Coping with a New Security Situation – Swedish Military Attachés in the Baltic 1919–1939

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Introduction

The end of the First World War changed the security situation in the Baltic dramatically as the empires of Germany and Russia crumbled and gave rise to a range of new states with a different status in Swedish thinking – Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. It also meant that Germany was no longer a strong regional power, but still maintained the possibility of becoming one in the future. Russia was embroiled in civil war and the Soviet-Union emerged from the ashes as the potential threat in the region. This meant that for a large part of the 1920s Sweden became a primary military power in the Baltic, yet still an unwilling one. The status of being a military power brought demands for action, which were evident in the discussions concerning Swedish intervention in the Finnish Civil War. The élites and the right were more or less in favour, the liberals were sceptical, and the Social Democrats strongly averse. The result was that Sweden did not intervene, apart from sending arms, and granted officers leave to serve in Finland and allowed the creation of a volunteer "brigade".[1]

This article will summarise how the Swedish military élites, particularly in the 1930s through the military attachés, assessed the "new" states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland from a strategic point of view. What assessments were made concerning the military developments in the region? What were the foundations of their analysis? The article is based on the results from research funded by the *Baltic Sea Foundation* called *The Sea of Peace under the Shadow of Threats*, published in 2013 and the forthcoming book, *Från Viborg till Narva och Lemberg: Svenska militärattachéers bedömningar av Östersjöområdet under mellankrigstiden (From Viborg to Narva and Lemberg: Assessments of Swedish Military Attachés in the Baltic in the Interwar Period).*

Total War as a Model of Interpretation

It is often stipulated that total war was born during the 1800s and was dependent on industrialism in its later stages. It is also often stipulated that General Ludendorff coined the term *Total War* in 1935 in the book *Der Totale Krieg* with the expressed purpose of explaining why Germany was defeated in the First World War, and also to point out that this was not the fault of the military but a result of political and civilian failure. This was *der Dolchstoss* in its essence, but the components of total war were defined long before that and the debates of which war was the *first* total war are numerous.[2]

During the 1950s an investigation was made by a group of high-ranking Swedish officers led by the former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (1944–1952) General Helge Jung. In 1957 the book *Öst, väst och vi (East, West and Us)* was published in which the war potential of the future was debated. In the group, former military attaché to Riga, Berlin, Zürich and Moscow, Major General Curt Juhlin-Dannfelt participated with a study of the relationship between war potential and peacetime economy. In his book he defined that war potential rested on three components: economic capacity, administrative competence and moral fortitude.[3] The economic aspects were divided into population, agriculture, provisions, natural resources, industrial resources, industrial capacity, arms production potential, transports and infrastructure. Juhlin-Dannfelt pointed out that the Soviet Union had surpassed Great Britain, France and West Germany in production of resources and threatened to surpass the West in its entirety. But he also pointed out that the communist system contained many flaws slowing production, but also that a victory in the coming great war was not guaranteed only by large material production capacity.[4] In the Swedish context the study pointed to the construction of total defence as a response to total war. The study also offered an understanding to how we can view total war.

Historian, Eric Hobsbawm has expressed that mass mobilisation only was possible in modern, high-producing industrial economies since traditional agrarian economies could not mobilise the majority of the population. The primary problem was how to finance war since total war demanded total economic control.[5] Professor Alf W. Johansson

connects total war to railroads and industries, allowing the mobilisation of more soldiers and also to transport and supply them. This allowed for the execution of strategic encirclement, but at the same time the development of machine guns, repeating rifles and rapid firing artillery made strategic encirclement impossible.[6]

The problem of defining the components of total war is related to the fact that it is connected to all aspects of society, but also that all wars have different phases and arenas. The totality of war is different during different phases and on different arenas, all depending on context.[7] It has also been said that total war demands total history because if one is supposed to study total war one has to study demography, technology, industry, social phenomena, politics and changing political patterns, expansion of public power and diplomacy, apart from studying only the military sphere.[8] This could be understood by the fact that total war is a cultural history in which, for example, images of gender and its changes apply.

I have chosen to define total war in this study in the same manner as the Swedish military attachés assessed other states´ possibility to resist aggression and also the forces undermining such a possibility. Total war is more related to economy and control and not particularly to purely military phenomena. Economic historian Lennart Samuelsson has, in his books on the economy and society of the Soviet Union in the interwar period, pointed out that Marshal Tukhachevsky was instrumental in defining how wars in the future would be fought. For Tukhachevsky total war demanded militarisation of society as a whole. Future wars should be fought outside the Soviet Union and should be fought quickly and with modern technology. This meant that the adversaries had to be divided and that the Soviet Union had to attain maximum industrial readiness. The Soviet concept of future war brought the possibilities of quick and decisive victories. This was only possible if a militarised society existed and where the resources were used for a form of mechanised cultural war.[9]

In a modern total war the distinction between civilian and combatant was broken down.[10] Ideas of total mobilisation of the entire

society were not only a Soviet concept, but were a common ideology in the interwar era. The German veteran, writer and fascist thinker Ernst Jünger defined that weapons and tools, workers and soldiers, were all essential and all the same thing. Both industrial production and war demanded continuous organisation, mechanisation and a quintessential will.[11] However, I will apply Curt Juhlin-Dannfelt´s division between economy, administration and moral strength as way to discuss Swedish strategic views on the Baltic and combine these with military training, capacity and equipment. It is essentially a historical definition of total war.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Total War

In the reports from Swedish attachés in Riga positive images of the future for the Baltic States were rare. There was also the conclusion that these states would not be able to resist a Soviet attack. The attaché to Riga between 1927 and 1932, Captain, and later Major Juhlin-Dannfelt, met the Estonian Chief of the General Staff General Juhan Tõrvand in February 1933 (although Juhlin-Dannfelt had already been selected as the attaché to Berlin in 1932). Tõrvand was not very positive regarding the future or Estonia´s possibility to resist Soviet aggression, seen as inevitable. Tõrvand advised Sweden to put all her efforts into aeroplanes, air defence, navy and submarines, something Juhlin-Dannfelt accredited to egoism. The most relevant is, however, the tone of General Tõrvand, which is characterised by despair and hopelessness.[12] His views actually summarised the Swedish strategic view on the Baltic States. Perhaps there was a grace period of a few years, but the Soviet Union would with a mathematical certainty "solve the problem", and then nothing could be done.

In economic terms the Swedish attachés believed that that Latvia enjoyed a better economic situation than Estonia as the industry was larger. This complemented an otherwise agrarian economy. In Latvia, trade was also more developed and the Soviet trade was especially lucrative. In a letter of September 1928 Juhlin-Dannfelt summarised a conversation with Estonian Minister Eduard Virgo on Soviet trade. His opinion was that Latvian industry needed the Russian contracts and that

the Soviets deliberately tried to make all the Baltic States economically dependent on Russia. Juhlin-Dannfelt otherwise defined the Baltic economies as strongly agrarian and meant that bad harvests easily gave rise to hunger and, in turn, to communist agitation.[13] In a letter of 1931 he returned to economic resilience in combination with the signing of a customs union between Estonia and Latvia, ending the trade war between the two. The Estonian economy was struck harder by the depression, followed by the Latvian economy. This made Estonia the weakest link and several times during the 1930s conscripts were sent home due to economic problems.[14] The Lithuanian economy was rarely described in relation to the other Baltic States, as Lithuania was the *bête noire* in the region. The Lithuanian economy was entirely agrarian, and the agrarian depression of the early 1930s gave rise to enormous problems in the Lithuanian economy. From this came also serious peasant unrest in the autumn of 1935, almost described as a civil war. It was problematic that the Civil Guard in Lithuania were recruited from the peasant groups and hence the peasants were armed in their protests. The reasons for the economic problems were international, but acquired a specific Lithuanian character. The existence of Civil Guards was an important trait of all the studied cases.

