



# THE BALTIC SEA REGION

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# 32 The concept of a security community

## 1. Wars and armed conflicts

One of the most significant issues in international relations is the one of armed conflict and war. During the Cold War, the continuous danger of nuclear war and a general insecurity for small countries plagued the world. In December 1991 the Soviet Union dissolved. The ‘Cold War’ as we were used to seeing it – military, political and to an important degree technological competition and rivalry between the world’s two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective military alliances – came to an end. The end of the Cold War also reduced the likelihood of a major war among the great powers of the world. The reduced tension in the international system has also created possibilities for promoting co-operation and building new kinds of bonds between former enemies. It has also created opportunities for domestic liberalisation and a rebirth of states and nations all around the world.

But the end of the Cold War has also unleashed new violence and unrest in some regions and nations where the newborn sovereignty has, for many of the states, been challenged by age-old rivalries and animosities. These internal conflicts, that were suppressed during the Cold War, today constitute a major challenge to the international community. Indeed, patterns of disruption can be found all over the world, and are not merely confined to remote areas in Africa or the former Soviet Union. A similar pattern can be seen in many other places. India, Pakistan, Canada, the remaining parts of Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Italy, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Haiti and Mexico, just to mention a few. All of them face similar structural tendencies for disintegration within their territories. Tendencies that imply the strengthening, or the emergence, of the ethnic state at the expense of the territorial state.

The same patterns can be found in the Baltic region. But set against the recent violent history of the Baltic region, the past decade has shown positive signs of both political and economical consolidation towards democracy and the market-economy and new forms of co-operation and accord. But due to the relatively short time span of these new developments, the question is what the future holds for the countries of the region in terms of peace and security. To respond to this question, the authors have chosen to begin with the notion of “security community”. Thus, we ask: are conditions created for a future security community in the Baltic region? In a long-term perspective, a second question is important: towards which type of relations are we heading as a region?

## 2. Security community

What then does the notion of a “security community” entail? Today there is no fear of a renewed war between Sweden and Norway. The fear of war between Germany and France is also receding among the general population and among leading decision-makers. This means that disputes between these countries are expected to be handled in peaceful ways: through direct negotiations or within multilateral organisations (such as Nordic co-operation, the European Union). These are examples of significant and lasting changes in relationships which, in this century, have given rise to serious conflicts or wars. The peoples of these countries now feel more secure vis-à-vis each other. As this feeling is shared on both sides, it can be said that a security community has been created in these cases, i.e. Sweden – Norway and France – Germany.

The notion of a security community was introduced by a leading social scientist, Karl W. Deutsch, active in the United States but originally from Prague. His definitions can be seen below. The process, by which such security communities are created, while the countries still consolidate their independence, is an important one. In a discussion on the dangers of wars and chances for peace in the Baltic area, the concept is useful. We thus ask whether such a security community can be developed in the Baltic region in the foreseeable future. This would mean a significant change in present relations between countries and peoples in the region. Especially since the Baltic region has been an area of conflict for many wars in recent centuries.

## 3. Characteristics of a security community

Deutsch specified 14 factors for the emergence of security communities. These seem to be relevant in a discussion of the use of this concept for the Baltic region, but can be merged into the following five aspects:

1. *Relations to outside actors* are important for the emergence of a security community. This might be the existence of a common military threat to the region or joint security co-operation extending beyond the region. Deutsch finds that outside military threats sometimes promote co-operation within a region, but that such effects are short-lived. It suggests, however, that the general relationships surrounding the region are important, and thus, we need to discuss the relations between the smaller states of the region and the major centres of power in Europe (chapter 33).
2. There would have to be a *communality of major values* among the countries concerned. This refers to a shared view of, for instance, democracy and market economy. *The spreading and stabilisation of democracy in Europe as a whole*, as agreed in the Paris Treaty of 1990, and in the Baltic region would be a most important factor for the future. In particular, democracy increases the legitimacy of governments and gives access to power for more groups. The links between domestic democracy and the absence of war are dealt with specifically (chapter 34).
3. There would have to be *mutual responsiveness* among the states and peoples of the region. This refers to an ability to predict the behaviour of other states. It requires extensive contacts and communication, as well as psychological and political adjustment, for instance, to the loss of a dominant status that is a result of changing conditions. *Experience in solving*

*conflicts peacefully*, as well as active participation in international conferences, would indicate responsiveness. This aspect is dealt with in chapter 35.

