and technical capability. The military is constantly operating in international operations under foreign command, developing also here an international spirit together with the allies. The armed forces are in this respect more autonomous than it was during the Cold War, but not necessarily more so than in previous times. At the same time the armed forces can be regarded as being closer to the people since it in some respect has become more civilian. It is being used to promote civil values (humanitarianism), through civilian methods (no more nuclear weapons or excessive use of force) and by being closely scrutinised by the civil society.

The introduction of Societal Security is in stark contrast the 19th century when the armed forces were purely a tool of the state. However, in Norway it appears that the state still primarily is using the military as a foreign policy tool, as a means to achieve international goodwill from allies, in case of future territorial threats. The Norwegian state engages in the international operations not mainly for societal security purposes, but for indirectly securing state security. During the Cold War the state could keep a domestic focus despite the internationalisation of the security policy through the NATO membership. Since Norway was a net-receiver of allied help, the military could build its legitimacy by integrating with the people. Now, when security explicitly must be secured abroad, this simplifying definition of national security is no longer durable. Security of today is something secured actively abroad, primarily by stabilising rogue and collapsed states.

In this security environment, legitimising power cannot be secured through nation building or integration of identities. There are already clear indications that the future legitimacy to a large extent will be dependent upon the collective interpretations of global developments by the people. These collective interpretations are likely to be regional and/or international. The controversy over the war on Iraq in most European countries is a sign of this. This was a controversy over the degree of risk Iraq represented as well as what means that would be legitimate to use against such a risk. The Western security discourse will be of increased importance, and the actors involved in this discourse will play a crucial role for the possibility to accomplish military missions. As demonstrated in this article, in previous times the power legitimising the armed forces has shifted, not only in locus (between the state, people and the military) but also in the deeper foundations these three actors are operating in. Today, these deeper structures are developing faster than before. The security discourse is evolving in a much higher tempo than in previous times. And new actors and institutions are increasingly engaged in the discourse.

The popular resistance to the war over Iraq in Europe contrary to in the US has demonstrated, among other things, the importance of the media in

the formation of the security discourse. The interpretation of events, the real-time coverage of developments, makes the people more involved. The state may consider the people to be 'wrong' or 'seduced' by the media, but it might be increasingly difficult for the state to act contrary to the opinion of the majority of the people.

The power that legitimises the use of military force and military manpower hence appears to be more in flux than ever before. The metaphysical foundation that united the people (the nation) is no longer relevant for international operations, the military itself is attempting to build its own ethical foundation, but cannot do so independently of the state and the people. The state is too weak to regain full control of its forces, but attempt to use it as an asset in the international arena under a veil of humanism. But humanism is not existential, the 'global village' has yet to replace the weakened national 'imagined community'. The armed forces could risk entering a serious legitimacy crisis unless a concept of existential risk again is developed within the security discourse. Even the 'hottest' contemporary risk, international terrorism, remains primarily within the judicial sphere, and the Norwegian military has yet to find its proper role relation to the police in this respect. International terrorism is also still too vague a threat to be considered an existential threat within the discourse.

There are already those who argue that the international missions are creating more risk than security. The argument is that the security forces applied abroad, risk to create enemies that seek to strike back against Norway or Norwegian property. The Madrid and London bombings are used as the prime example of this. Norway has already twice been mentioned in an Al-Qaeda communiqué as a potential target. In all places where Norwegian troops are deployed, a certain number of the local population consider the foreign military presence to be imperialism rather than humanism. This is irrespective of whether the missions have a clear UN-mandate or not. Lack of socio-economic and political progress may increase frustration locally and thereby also spread such sentiments. The result could, at some stage, be sudden rise in resistance, violence and hence casualties.

How many casualties can Norway take before the very foundation of an operation is put into question by the people in the security discourse? Since the armed forces now base its legitimacy on operations rather than being national watch-guards, such questioning will ultimately also spill over to the armed forces in general. Hence, in the globalised media world the legitimacy of the armed forces could alter more or less over night.

## Conclusion

Let us summarize briefly the general trends. In the earlier days, the state was embodied by the King who based his power on the military force. The people did not yet exist within the security discourse and were irrelevant except for taxation and draft. Later, a social contract was established, at least formally, through the Constitution in 1814, making the people the judicial foundation of the state and hence the armed forces. This never materialised however, until the dawn of the Century, when the Nation became the dominant identity of the people.

Then, when Norway gained international independence in 1905 the nation had conquered the armed forces which helped it to also take control of the state by seceding from the Union with Sweden. However, prior to World War II, the armed forces were again controlled by the state as the nation was weakened and the people again were split in different fractions. This weakened the military and its legitimate foundation.

During the Cold War, the people became a full nation, and the very legitimising foundation for the military as well as the state. The three also mutually reinforced each other and united in one shared national identity.

Today, the relationship between the three is again altered. The three are moving away from each other. The people has to some extent increased its leverage over the military, but has itself become split, trans-national and sceptical towards the use of military force altogether. The military has become operational and is seeking to prove its relevance through successful missions. It is more dependent on the people than the state in this respect. The state attempts to use the military to nurse the relations to allies, but uses humanitarian phrases to legitimise it in the lack of national foundation. All three are involved in an on-going security discourse, where neither part can be said to be consolidated enough to dominate the others.

There are several lessons to be learned from history. One is that even if the institutions remain, such as conscript-system, the very foundation upon which it rests has been changing significantly. Yesterday's legitimacy may be irrelevant tomorrow. The armed forces' has always been a contested organisation since it is violent by nature. Modernity made it legitimate, but only to a certain extent. In periods of peace the violent aspect has been played down (the Cold War), and in patriotic times it has been acceptable (1905). A 'challenge' today is that Norway and other Western societies have a very low threshold when it comes to tolerating violence. Fighting wars appears for many to be an alien activity.

States or alliances of states, as well as the armed forces, may find this increasingly difficult to handle. Pressure from allies for military assistance may put states in difficult positions if the people are opposing it. Abolishing conscription, as several Western powers have done years ago, will not in itself solve this challenge, since the military remains to be a representative of the state and the civil society. In other European countries the tendency is already visible: states are doing as states did prior to conscription: They hire specialists for the dirty work. In the pre-modern times, when popular resistance from the draftees was a problem, mercenaries were hired to secure military success. Hence, if the armed forces in the future meet growing resistance from people questioning the legitimacy of a mission, it could be tempting to use contracted soldiers instead. The use of Norwegian special forces in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan could be an example of this. However, even the special forces carry a flag on their uniform, they are not freelance mercenaries. They cannot entirely escape the scrutiny of the people even if they are operating in secrecy. These troops are also too small to fight entire wars, so if Norway (and Europe) wants to remain capable of applying significant military force at some future security risk, the legitimate foundation of the regular armed forces, as perceived by the people, remains crucial.

The Norwegian military, if peripheral in Europe, are in this respect facing the same challenges as the rest of Europe. It is re-organising to become relevant, applicable and efficient, but the legitimising foundation remains under constant pressure. There is no *a priori* answer to the why question; Why do we have military forces at all? The answers, even if convincing enough, nowadays have to be constantly updated, renewed and adapted. Strategic or local security, state, societal or human security, humanitarian support, risk management or containment are all concepts that can legitimise the use of armed forces. However, this is only possible if they are firmly anchored in the wider security discourse. The use of the military without such an anchoring may boomerang back on the state and armed forces itself with more devastating force than any other non-lethal force. Such a backlash may in itself be a domestic security threat.

Handling security risks is indeed a risky business.

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