The cause of the problems of the Baltic economies was the same as, for example, Finland and came from the fact that the Russian revolution, the Communist coup d´état, the wars of liberation and the civil war had destroyed the economic structures of empire. Estonian agriculture as well as the Finnish metallurgical industry depended on trade with St. Petersburg.[15]

According to historian Max Engman, the dissolution of empire destroyed an otherwise well integrated economy, in turn giving rise to economies dependent on single commodities, without the integrating forces of empire. The Latvian economy was, for instance, more industrialised and depended on Russian imports of raw materials.[16] This was the foundation for the Baltic land reforms and the ensuing processes of nostricfication – i.e. transforming the economy and the ownership of all resources into the hands of the majority ethnic group. In the Baltic States the land reforms created too small farms based on the

expropriation of lands from Baltic-German estates. The reform satisfied land hunger but were economically doomed which, in turn, led to political destabilisation as smallholders together with veterans founded armed organisations at odds with the government. In Estonia a solution was to try to invest in industrial development to manage economic hardship. When this plan failed the only solution was to again try to develop the agrarian economy.[17] Depression and agrarian crisis also brought a higher degree of natural economy among smallholders and farmhands. Owners of middle-sized and large farms could initially borrow money from banks, but as the markets became more localised and small industry was struck by lower consumption the farmers were hurt.[18] The economic pressure chiselled away at the political and military foundations of the Baltic States. The Civil Guards in turn were often recruited in agrarian society and the agrarian depression meant that the disenchanted poor farmers turned into more extremist organisations. A security problem followed as guardsmen were armed and constituted a constant threat of a coup d´état.

In terms of administration the Swedish assessment described a slightly organised chaos in Estonia, Latvia as semi-chaotic, and Lithuania as in total disarray. Baltic societies were crammed with intrigues, scheming and politicised officers, and the military staffs did not function due to the intrigues. Estonia was the least corrupt, partly because General Tõrvand was the Chief of the General Staff for over ten years, but this was cosmetic. The administrative competence in the Baltic States, as well as Estonia, was generally found lacking. This, in turn, led to a poor use of resources. The small resources of Estonia could, therefore, not be channelled to military needs. The assessments made by Swedish military attachés mainly dealt with military phenomenon and institutions where the officer corps in the Baltic States, were at best seen as schemers. In regards to training, everything was seen as quite well organised.

The moral strength was built on an understanding of national characteristics and stereotypes, and also concerning minorities and their perceived loyalty. The Swedish reports from the Baltic States were filled with discussions on various minorities and their relations to the state and

their reliability. In general, Baltic soldiers were described as well-trained and in possession of the "moral" force to be able to resist aggression. Some of the minorities were also seen as having the same morale force, for example, the Baltic-Germans could be counted on in the event of war with the Soviet Union. The Russians could be loyal if they were, "led the right way". Jews were described as completely disloyal and could only be used in administrative duties. One can, of course, wonder how many Jewish conscripts there could be every year in Estonia, and whether this would be a threat to the potential success of the Estonian army in the event of war? The answer was, of course, none. But the purpose was to point out an enemy in order to be able to militarise and organise society. The State President Konstantin Päts on January 17, 1935 said:

The Constitution we own today is not the one we can remain with. We must convene a national assembly. Our people must be reorganised. The old parties must disappear and be replaced by [corporative] organisations representing the trades. Although it will be hard, all trade organisations must be united under a single roof. All must understand that they are organisations belonging to the Estonian free state. As long as the people is not organised in this manner, no parliament will convene and no elections will be held.[19]

Reading the Swedish reports from the Baltic States one gets the impression of states being torn apart by minority struggles – although often fabricated one. Lithuania especially was in a fix during the late 1930s in their relations with Germany concerning Memel. The Lithuanian army and other elite circles were, however, positive to Germany and at odds with the government of Russia. In a report from November 1938 the Swedish attaché to Riga, Major Lindqvist, travelled to Memelland together with the British military attaché. During the second day they visited the city of Šilute/Heydekrug and found the hotel packed with *Memelländers*; "who under diligent beer drinking sang various German patriotic and Memel-songs". The hotel proprietor was one of the leaders of the outlawed German organisations. He told Lindqvist that the *Memelländers* could no longer be bought with less than full *Anschluss* to Germany.[20] Lindqvist went on to describe the journey giving the

impression of an almost feverish activity. The Lithuanian representatives and the Lithuanian population were described as almost besieged. Later during the journey Lindqvist described a dinner at the Swedish consul in Memel with a number of prominent *Memelländers*. Their opinions were that 90 per cent of the *Memelländers* were in favour of a German solution, and this view was also found among the Lithuanians. The reason for this was that the Lithuanians under Russia had been treated harshly, but in the countryside the German manor owners had treated the population well and therefore they all had become almost German.[21] Lindqvist shared this opinion as he had heard the same thing from other sources.

At 8 p.m. the Memelländers gathered at the theatre square after the torchlight procession. The participators amounted to around 6 500 people and the spectators along the streets were approximated at around 10 000. At the sporting arena (the goal of the demonstration) 12 000 spectators had gathered. […] At the head of the torchlight procession marched a large band from the German youth organisation in white shirts, black shorts and white socks (all organisations had been banned up until the preceding day, but were now performing; drilled and fully uniformed). After this followed massed standards, in which the German national flag was found but no Lithuanian flag. Immediately after marched the "Heinlein" of Memelland, Dr. Neumann, in black uniform and black boots, followed by approximately 50 bodyguards. Thereafter followed numerous youth groups; all dressed in black uniforms. The red armbands missed the swastika as far as we could see. Apart from this the march contained contingents from all trades. […] At the very end of the demonstration was a banner declaring: "Der Heimat treu".[22]

After this Lindqvist summarised his impressions from the journey and the revocation of the state of emergency in Memel. The Jews had already begun to liquidate their businesses and prepare their move to "Great Lithuania". The most important fact was that there were German organisations, under the surface, all ready to act immediately. They could mount demonstrations and events without anything being printed in the newspapers. The conclusion was that Lithuania could no longer withstand the German propaganda.[23]

Lindqvist's analysis of his journey to Memel bears witness of the sentiments found in the Swedish reports from the Baltic States. It was a quagmire of political movements, active beneath the surface while the official rhetoric was a thin layer of varnish proclaiming that everything was good and orderly. Lindqvist's report also showed that not all minorities in the Baltic States were loyal. Whether this assessment came from chauvinist behaviour from the majority population or something else remains to be shown. Poland had the same problem in Danzig, which also held a strong Nazi-movement under the mayor Hermann Rauschning. Danzig was a League of Nations mandate and free city, and therefore Poland could not intervene with force. But Poland manifested its military power in the city by landing troops and combined that action by alternately mounting political campaigns expressing moderate policies.[24]

The military capacity of the Baltic armies was initially assessed as quite good, although the officer corps was described as uneducated, scheming and politicised. The economy was poor and exercises and manoeuvres were often postponed. But all the same, the results were seen as adequate. The armies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were seen as equal in performance, but it is striking how well the Lithuanian army was described in reports. The concept of wars in the future was nowhere to be seen in the reports – not at least as a fully defined doctrine. It comprised of armoured warfare, airpower and most importantly, the cooperation between infantry and artillery. Airpower was mentioned, but only sketchily as was motorisation and mechanisation.[25] In a message from 1935 Brunsson reported on tactics, equipment and organisation of the armoured forces in the Baltic per an order from Stockholm. In Estonia and Latvia the conclusion was that the terrain was not suitable for tanks and that tanks in any case were unaffordable. In Lithuania the view was more positive. In all cases the equipment standard of tanks was found lacking as most tanks were surplus Renault FT-17 tanks from the First World War combined with a few purchases of more modern tanks in the 1920s. Still, the number of tanks was low.[26]

Another thing the reports found lacking was cooperation between artillery and infantry, another important lesson from the First

World War. In any case, neither the attachés, nor anyone else, had a clear view of what war would be like in the future. A common assessment was that the Baltic armies and Civil Guards were too positive concerning their own capacity to beat the Russians, a feeling coming from a Baltic misinterpretation of the wars of independence. Swedish attachés and officers stressed the differences between the modern Red Army and the haphazardly organised units of the civil war. Otherwise a common remark was that the equipment of Baltic armies was elderly and came from the various postwar surpluses as well as from different enemies. As a result, the small arms and artillery were of different origin and different calibres, a logistical nightmare as the Estonian army alone had at least three different service rifles all in different calibres.