4. *New forms of behaviour* among the states and peoples, which make the present distinctly different from the past, are another feature of a security community. This involves, for instance, improving economic conditions for the whole or important parts of the region (compared to other regions, as well as compared to the past). This we could interpret to mean a *move away from reliance on armaments for security to disarmament*, giving room for other types of contacts, chapter 36.
5. To this we need to add the significance of *common institutions*, which at the same time respect and uphold the independence of the member states, and contribute to concerted actions in security matters. Such institutions may incorporate many of the four factors but are still important in their own respect. Such institutions, which might be the *United Nations*, the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)*, NATO, EU (the European Union) or others, can be evaluated with respect to their significance for security in the Baltic region (chapter 37).

The five characteristic factors of a security community dealt with separately in these five chapters are discussed in the final chapter. There, an answer is suggested to the question of whether the conditions for a security community are present or not, or emerging. This is done by comparing three different points with respect to twelve significant relations involving all littoral Baltic States.

#### 4. Security communities and alliances

The five principal components in a security community as described by Karl Deutsch are expected to contribute to a sense of security within a region. Although “security” can mean many things, we treat the five factors as a way of discussing the possibilities of the emergence of a security community in the Baltic region. This means that the factors are used to describe present developments without making assessments of what in fact will happen to the region. It is, however, a broader approach than the customary one for the analysis of peace and security.

One may then ask if a security community is the only way to enhance the security of a state or a region? To be sure, the quest for security is often described in terms of defensibility, alliance-building and military capability. According to this perspective the only way to gain security and stability is to join an alliance. The problem with this view is the fundamental question of inclusion and exclusion, i.e. that an alliance is always directed towards some other, and this other is usually perceived as a threat. It may even be so that the creation of alliances in a particular region, to all intents and purposes, decreases the level of security for both the insiders and the outsiders and that new patterns of conflict are created upon old ones. In addition, history is full of examples where the promises of the alliance have not been very credible and the supposed security has in fact turned out to be an in-security.

A security community is not the same thing as an alliance. Whereas a security community is about trust, confidence, transparency and a high degree of non-formal interactions between central actors and institutions among states within an area of geographical proximity, an alliance is a formal coalition of states that coordinates its actions to accomplish some ends. An alliance that is concerned with international security is normally codified and formalised by a written treaty that encompasses a range of issues that is supposed to last across time. Another major distinction is that alliances and security communities have different purposes. Alliances

generally have the purpose of augmenting their members' power relative to other states, and they join the alliance to defend themselves against a common external enemy. In a security community states join in so as to increase common welfare by enhancing interdependence.

An alliance also differs from a security community in terms of the promises that are behind its purpose. The security that derives from an alliance is upheld by the promise that an attack on one is an attack on all. It means that every member in the alliance is willing and obligated to use force in order to defend its allies even though its own security is not threatened. In a security community, disputes are settled peaceably and no one will use force against any member of the community.

The final distinction that can be made between an alliance and a security community is the way the institutions are organised in order to provide or facilitate security. In an alliance, the institutional mechanisms are based on an authoritative or hierarchical decision structure. This is usually visible in a unified command and that some parts of the political national decision-making are surrendered to a supranational level. A security community, on the other hand, is based on an egalitarian decision structure. It means that every peaceful procedure of dispute settlement is sought by an enhanced transparency, mainly through such institutional mechanisms as sharing information, and by promoting different confidence-building measures.

Table 13. Main differences between an Alliance and a Security Community

	Alliance	Security Community
<b>Purpose</b>	States join to defend against a common external enemy	States join to increase common welfare by enhancing interdependence
<b>What kind of promise?</b>	An attack on one is an attack on all: 'I will use force to defend my allies even when my own security is not threatened.'	Disputes between states are settled peaceably; 'I will not use force against any member of the security community.'
<b>What kinds of institution add credibility to the promise?</b>	Authoritative or hierarchical decision structure. Unified military command. Maximum integration of armed forces	Egalitarian decision structure. Peaceful dispute settlement procedures. Other means for enhancing transparency such as sharing information, confidence-building measures.