Concerning alliances the Swedish attachés maintained that the only viable military option for Estonia and Latvia was an alliance with Poland, something that was also a risk as Polish adventurism and chauvinism could easily lead to war. Another possibility entertained was that the League of Nations would succeed in curtailing the military arms race. But as that organisation deteriorated this was not a credible option. Therefore it was only the great powers (Great Britain and France) and their actions that could save the Baltic States. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact knocked the air out of the possibility of balancing Germany against the Soviet Union, which left Great Britain and France alone. These powers had already failed to protect Austria in 1936 and Czechoslovakia in 1938, the latter in alliance with Poland since 1935. Sweden could not act on something that the Baltic States themselves had not anticipated. There was no warning for Sweden and when the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was signed the Swedish analysis had hinged on the fact that a war would resemble the war of 1914–1918, with Great Britain, France and Russia on the same side against Germany.[27] The independence of the Baltic States was not a primary Swedish interest compared to the importance of Finland, which overshadowed most things. The Swedish assumptions were, from the beginning, that the Soviet Union would sooner or later restore the borders of Czarist Russia. The assumption was also that the Baltic States could do nothing to resist and that the League of Nations would be toothless. [28] Finland was in the same

strategic situation as the Baltic States, but was a much larger opponent for the Soviet Union and also in possession of a defendable border.

The Soviet Invasion of 1939

In the reports from Riga in 1938 and 1939 it is evident that the attachés described a situation where the world rushed towards an abyss. After the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact the Baltic States proclaimed that it was none of their business, although the military leaders of Latvia expressed concern that there were secret clauses giving Russians the option to invade the country. The analysis of Major Lindqvist was that there was major concern combined with official declarations maintaining that everything was calm.[29] During the last days of August and the first days of September 1939, when the war had already broken out, Lindqvist reported on Baltic alerts and the callup of reservists. Germany had unsuccessfully tried to encourage Lithuanian hostility to Poland. On 16 September Lindqvist wrote after a visit to Kaunas that the major Soviet forces on the borders most likely would go into Poland, alternately that the USSR prepared an invasion of Estonia and Latvia. On the 17th it was obvious that the USSR had invaded Poland in fulfilment of its alliance with Nazi-Germany.[30]

On 22 September 1939 Lindqvist met with the Soviet military attaché to Riga to discuss the future. Colonel Tsoukanov, as spelled by Lindqvist, was convinced that the Russian armies would stay in Poland after annexing the areas inhabited by Russians (in fact inhabited by Byelorussians and Ukrainians). According to the Soviets these groups had been persecuted under Polish rule but were now liberated. The USSR would resist any reinstatement of Poland, but Lindqvist assumed that there was need for a buffer between Germany and the USSR. He maintained in a message that the Soviet attaché had said similar things concerning minorities in the Baltic States as such pretexts had already been used to explain the invasion of Poland. He was certain that something would happen shortly.[31]

On 23 September Lindqvist reported that Soviet troops were concentrated on the Estonian-Soviet border and that the Estonian

Minister for Foreign Affairs Karl Selter had been invited to Moscow. Lindqvist cooperated intimately with the American military attaché Major Huthsteiner, and the American's reports were often enclosed. General Laidoner had, in conversation with Huthsteiner, said that he did not want to mobilise, but still maintained his readiness to do so. He hoped that Russians and Germans would fall out after trying to share their prey – Poland.[32]

A few days later Lindqvist reported that the Russian demands on Latvia included the use of the harbour in Ventspils. In his report he also mentioned the wrenching events in Riga. The Polish attaché demanded to make his official farewell before leaving Riga, but was told that Poland no longer existed. The Estonian Chief of the General Staff General Reek, and the Latvian Chief of the General Staff General Hartmanis, had asked the German attaché to Riga, Colonel Rössing, for help in the event of a Soviet attack. Rössing had answered that Berlin would not listen to any requests or pleading.[33] On 27 September Lindqvist telephoned the Intelligence Section in Stockholm to convey that the Soviet demands on Estonia were Baltischport (Paldiski), garrisons and air bases on Ösel (Saaremaa) and the use of Tallinn harbour. Later on military garrisons elsewhere were added. Laidoner had proclaimed that he would rather mobilise the army and fight, while Prime Minister Eenpalu suggested that the Soviet demands be met. State President Päts decided to follow the latter course, a decision leading to great consternation in Riga.[34]

A few days later Lindqvist wrote that he had met the Latvian head of intelligence, Colonel Celminš, who also the founder of the *Perkonkrusts* (*Thunder Cross*), who described the seriousness of the situation. According to Celminš the Russians would make impossible demands, but that the Latvian army now was deployed and that Latvia would have to fight alone as Estonia had betrayed the cause.[35] During the first week of October 1939 negotiations between the Soviet Union and the Baltic States were held. On October 3, 1939 it was announced that the German minister in Riga had proclaimed that Germany would not support Latvia. Lindqvist meant that this was the final evidence that Germany had sold out the Baltic States to the USSR.[36] On October 6 the Soviet "pact" with Estonia and the Soviet troop deployments were

finished. In correlation with this Lindqvist had received messages that censorship had been introduced from the first day of the Soviet invasion. Lindqvist had received the marching order from Colonel Maasing, the head of Estonian military intelligence.[37] The Soviet troops in the northern column marching into Estonia were scrutinised by Lindqvist, who assessed the behaviour and appearance of the Red Army as good. Huthsteiner had seen the southern column and Lindqvist had read his report. The heavy weapons and equipment were more numerous in the south than in the north, but the general impression was negative.[38]

The characteristic tone of the reports from Riga up until the Soviet invasion was dejection. All Swedish reports from 1927 and onwards had emphasised that the Estonian army was well trained and equipped. Communists and others were held at bay and the defence plans for the border already drawn up. In the reports defeatist statements are found, but the primary reason for the Baltic States acceptance of Soviet troops on their territory in 1939 was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact preceded by the impotence of the Western Allies. Concerning the agreement between Latvia and the USSR, Lindqvist had been informed by the Chief of the General Staff General Rozensteins that:

The General also spoke of the internal security situation in Latvia and stressed that there was no threat from the home grown communists. After the agrarian reform the majority of the population, the peasantry, were not susceptible for communist propaganda and that the relatively few communists in Riga and other cities were disorganised and unarmed and under close supervision by the state. […] My general impression is that the Latvians in the now concluded military negotiations have asserted themselves better than the Estonians. In the future they will not be as appallingly compliant to the Russian demands as their northern neighbour was."[39]

This statement illustrates the disheartening effect that occurred when Estonia, the state seen as the most credible among the Baltic States, was the first to crumble. Only a few days before the Latvian acceptance of the Soviet demands the former head of intelligence Colonel Grigorijs Kikkuls was appointed Latvian military attaché to

Stockholm, something that suggests that Kikkuls probably was an important Swedish informer.[40] Yet another important factor surfacing as a result of the Soviet invasion of Poland was the "solution" of the Vilna-issue. Now it was resolved in favour of Lithuania as the Vilna area was transferred, although the happiness was short-lived.[41] The Swedish attaché to Riga and his assistant in Tallinn, Lieutenant Carl Eric Almgren, reported during 1940 on the Soviet projection of power in the Baltic States. Sweden´s strategic situation worsened considerably with the new Soviet bases established in the Baltic States, mainly because the Red Fleet was no longer trapped in the Gulf of Finland.[42]

Poland and the Future War

The assessments of the Swedish military attaché in Poland were, from the first to the very last, a history characterised by consternation. There was scepticism towards conditions in Poland and a general negative attitude about its capability to develop in a positive way. The main problems were an adventurism in foreign policy and chauvinism concerning minorities. This was combined with a slightly more optimistic opinion concerning the Polish armed forces.

Industrially and economically Poland was struck hard by depression and the same factors mentioned above affected Poland's agrarian economy as it increased debt and turned inward. Indeed, the economy was just as agrarian as in the Baltic States and Polish agriculture depended on historic structures. The land reforms of 1919–1920 were inevitable and motivated as a means of fighting communism. This meant that agriculture was not organised in a manner to allow for rapid modernisation or industrialisation, but was organised around purely political reasons. The Polish land reform was more modest than the Baltic reforms because in Poland the land had to be expropriated from the strong Polish gentry and their manors. There were few foreign elites who owned land so all agricultural reforms affected the ruling circles.[43] As a result, Polish agriculture was as hard to manage in economic terms as in the Baltic States. When depression struck Poland it struck hard. Eric Hobsbawm describes this process when as the globalised economy of the interwar period stopped working and was replaced by

protectionism, tariffs and regulations. Unemployment was always a major problem, particularly in Eastern Europe where economies were more sensitive to the "seismic" shock waves, from the derailed American economy. Indeed, world trade declined by 60 per cent 1929–1932.[44]

Industrially there were few positive impressions among the attachés, but the Polish project of creating a central industrialised heartland in central Poland in the late 1930s was seen in a positive light. The "Four year plan" was the holistic approach that was required and Major Torén noted that there was a need for a central administration to manage industrialisation. The concept a "state directed economy" was everywhere according to the attaché, but the problem was the lack of capital. Torén believed that the plan for a central industrial region behind the Wisła and San Rivers was essentially a good plan.[45]

In Poland there was also a significant difference between reality and the proclaimed successes. In this aspect Poland was no different from the other authoritarian regime. In a travel report by Lieutenant Colonel Wallman from November 1937 Poland was described as a confusing country because it had been devastated by the Polish-Bolshevik war and a century of Russian rule. Infrastructure was particularly bad, especially in the east. In the eyes of Wallman, Poland was a distressingly poor country with an industry only capable of producing military equipment. The consequences of this were somewhat diverse. First, Poland was described as chaotic both concerning administration as well as in economics. Secondly, poverty was abysmal. This condition, on the other hand, had the positive effect that conscripts were more than willing to do their military service as they were both clothed and fed in the army. Wallman continued to emphasize the glowing patriotic spirit of Poland saying that not even a century of oppression had killed the Polish spirit.[46] In general, the Swedish officers' assessment argued that Polish industrial and economic development was deficient. The depression struck all the nations and part of the economic hardship came from the worldwide depression. But the Polish agrarian economy meant that economic hardship was multiplied.

Administration in Poland was, in general, portrayed as better during the 1930s than during the preceding decade. Characteristics of the former period were scheming and politicised officers at odds with each other. Political controversies and conflicts between legionnaires and former Austrian officers were common themes in Swedish reports. Legionnaires were described as uneducated corporals promoted above their capacity. Former Austrian officers were well educated, but often old-fashioned. Minority issues were always present in the Swedish reports as issues that took up the attention of the government. In Poland the handling of minority issues was somewhat simpler than in the pre-war Habsburg Empire, which had had different administrative languages as opposed to the Poland's hard-line policy of Polonisation. This policy deteriorated the relationship between minorities and the Poles and hampered administration and economic development. Sometimes Swedish attachés expressed a negative view on parliamentarianism, which was described as political squabbles. This was particularly true for states such as Poland where the nature of politics was seen as very different from Sweden. This opinion was common in reports up until the coup of 1926, but after this there was a perception of less squabbling. This did not however mean that Piłsudski was seen as a positive force in Polish politics. Indeed, this was quite the opposite. One thing differentiating the reports on Poland from the reports on the Baltics was that there was not the same sense of uncertainty. Poland was seen as more stable and there was rarely any impression that at any moment there could be a communist coup. Poland had been grounded in authoritarian measures and control since 1926, but the Baltic States only since the mid-1930s.

Militarily there were definite problems in managing a defence budget amounting to over 40 per cent of the national product. Most of the budget, however, went to feeding and clothing the large number of conscripts and few funds and resources were left to modernise the army. The relationship between officers and soldiers in the 1930s were often described as patriarchal but positive.

"Also interesting were the tasks and activities of the educational officer. Allegedly there was one in every unit. The translation of the word used in conversation with me was the German *Erziehungsoffizier*, it

is perhaps not entirely adequate […] included not only the evocation of patriotic love and general military virtues, but was seriously directed to the character-building of the soldiers […] almost gave the impression of fatherly care. This care was extended also to include leisure and personal details such as hygiene and table manners.[47]

This also had something to do with moral aspects as well as training and administration, particularly in this respect the best use of their resources. In the travel report from Colonel Falk on the Polish 22nd Mountain Division in Przemyśl there were references to Poland being a large steppe without hills or forests. Everywhere cows, goats and women with bare feet could be seen, together with children, beside small insignificant farms and primitive barns. From a military point of view these conditions forged good and hardy soldiers, as opposed to Sweden where public welfare had degenerated the conscripts. According to Falk, among the Polish soldiers there was a thirst for knowledge and a very good relationship between soldiers and officers, which was not often seen in Sweden. Polish soldiers had a pronounced belief in authority and a strong sense of discipline. The army was a guarantor of national independence.[48]

Morals were, as mentioned above, dependent on the relationship of the state to its minorities and served as a means to manifest order through parades. These can be analysed as visual manifestations of the eternity of the Polish nation. But in a few reports from 1938 and 1939, Major Torén and the former attaché recalled to duty, Lieutenant Colonel de Laval, indicated there was a certain weariness with parades in Poland. Parades were well-organised and with tidiness and demeanour, but the spectators were not as enthusiastic as before.[49] However, minority issues were the factor that most of all threatened the manifested orderliness of Poland. In a report from July 18, 1939, Major de Laval wrote ominously about the Polish minorities. The report was quite conventional in its layout with a short description of the various minorities. The only difference from before, where Jews and Ukrainians were described as the foremost threats to the Polish state, was that Jews were now described as entirely loyal to Poland. This was quite natural as the relationship between Poland and Germany had deteriorated during the summer of

1939. Communism was still strong in the eastern parts of Poland and the German minority was no longer loyal to Poland.[50] In general, in the Swedish reports the Polish soldiers were seen as loyal, while disloyalty was found among the minorities. This information probably came from the Polish General Staff, who had explained their view on the minorities. Some of the information came from what the attachés themselves saw. However, the units they visited were carefully selected and in these units the soldiers were Polish and did not belong to the minority groups.

Soldiers were assessed as well trained and drilled. In a report from November 1937 Major Torén wrote that the general training of the Polish army was good, as well as the training of the common soldier. But the opposite view also surfaced. In March 1938 the assistant military attaché, Lieutenant Montgomery, visited the Infantry Combat School in Rembertów and his assessment was that the education was deficient, especially since the unit was a particular training battalion with eleven months of training behind it. The cooperation between infantry and artillery was poor, shooting was aimless, firing lines were without depth, and machine guns were positioned without cover, and many other problems were noted. The positive aspects were the offensive will of the soldiers, a positive attitude to military service, and the hardiness of the common soldier.[51] These assessments were more or less common descriptions as Polish soldiers were deemed as hardy, sturdy, capable of marching long distances, somewhat stupid and untrained, but possessing a good spirit.