Source: Steven Weber. 'A Modest Proposal for NATO Expansion'. In Robert W. Rauchhaus (ed). Explaining NATO Enlargement. Frank Cass. 2001

## 5. What is security policy?

"Defence policy", "foreign policy", "security policy" – anyone interested in international relations frequently encounters different concepts regarding a state's relations with its neighbours. There is no final definition of these concepts – their meaning is constantly changing.

Different states use different means to maximise security. All states try to prevent an armed attack against its territory. For small states, it is especially important to establish good neighbourly relations with bordering states. However, this is not always possible. Alliance

membership is considered an alternative by many small states. For some, this is an important way to compensate for local insecurity, for others an alliance adds to an already stable regional situation.

Major powers also make use of a military presence abroad as an important part of their security policy. During the Cold War, the superpowers, USA and USSR, had well-defined spheres of influence on all continents. This was often perceived as a security problem by minor states. Today, with the superpower rivalry dissolved, foreign military presence is less problematic for regional and national security.

During the first part of the Cold War, “security policy” was often synonymous with defence and strategic matters since its primary objective for analysis was the idea of power, balance and influence in the international system, which stressed the role of military and economic resources that governments have at their disposal. Much of this perspective was dependent upon the bi-polar world of the Cold War and the conception and determination to treat politics as *realpolitik* – according to the notion that the strong can have their way with the weak. Beginning in the middle of the 1970s, the concept of security shifted its emphasis towards a more open and wider tenor, emphasising a world of complex interdependence characterised by multiple channels and actors in world politics.

During the 1980s, a further wider understanding of “security” developed. This development began among Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and spilled over into policy-making circles and governments. In 1984, for instance, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (also called the Palme Commission) coined the concept of “Common Security”. The Commission thereby stressed the mutual character of security, and said that it was no longer sufficient to decelerate the arms race of nuclear and conventional weapons. It was also indispensable to implement a sustainable development that would promote global security by encouraging economic and social development, environmental protection and the extension of human rights.

## 6. The widening and deepening of the concept of security

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of an even further development of the notion of security. The end of the bi-polar world, with the consequent lessening of the nuclear threat, did not only entail a fundamental different world order that brought about new forms of multilateral international relations. It also obliged academics to re-think and re-analyse the concept of security both theoretically and practically. Consequently, several scholars in the academic community have re-considered what is, and what should be, included within the concept of security and whether a broader definition reflects a more accurate interpretation of reality.

By bringing in a broader spectrum of actors and societal structures into the security agenda, the concept of security tends to include more and more issues of an internal or transnational character. Thus, the role of the state has diminished at the expense of a more comprehensive understanding of what is “security”. But even if this wider meaning of security and security policy, including dimensions of economy, societal issues, environmental protection and disarmament better reflects a common understanding of security, it also makes the security debate more difficult. The decade after the Cold War has therefore been marked by an ongoing debate about how far the traditional political-military concept of security should be extended to include non-military aspects of security as well.

The debate about the concept of security has been divided according to two theoretical perspectives, in which the first one argues that a widening and deepening of the concept reflects the contemporary world better than the old one, and a second one that argues that a broadening of the concept will result in a theoretical anarchy where everything from “thugs”, “drugs” and “bugs” to severe international crisis and armed aggression is included in the concept. To facilitate a better understanding and provide an overview of this debate, it is practical to categorise these perspectives according to their “core arguments”. The first one should therefore be labelled as the “traditional” view since it defines the concept of security in terms of an original state-centric essence. The other perspective is labelled liberal, because of its more open view of the security agenda. However, even if there is agreement among those who see a need for a wider definition of security, they sometimes hold a different view on the need of deepening the concept – i.e., that the concept of security should have another object of reference than the state.

Table 14. Concepts of security

	Definition	Reference	Threats
<b>Traditional</b>	Narrow	State	External
<b>Liberal (I)</b>	Broad	State	Internal/external
<b>Liberal (II)</b>	Broad	Individual	Global/internal

The “traditionalists” hold the view that by leaving the long-established notion of security, made up by power politics and military capabilities, it would mean that everything becomes a matter of security and that the concept loses its theoretical cogency. The definition and understanding of security should therefore be as narrow as possible in order to maintain analytical clarity and theoretical simplicity. The state, according to this perspective, is the most important object of reference since it is the primary actor in the international system and the principal organiser of political, economical and social matters on the national level – such as the welfare of its subjects and the safeguard from any external threats. By expanding the concept of security beyond the limits of the territorial state, it is not possible to identify and study security since it becomes impossible to assess and determine the real threats to one’s security and complicates the ability to make necessary political priorities between “security” and “non-security”.