The now somewhat worn opinion that the Polish army of 1939 was completely inferior as compared to the German army, which marched into Poland with a finished and complete doctrine of *Blitzkrieg* and simply finished Poland off in a few weeks, is certainly tainted. Palmer´s description written in the 1970s was: The Polish state of Rydz-Śmigły, Mościcki and Beck was a social and military anachronism; swords and lances made little impression on panzer divisions.[52]

This view has been common concerning Poland and her armed forces ever since the Second World War, but has been proven wrong. In fact, the Polish army of 1939 was well equipped, in relation to Germany

(which had only a few panzer divisions in 1939) and also in relation to Sweden, as several artillery systems were the same. The Polish anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns were modern Bofors guns and in their day seen as fully adequate.[53] The main shortcoming was the lack of motorisation and the number of trucks-- but concerning armour the Swedish attachés saw Poland as well equipped with modern tanks. Lieutenant Nils Stahre from the regiment of Älvsborg was attached to the Polish Armour School in 1937. He argued, in a very technical report, that the Polish armoured units were well trained and equipped with good and sturdy tanks.[54] The assessments were well in line with the international trends and views on tanks, i.e. the French school that the primary mission of tanks was to support the infantry. The Polish army can hardly be blamed for not introducing a more visionary approach to armoured warfare. In any case, the Poles did not have the financial means to have significant armoured or motorised forces. Concerning air forces, the Swedish assessment came mostly from a report by Captain Carl Bergström in 1937. His conclusion was that the Polish air force was not an independent branch of the service, but still had significant numbers of planes and a high combat value. The problem was that the equipment was not fully modern and that the supply of bombers had been postponed due to the goal of equipping the air force with Polish-made aeroplanes.[55] Again Bergström's assessment was in line with international trends. The goal to be self-sufficient in aircraft existed everywhere, which was also the case in Sweden which during the war worked intensively to build an aeronautical industry. Initially the industry could not meet the demands of the forces and aircraft purchases were made in Italy and also in Germany.[56] Still, the Polish aeronautical industry became substantial and supplied the Polish air forces with adequate equipment. The problem was that the enemy had aircraft that was better than adequate and also used it in a new and unexpected manner.

In a report from 1938 Colonel Kellgren wrote on the development and capabilities of the Polish army in a future war and made comparisons with travels in Poland in 1932. His conclusion was that Polish tactics was very offensive as they were developed from the experience of the Polish-Bolshevik war in which the offense often knocked the spirit out of Red units. The view of the Polish officers was

that soldiers, in order to be kept in a state of high morale, should go on the attack as this suited the Polish temperament. However, according to Kellgren, such a reliance on the offense could lead to horrendous losses against well trained and disciplined opponents. The lessons of 1919 were no longer viable as the Poles had then attacked demoralised Bolsheviks, as opposed to their modern adversaries. Kellgren concluded that the only thing that could justify a Polish offensive was if there were enough tanks and artillery to keep the enemy occupied while the infantry attacked.[57]

The Polish army introduced a defensive doctrine in 1938, but this was not put into practice. After the German attack and under German pressure the Polish generals reverted to what they knew--counterattack. On August 28, 1939 Lieutenant Colonel de Laval wrote from Warsaw that Poles saw themselves as individualists as opposed to the German "horde-people", and the Poles were good and death-defying soldiers. De Laval emphasised that these ideas were combined with a general lack of practical organisation; "a part of Polish national character". The conclusion was that Polish morale was good, but that the end result would be bad for Poland. On the other hand, Germany should not expect to crush Poland within a few weeks.[58]

According to the Swedish assessments Poland was not ready for total war, but on the other hand, no one was. Poland was as well, or probably better, equipped to deal with her adversaries than most. The problem for Poland was similar to the conditions in the Baltic States, the strategic situation was unattainable. Through the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1938 the length of the border between Germany and Poland doubled. The appeasement of the Western Allies was the main reason that the Polish border was un-defendable. Equally important was that Poland, allied to Czechoslovakia since 1935, took part in the German occupation and annexed the Czech district of Teschen. With a border doubled in length and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed, the situation was hopeless. Poland, as opposed to the Baltic States, chose to fight anyway, partly because there was no other option.

Finland – Sweden´s Ally 1938–1939

Finland was the state that Sweden possibly could imagine to be allied to, but for most of the 1920s and 1930s alliances were not an option. One of the reasons was the language issue, in which the Fennomans fought with Swedish minorities. Of equal importance were Swedish domestic policies as the Swedish Social Democrats were strongly against allying with the "Whites". But also on the Finnish side there was a strong scepticism against cooperating with Sweden. Finland was also sceptical to what Sweden could do to guarantee Finland´s independence. Swedish defence policies made Sweden an unattractive military partner and this destabilised the region. However, it was significant that concerning Finland, the possibility of cooperation arose. It was only towards Finland that Sweden was willing to deviate from non-alignment. Membership in the League of Nations was, in a way, an alliance, but it had been proclaimed from Nordic states upon entry into the League that they reserved the right to decide which sanctions to take part in.

Finland was also the state most similar to Sweden, and there was a greater understanding of Finnish political life from the Swedish horizon than was the case of other nations. Historical relations were important in the Swedish view of Finland. Sweden understood the details of the Finnish political system and appreciated the Swedish laws of Finland. In general, the historic dimension was very important in the analysis sent home by the attachés. But through closeness in history came problems, as this concept of closeness was challenged by Finnish nationalists and extremists. Through the proximity of history Finland was also judged more harshly than other states. Concerning Poland and the Baltic States, there were no Swedish illusions nor were there strong relations, therefore Sweden often was pleasantly surprised. This was not the case of Finland where assessments were sterner. Yet another factor separating Finland from the others was that the Finnish borders were seen as easily defendable, but also as "natural" ones in both geographical and cultural terms. This made the tasks of the Finnish armed forces delicate, but manageable. The USSR could not attack on a broad front although a quick look at the map suggested they could. Indeed, the

reality was quite the opposite. The roads and infrastructure channelled Soviet possible thrusts to a few areas on the Karelian Isthmus and along the roads further north. In the Winter War of 1939–1940 this scenario is exactly what happened.

Economics was not a common topic in the military reports and there were several reasons for this. The Finnish economy was more resilient against the depression than the economies of Poland and the Baltic States. The economy of Finland was more diversified and not dependent on particular products, as opposed to Estonia where dairy was the economic base.[59] The answer to the question as to which economic and industrial factors played into the Swedish assessments of Finnish resilience was that the general economic capacity was seen as favourable. At an industrial level there were greater problems as the Finnish aeronautical and automotive industries were minute, as was the capability to produce heavy artillery.

Concerning administration the Swedish military assessments expressed a scepticism towards the Finnish political system, which was seen as shaky when many governments succeeded each other in the 1920s. However, it can be noted that this was the case in Sweden as well as many governments fell on issues of defence or agriculture.[60] This common European problem with the crisis of the liberal political system did not lead to the disastrous consequences in Sweden nor in Finland, as commonly occurred through much of Europe. In Finland, right-wing extremism was stronger than in Sweden. But from an administrative point of view there were few, if any, Swedish concerns over civilian administration in Finland. This can be illustrated in the reports concerning the Lapua Movement and the Mäntsälä-Rebellion in 1932, in which the Minister of the Interior Erik von Born was described as a breakwater in an ocean of extremists. This opinion was facilitated by the fact that von Born belonged to the Swedish People´s Party and as a consequence seen as inoculated against extremism. The major administrative problems came from the competition between different groups of officers, particularly between the Jaegers and the former Czarist officers. These contradictions threatened to make the army less effective. This was quite common in the reports from all the states

studied as the processes of nostrification gave rise to these kinds of conflicts. The Swedish officers consequently assessed younger officers, i.e. the Jaegers as uneducated upstarts. An issue of equal importance in the state administration was the civil guards. Its existence, with its own Central Staff and a geographical structure, created competition between the army and Civil Guards.

The Swedish assessments of the moral qualities in Finland show as many negative judgments as do the reports from Poland and the Baltic States. From a Swedish point of view the minority issues in Finland were much more problematic than elsewhere. The fact that the minority was Swedish was difficult in itself, but the real issue was that this minority was seen as superior to the Finns by the Swedish attachés. On the other hand, these culturally superior Swedes were still criticized by Finns. The language issue was a recurring problem in the relations between Sweden and Finland, politically as well as militarily.[61] After the "Nordic turn" in Finnish foreign policy in the 1930s, Finland officially tried to improve its relations with Sweden, but the language issue continued to throw a spanner in the works. One example of the more Nordic aspirations in general was the celebration of *Finnish Week* in Stockholm in April 1936, something described in a positive account in the Finnish press. In the same report there was also a piece about Fennomans attacking the influence of Sweden in Finland´s economy. The newspaper *Suomen Heimo* argued that Swedish influence should be fought with: "measures that have a striking resemblance to that in which the Jewish business in Germany at the time was treated…"[62]

During 1936 and 1937 the language issue was described in Swedish reports as something destroying the Finnish state. If the Swedish minority were alienated it would diminish the Finnish military capacity, the reason being that Finnish soldiers were believed to be in need of leadership from more cultured and educated officers and non-commissioned officers, i.e. Swedes. [63] For such views on the language issue and the characterisation of Finnish officers as schemers, the Swedish assessment was that the Finnish army was not as good as it could be. The individual soldiers were exceptional, as they were in Poland and the Baltic States, but the Swedish assessments of the officer

corps were the same. Finnish officers, as well as Poles or Baltics, were described as scheming and political and lacking education. This was a trait that was toned down from the mid-1930s, partly because younger officers came into senior positions in the Swedish army, many who had combat experience in Finland in 1918.

Concerning the Finnish army and the capacity to wage modern total war, this capacity increased during the 1930s according to Swedish reports. In the reports of Colonel Ehrenborg and Major Ekström from Finland, Estonia and Latvia in 1935, the collective impressions were that magnificent work had been done over the years and that the armies had reached a point where their value began to show. There were still common weaknesses in education, but this was weighed against the good attitude and morale of the soldiers. Ehrenborg and Ekström emphasised that a common trait was the patriotic love between the people and army in all the visited countries.[64]

Again the same short notes concerning tanks and aeroplanes came from reports on Finland in similar terms from Poland and the Baltic states. Such equipment was expensive and small states rarely had the possibility to adequately rearm with modern weapons In a message from 1936, Major Tengberg wrote about manoeuvres with tanks at the Nyland Regiment, among other things to test the capabilities of tanks. The manoeuvres showed in particular the vulnerabilities of tanks. However, according to Tengberg, tanks should not be underestimated if they were modern models.[65] The Finnish attempts at motorisation were also described in a similar manner, as was the air forces. These forces were assessed as numerically and materially inferior.[66] In Swedish reports the Finnish army was described as lacking modern weapons and equipment. Modern tactics were described as deficient. It was often pointed out that the influence of the civil war of 1918 was too dominant in Finnish military thinking. The same thing had been noted concerning Poland and the Polish-Bolshevik War, as this experience had influenced the military's views on future war. Swedish attachés often commented that these wars had nothing to do with modern warfare. But, in the end, if there was one army up to the task it was the Finnish army, followed by

the Polish army. The advantage of the Finnish army in comparison with others was one of geography and a border that could be defended.

Conservative Assessments of Future Wars

It one takes a holistic approach to the military assessments of the Baltic it is evident that there is a strong conservative bias. The elements of conservative thinking can be traced in the assessments and a number of central elements surface in the analysis.

The military attachés were militarists and it would be odd if they weren´t, but it was not a 1914-style Prussian militarism. It was a militarism centred in their role in society and the role of the army in society and politics. Militarism in their sense entailed loyalty, military honour, culture, education and hierarchy, channelled through a respect for the King, and sometimes the government. In their assessments on foreign militaries their militarism influenced the reports through the concept that officers should not scheme and play politics. For them it was a question of respect for hierarchy and social unity. The army was the foremost example of national cohesion and the foremost national symbol. The Swedish assessments therefore became negative as most officer corps in the Baltic during the 1920s were described as corrupt. This was related to the foundation of the new states in the region and during the 1930s the state structures had been formalised and, as a consequence, the assessments of other nations became more positive. History was central in their militarist opinion since history constituted the "natural and organic" relation between state and armed forces. Swedish militarism also influenced assessments as part of an international military culture. Things in line with this culture were seen as positive and things outside as negative –recognition was the key.

Concerning constitutionalism, this was also an important part of the hierarchic definition of society and the relations between state, armed forces, politics and people. In the Swedish reports on the Baltic States, Poland and Finland, there was only a positive view presented on Finland as a functional constitutional system. Poland and the Baltic States were all described as dysfunctional, mostly due to the minorities and their

relations to the state. In these assessments there was also an inherent scepticism of the liberal political systems that took inspiration from Wilsonian ideals. When these systems derailed there was almost a sense of schadenfreude among the attachés. Again it was Finland that was different from all the others as the attachés maintained a positive image of the historical origin of Finnish laws, associated with the relations between power, state and armed forces. In Finland the threat came from revolutionaries, mostly right wing revolutionaries during the 1930s, who had proclaimed Sweden and Swedes as the enemies. According to a conservative view these Fennomans manifested their immaturity to rule justly because they could not put themselves above their own egotistic opinions. This was also a conservative parade view founded in a pessimistic view of humanity and the relation to history. History was the cement holding society together.

The agrarian ideals, sometimes defined as anti-modernity, existed throughout the period in the Swedish assessments of Polish, Finnish and Baltic armies. Peasant boys were described as better soldiers from a physical point of view, but also concerning the skills that soldiers needed. Peasants were also believed to have a mental firmness above that of workers. Farmers and peasants were seen as trustworthy anti-socialists as they emanated from a more "traditional, natural and organic environment", where social relations were natural and had sprung from history. Modern society and the city were threats to the natural order. Industrial workers and others were not nearly as good soldiers as peasant boys. Work in cities was in no way nearly as natural as farm work, closely connected to views on modernity. The city was characterised by leisure, comfortable living conditions etcetera, all making soldiers less hardy. Sweden was in many respects a more modern society and education was way above the other Baltic nations, but this also made Swedish soldiers more easy-going and not as physically fit.

Nationalism was another strong influence that formed the assessments in many ways. One of these ways was expressed in the Swedish nationalist position during the early 1920s towards Finland, in support of Swedish minority in Finland. Another way was the constant assessment of popular nationalism as positive, but not if nationalism

existed among minorities (as long as the minority was not Swedish) that constituted a centrifugal force. Nationalism was a double edged sword as it could both be a uniting and a divisive force. Chauvinist nationalism and the processes of nostrification and language issues were often seen as quite distasteful by Swedish attachés, who often described them as a sign of immaturity. Their view was that if nationalism was natural then it also had its natural and organic base in history and religion. Fennomania, or Latvification, in the eyes of Swedish officers seemed childish. The states were seen as young, absent of a long history, and therefore their nationalism became chauvinist and challenging, i.e. more of a threat than an asset. This was connected to overly broad nationalisation campaigns driving the centrifugal forces among minorities and threatening to crush the states. This was seen as dangerous, and in some cases completely inappropriate, particularly if the minorities were seen as culturally superior – i.e. Swedes in Finland or Germans in Poland and the Baltic states. The ideal society for Swedish attachés in their views on minorities was a society that was homogenous, united and patriotic. In essence it was an idealised image of Sweden, perceived to be homogenous, but not fully united as the liberals and socialists had destroyed national unity through egotistic policies. This was yet again an offshoot from a pessimistic view on humanity.

Anti-socialism combined with pessimism was common in Swedish assessments. Anti-socialism was mostly turned against communists, but often it also had an anti-Semitic tone with concepts of the "Jew-Bolshevik". Interestingly it was not Social Democracy in Finland that was a problem in Swedish reports. They were not seen as a positive. Instead, the main threat came from the right-wing of the Coalition party together with the agrarians as they were the foremost supporters of the Lapua movement. Aside from this the threat communism in all its forms was a major threat. Essentially, no other question was of equal importance as the threat from the Soviet Union in its various forms. For the attachés the main thing was to decide how resilient the states were by studying communist influence, which was all governed by the Comintern. There was a basic understanding that the newly founded states were especially vulnerable to be undermined by communist conspiracies.