Among the advocates for a wider and deeper understanding of the concept of security, there are those who see a need to broaden the concept to other areas than the military one, but that it is still necessary to refer to the state or to other large scale of political collectives. And there are those who argue for a more extensive interpretation and definition of security that should have a global perspective with a focus on the individual, and not the state, as the primary object of reference. They consider the “traditionalist” view of security as ethno-centric and out of touch with the current process of globalisation that has diminished the role and the significance of the territorial state. However, what unites the advocates for a wider and deeper understanding of security, is the perception that most threats towards security are not solely external and primarily derived from power politics and military capabilities. They firmly believe that a definition of security must appreciate the fact that the majority of contemporary conflicts, and for that reason threats to security, are not external but internal, and comes from political domestic mismanagement, social and economical discrimination, cultural and ethnical intolerance and environmental catastrophes.

What underlies the conceptual debate of security is the way in which both the traditional and liberal proponents perceive the function and organisation of international politics and relations.

## 7. The study of international relations

During the period after the Second World War, three perspectives on conflicts in the international system have been guiding research and policy analysis: *realism* (or “power politics”; “statism”), *integration* (or “trans-nationalism”; “liberalism”; “idealism”) and *dominance-liberation* (or “radicalism”). Although the basic characteristics are the same, the perspectives are sometimes labelled differently (as in parentheses) by different authors. In this summary, the perspectives are presented in a way that stresses their differences rather than similarities.

*Realism* is a perspective, which stresses the role of (mainly) military and economic resources that governments have at their disposal for pursuing their interests. According to this perspective the international system is characterised by clashing national interests, and a certain balance of forces is required to maintain international stability. Peace, according to this view, is at best stability through a balance-of-power. The state, according to this view, is seen as a self-interested actor that always seeks to maximise its own advantages and thereby tries to manoeuvre successfully in an anarchical international realm. The self-sufficiency of the state means that it is practically impossible for the creation of any kind of “world governments”, or that the international system can ever be organised and function with the same characteristics as the national state. Any attempt at building “common security” with other means than military capabilities and power politics is doomed to fail, because, eventually, every state will seek to maximise its own interests and this will inevitably be at the expense of someone else. The world is inhabited by strong states and weak states, and the only way to seek security is either to be stronger than everyone else, or by joining a stronger state or a group of states in an alliance. Indeed, realism is more than just a theoretical perspective on international relations. It is also a normative assessment of the way the international system is constructed and the possibilities that exist for states to pursue co-operation and building common interests.

*The integration* perspective focuses on the many forms of international co-operation in political and economic matters that characterise the global system of today. Increased co-operation is a way to increase peaceful relations according to this perspective. Thus, non-state actors such as corporations and non-governmental organisations should be studied, as well as governments. The integration perspective is, in contrast to the realist view, not a clear-cut “theoretical school” within international relations. Instead, the core arguments behind the integration perspective are represented among a variety of “schools” within international relations. Two important tracks of the integration perspective in the contemporary study of international relations can be found in the neo-liberal and constructivist schools of thought. The former perspective holds that even if states sometimes act solely in their own self-interest, it is often combined with ways of seeking and facilitating trust in order to enhance different kinds of collaboration. The constructivist perspective, on the other hand, rejects the realist view of the international system as a static anarchy that seldom changes because of fixed identities of self-interest among the states within the system. The international system is seen instead as

a social construction which is a reflection of how different states view themselves and of how they perceive the world around them. Thus, the identity of the state is in constant change and this creates opportunities for co-operation and the building of common interests. The world is what we make of it, and removing mistrust and misconceptions therefore enhances security, according to the constructivists.

*The dominance-liberation perspective*, finally, focuses the economically unbalanced relations – asymmetries – that characterise global trade relations for instance. This asymmetric system – which in practice exploits its weaker parts – is an important factor behind conflicts both within and between states, according to this perspective. The perspective, then, is often a rationale for liberation movements of different kinds. All of them, however, stress the need for structural changes in society. In the contemporary world, this integration-liberation perspective is often connected to the ongoing process of globalisation. The harmonising of economies and increasing interconnectedness that creates new norms and values in world politics and new possibilities for states, individuals and transnational organisations, is not entirely a positive development. The flipside, according to this perspective, is an increasing degree of autarchy, unilateralism, disintegration, heterogeneity and separation. It both reinforces existing asymmetric relations between weak and strong states and creates new kinds of threats that can no longer be resolved by individual governments acting alone. The advocates for this perspective argue that as long as the process of globalisation is not altered, or controlled, the prospect of security for those who cannot benefit from this process will gradually decrease.