Another important discourse among the attachés was Social Darwinism and concepts of modernity. The former had changed character and did not comprise the same teleological approach were states naturally replaced each other in an eternal power struggle. Social Darwinism had been replaced by other more modern approaches, but there still were Darwinist ideas present in the assessments. This particularly concerned Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as they were seen as having no future. The Soviet Union would "naturally", from its geopolitical position, be drawn towards the coastlines and sea lanes and would "solve the problem" of the Baltic States. Poland could also be devoured, but this was not seen as a certainty as in the case of the Baltic States. Finland was described as being a "natural and organic" state, but still under threat from the USSR. Modernity was characterised by ambivalence concerning change. In the conservative point of view modernisation to preserve existed as a concept, but not as much as it did in the civilian sphere. There was, and had always been, a contradiction between tradition and modernity in armed forces, as there was a definite strategy to modernising warfare in the technical sense, but at the same time maintain the historical legacy. The relationship between modernity and tradition was always present.

But what role did these conservative opinions play in the assessments of the future? They played a fundamental role as the ideologies of hierarchy combined with militarism, and as a pessimistic view of humanity as defined in the assessments sent to Stockholm. In the next step the reports were analysed and made into strategic policy. Hence, conservative analysts in the General Staff interpreted the reports made by equally conservative attachés, forwarding the concepts to conservative chiefs of the General Staff, tasked to cooperate with a civilian Minister of Defence, often with a diametrically opposed position. These conservative assessments in many cases inflamed the political controversies concerning defence.

Another central issue in this study has been to note how important recognition was for the assessments. Swedish attachés in general assessed what they recognised in a positive way. Hence Swedish assessments of Prussian-style drill became more positive than one

concerning haphazardly uniformed freedom fighters. This did not mean that there was an inherent Swedish-German relationship, or a Swedish appreciation of Prussia, but that the Prussian drill signified a "real" army. The opposite was the freedom fighter in civilian dress with a cockade. These soldiers gave the impression of revolutionaries among the professionals. There was often a feeling of discomfort for attachés when civilians were armed, both because it reminded people of revolution but also because it signified amateurism. In this process a recognition of the military code and culture became central. It was partly through visual phenomena in celebrations and traditions that transformed, „new" states into "real" states. Military manifestations became central in the creation of statehood through historicising and recognition. The military attachés were the receivers of a message sent by the local general staff using the language of military culture. The military attaché instinctively recognised what should be manifested and continuously assessed these factors as positive.

A following question is what role did this play in the assessments sent to Stockholm? The answer is that the Swedish attachés consequently assessed what they recognised in a more positive way, and therefore their opinions influenced the capacity of the new states to manifest order and capacity. The reports concerning celebrations and traditions rarely had anything to do with military capacity. An example is reading the reports of celebrations concerning the distinctly historicising manifestations of the Estonian army in the 1930s with the (Swedish) victory at Narva in 1700 as a centrepiece. The celebrations gave the impression of an orderly and well-functioning state, while in fact the opposite was the case.

Ideas concerning future wars were another basis for the assessments made by Swedish military attachés. It is often argued that the analysts of the interwar period were wrong in their assessments of the future and the manner in which wars would be fought. Of course it is intrinsically hard to foretell the future and it is at the same time quite easy to be wise in hindsight. The Swedish assessments were well in line with the international trends of the interwar period. Concerning armoured warfare Sweden came to the same conclusions as many others in the Baltic, i.e. that the terrain made the use of tanks complicated and

therefore there was little reason to worry. At the same time, small groups of officers proclaimed that tanks should be used in large numbers and for breakthroughs, combined with other arms. The problem is that this concept did not exist anywhere during the interwar era, apart from the Soviet Union and Germany, and also perhaps in the mechanised trial units in Great Britain and France. The most common way to use tanks was the French concept with tanks serving as support for the infantry. The Swedish attachés, as well as almost everybody else, described this as up to par. Airpower was discussed in the same way, and air forces around the Baltic were seen as irrelevant if they did not have strategic bombers. Sweden tried to follow the trends and purchased medium bombers from Germany in accordance with common international thinking. In this case as well the assessments were well in line with the general international trends. However, the most important issue was the cooperation between infantry and artillery and this was directly linked to the lessons of World War I. Swedish officers in general believed that cooperation between infantry and artillery was always found lacking and undeveloped.

The history of the observed states was of immense significance in the assessments. History and the historical understanding of the attachés coloured their analysis both in a positive and in a negative way. A developed tradition of history and recognition, as in the case of Finland, constituted a positive foundation, but also in a negative when Finland departed from the Swedish "track", and then analysis became merciless as a result. For example, the lack of historical understanding in Sweden affected Lithuania. The Swedish view on Lithuania was one of disinterestedness. Recognition was the key and there were no elements of this between Sweden and Lithuania. Recognition also became important in the assessments during the 1930s and the many coup d´états carried out in the region. Pilsudski's coup in 1926 was described as distasteful, but also through the lens that there were no alternatives.

It is possible to relate this to Ernest Gellner´s typology of new and old states as well as to the phases of nationalism as defined by Miroslav Hroch. The observed states had a birth phase when their borders were punched out of the crumbling empires. During this birth

phase Sweden was sceptical towards Poland, positive to Finland and wondered about the Baltic States. The "birth phase" was finalised through the peace treaties of Tartu (Dorpat) in 1920, and a phase of maturing ensued. Sweden was positive to the existence of the *randstaaten*, with a positive view of Finland, and less positive views concerning Estonia and Latvia, and sceptical about Poland and Lithuania. Adulthood would then come in the 1930s when the states were firmly established with functioning political systems. Most of these states accordingly never reached adulthood as the processes were derailed in coup d´états. Defining how the Swedish military perceived these states during these three phases a pattern becomes visible. The main thing for Sweden was maintaining the independence of Finland and seeing that Finland was not caught by the siren of Poland. If the other states managed to survive it was, of course positive, but it was not a primary Swedish interest. The status quo was the preferred outcome. If the Baltic States survived it was positive, but the signs were not good. However, Sweden assumed that Poland would survive, but probably only after border "corrections".

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[3] Curt Juhlin-Dannfelt, *Öst och väst: synpunkter på krigspotential och fredsekonomi* (Stockholm 1958), p. 9.

[4] Juhlin-Dannfelt (1958), pp. 215–217.

[5] Hobsbawm (2004), pp. 62–65.

[6] Johansson (1988).

[7] Ian Beckett,”Total War”, i Colin McInnes & Gary Sheffield (red.), *Warfare in the Twentieth Century* (London 1988), p. 28.

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[13] Gst/utr, Baltikum, 200 EIa:3, Handbrev Litt. no. U A 32 den 21 september 1928 från Juhlin-Dannfelt till C Gst/utr.

[14] Gst/utr, Baltikum, 200 EIa:6, Handbrev Litt. no. U A 4 den 4 februari 1931 från Juhlin-Dannfelt till C Gst/utr och EIa:6, Meddelande no. 57 den 12 september 1931 om Litauen, Meddelande no. 65 den 11 mars 1931 om Estland samt EIa:8, Meddelande no. 10/1933 den 27 januari 1933 om Estland, samtliga från Juhlin-Dannfelt till C Gst/utr.

[15] Kõll (1994) & Mikael Korhonen, ”Krigskonjunktur och fordringsanspråk: den finländska metallindustrins förluster till följd av ryska revolutionen 1917”, i Max Engman (red.), *Väst möter öst: Norden möter Ryssland* (Stockholm 1996), pp. 239–250.

[16] Max Engman, ”Imperieupplösningar och ekonomisk nationalism”, i Max Engman (red)., *När imperier faller: studier kring riksupplösningar och nya stater* (Stockholm 1994), pp. 264–270

[17] Engman ”Imperieupplösningar…” (1994), pp. 274–276 and Kõll & Valge (1998).

[18] Palmer (1970), p. 207.

[19] Gst/utr, Baltikum, 200 EIa:10, Rapport no. 1/1935 den 26 januari 1935 från major Brunsson till C Försvarsdepartementet, s. 2.

[20] Fst/und, Baltikum, 206 utgående, BI:3, Meddelande no. 71 den 7 november 1938 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 1–2.

[21] Fst/und, Baltikum, 206 utgående, BI:3, Meddelande no. 71 den 7 november 1938 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 3.

[22] Fst/und, Baltikum, 206 utgående, BI:3, Meddelande no. 71 den 7 november 1938 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 4–5.

[23] Fst/und, Baltikum, 206 utgående, BI:3, Meddelande no. 71 den 7 november 1938 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 6–7.

[24] Stjernfelt & Böhme (2007), p. 19. This in turn was based on L. Denne, *Das Danzig-Problem in der deutschen Aussenpolitik 1934–1939* (Bonn 1959).

[25] Gst/utr, Baltikum, 200 EIa:3, Rapport no. 17 den 16 mars 1928 om bristande motorisering av det lettiska artilleriet. EIa:6, Meddelande no. 22

den 11 mars 1931 om polskt flygbesök i Estland och Lettland för flygplansförsäljning. Meddelande no. 24 den 14 mars 1931 om estniska flygvapnets propagandatour i landet. Samtliga från ryttmästare Juhlin-Dannfelt till C Försvarsdepartementet/C Gst/utr.

[26] Gst/utr, Baltikum, EIa:10, Meddelande no. 40/1935 den 16 november 1935 från major Brunsson till C Gst/utr.

[27] David M. Crowe, *The Baltic States and the Great Powers: Foreign Relations 1938–1940* (Boulder 1993) & Wilhelm M. Carlgren, ”Den stora överraskningen: regeringen och Moskvapakten”, i Bo Hugemark (red.), *Stormvarning: Sverige inför andra världskriget* (Hallstavik 2002), p. 144.

[28] Wilhelm M. Carlgren, ”Sverige och Balticum sommaren 1940”, i Bo Hugemark (red.), *Urladdning: 1941 – blixtkrigens år* (Hallstavik 2002), p. 355.

[29] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 100/1939 den 25 augusti 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 1–3.

[30] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 105/1939 den 31 augusti 1939 om lettiska fältbefästningar vid gränsen, Meddelande no. 108/1939 den 5 september 1939 om Litauen, Rapport no. 19/1939 den 11 september 1939 lettiska reservister inkallas, samt Rapport no. 20/1939 den 16 september 1939 om ryska trupper vid gränsen, samtliga från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und eller C Försvarsdepartementet.

[31] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 115/1939 den 22 september 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und.

[32] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 117/1939 den 23 september 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und.

[33]Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 119/1939 den 26 september 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 2. Se även Norberg (2002) som påpekar att Rössing tidigare varit attaché i Stockholm.

[34] Fst/und, 202:3, EI: 2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 122/1939 intelefonerat till avdelning U den 27 September 1939 kl. 14.40 från major Lindqvist mottaget av överstelöjtnant Torén, tidigare attaché i Warszawa.

[35] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 128/1939 den 29 september 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und.

[36] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 132/1939 den 3 oktober 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und.

[37] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Rapport no. 23/1939 den 6 oktober 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, angående avtalet och Rapport no. 27/1939 den 18 oktober 1939 angående marschordningen.

[38] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Rapport no. 28/1939 den 19 oktober 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, om norra kolonnen, och Rapport no. 30/1939 den 24 oktober 1939 om den södra kolonnen.

[39] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Rapport no. 32/1939 den 26 oktober 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 2–3.

[40] Fst/und, 202:3, EI:2 vol 4, Meddelande no. 139/1939 den 10 oktober 1939 från major Lindqvist till C Fst/und, s. 2–3.

[41] Leonas Sabaliūnas, *Lithuania in Crisis: Nationalism to Communism 1939–1940* (Bloomington 1972).

[42] Lars Ericson (Wolke), ”Buffert eller hot? De baltiska staterna i svensk militär planering år 1940”, i Bo Hugemark (red.), *I orkanens öga: 1941 – osäker neutralitet* (Hallstavik 2002), pp. 128–132.

[43] Max Engman,”Imperieupplösningar…” (1994), pp. 272–275.

[44] Hobsbawm (2004), pp. 110–113 & 116.

[45] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EI:13 vol. 2, Rapport no. 5/1938 den 19 februari 1938 från major Torén till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[46] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EIII:13 vol. 1, Överstelöjtnant vid Kungl. Signalregementet S. E. R. Wallmans rapport över studier inom polska och finska arméerna anbefallda genom generalorder 702/1937 den 29 november 1937, s. 1–2.

[47] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EIII:13 vol. 1, Överstelöjtnant vid Kungl. Signalregementet S. E. R. Wallmans rapport över studier inom polska och finska arméerna anbefallda genom generalorder 702/1937 den 29 november 1937, s. 3.

[48] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EIII:13 vol. 1, Överste Falk vid I 12 rapport över genom generalorder 2052/1937 anbefalld tjänstgöring i polska armén odaterad, s. 1 & 2.

[49] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EI:13 vol. 2, Rapport no. 23 den 3 December 1938 från major Torén till C Försvarsdepartementet och EI:13 vol. 3 Rapport no. 19 den 10 Maj 1939 från major de Laval till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[50] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EI:13 vol. 3 Rapport no. 32 den 18 juli 1939 från major de Laval till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[51] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EI:13 vol. 1, Inkommen rapport den 3 november 1937 från major Torén till C Fst/und och EI:13 vol. 2, Rapport no. 11/1938 den 14 mars 1938 från major Torén till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[52] Palmer (1970), p. 224.

[53] Fst/und, Polen, 203:3 EI:13 vol. 1, Rapport no. 33 den 15 juli 1937 från major Torén till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[54] Fst/und, Polen, 203:3 EIII: 13 vol. 1, Löjtnant Nils Stahres I 15 rapport över tjänstgöring vid polska pansarvapnet jämlikt generalorder no. 344/1937.

[55] Fst/und, Polen, 203:3 EIII: 13 vol. 1, Kapten Carl Bergströms rapport över tjänstgöring vid polska flygvapnet 15/11 – 4/12 1937 odaterad.

[56] Böhme (1982).

[57] Fst/und, Polen, 203:3 EIII:13 vol. 1, Rapport över studier inom polska armén 1. – 21. juli 1938 av Överste H. Kellgren enligt generalorder 770/1938, s. 6.

[58] Fst/und, Polen, 202:3 EIII: 13 vol. 3, Rapport no. 37/1939 den 28 augusti 1939, från major de Laval till C Försvarsdepartementet.

[59] Eellend (2013).

[60] Eriksson (2004), Gerdner (1946) and Schüllerqvist (1992).

[61] Gst/utr, Finland, 200 EIa:33, Meddelande no. 49 den 3 april 1936 från major Tengberg till C Gst/utr.

[62] Gst/utr, Finland, 200 EIa:33, Meddelande no. 65 den 2 maj 1936 från major Tengberg till C Gst/utr, s. 3.

[63] Exempelvis Gst/utr, Reserapporter, EIg:118, Reserapport av Kaptenen vid I 16 B.V. Hjärne jämlikt generalorder 1016/1933 med rapport över utrikesstudier den 13 november 1933, s. 7. Hjärne är dock inte negativ till de finska soldaterna tvärt om men har grundförståelsen att svenskar är mer intelligenta och bättre skickade att styra.

[64] Exempelvis Gst/utr, Reserapporter, EIg:120, Reserapport av Tf Chefen I 14 Överste Ehrenborg och förste läraren vid SS, majoren i armén, kaptenen vid I 2 Ekström med rapport över tjänstgöring utom riket den 14 februari 1935, s. 30–31.

[65] Gst/utr, Finland, 200 EIa:34, Meddelande no. 111 den 17 september 1936 från major Tengberg till C Gst/utr, s. 2.

[66] Gst/utr, Finland, 200 EIa:34, Rapport Litt. no. S. 40 den 1 juli 1936 från major Tengberg till C Utrikesdepartementet om motorisering, EIg:119, Reserapport av kaptenen vid Flygvapnet J.E.R. Stenbeck jämlikt generalorder F 168/1933 med underdånig rapport över kommendering vid Finlands flygstridskrafter den 1 juli 1934. Stenbeck var som redan nämnts en av de mer hyllade flygvapenofficerarna under 1930-talet.