The three perspectives focus on different aspects of international relations. They are not incompatible, but complementary. Each one has its merits and weaknesses.

Table 15. Three Perspectives on International Relations

Perspective	Realism	Integration	Dominance-Liberation
<b>Basis for stable relations</b>	International balance of power; elite rule	International co-operation; internal democracy	Transformation into symmetric relations; economic justice
<b>Central unit of analysis</b>	The state; government	World society; inter- and intra-state relations	Structures; trade relations
<b>Focused level of conflict</b>	“Acute”; open conflict; crisis orientation	Open but not militarised, manageable	Latent and/or open conflict inevitable in society
<b>Key actors for change</b>	Decision-makers	International organisations; Non-Governmental Organisations	Liberation movements
<b>Causes of war</b>	Failing balance of power	Ignorance, prejudices, power interests	Centre–periphery conflict
<b>View of the human being as</b>	Self-oriented	Co-operative	Structurally conditioned

## Patterns of Conflict and Security

*Patterns of Conflict.* Not a single day passes without the mass media telling us about violence, death and destruction following political struggle. During the period 1989-98 there were 108 armed conflicts in 73 different locations. Of the 108 conflicts, 37 were active in 1998 in 32 different locations, compared with 34 in 27 locations in 1997. 1998 marked an increase in the number of armed conflicts from 1997, after an overall decline since 1992. The number of wars doubled in 1998, after a marked decrease that had also started in 1992. Most wars took place in Africa. Of the 108 armed conflicts during the period 1989-98, only seven were interstate conflicts. Two of these were active in 1998: India-Pakistan, which had also been active in earlier years, and Ethiopia-Eritrea, which broke out in 1998. All the armed conflicts listed had at least 25 battle-related deaths during the year. The last two categories are referred to together as major armed conflict, making up more than two-thirds of the armed conflicts recorded in 1998.

A “major armed conflict” here means a conflict that has caused at least 1000 deaths since its beginning and concerns the control of a government or of a territory (or both). In some conflicts, such as the Iraq – Kuwait War of 1991, many lives were taken during a short period of time. In others, such as in Northern Ireland, the conflict claims comparatively few lives but it exists for a long period of time. They have been divided into three categories: *minor armed conflict*, where the number of battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict is below 1,000. In 1998 there were 10 such conflicts. *Intermediary armed conflict*, with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths recorded during the course of the conflict, but fewer than 1,000 in a particular year. In 1998 there were 13 such conflicts. War, with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths during a particular year. In 1998 there were 14 such conflicts.

These examples of what constitutes armed conflict are often conducted in different kinds of settings ranging from the international to the internal, i.e., local, level. Here we will point to three different categories of conflict:

1. *Inter-state conflicts* are international, i.e. between sovereign states.
2. *State-formation -conflicts* are non-international and concerned with the basic constitutional structure of a state (e.g. Northern Ireland/Great Britain). A typical example of such a conflict is when a region wants to secede or to have autonomy within an existing state. Such conflicts may also have international connections to governments and movements in other countries.
3. *Internal conflicts* are concerned with the control of a government, for instance when a liberation movement wants to replace an incumbent government.

In the contemporary world, very few conflicts are conducted on the international level. This is also something that follows a trend that has dominated since World War II: very few inter-state conflicts and an increasing number of internal and state formation conflicts.

After the Second World War a more or less stable pattern of conflicts emerged. However, this pattern changed after the Cold war and a number of new conflicting regions was added to old ones. A conflicting region is defined as a region where at least three geographically bordering states are involved in major armed conflicts. Examples of these conflicting regions can be found all over the world:

*The Middle East* (Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran/Iraq),  
*Southern Africa* (Angola, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe),  
*Central America* (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua), *South Asia* (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka),  
*Central Asia* (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan), *Indo-China* (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia),  
*South-eastern Europe* (Serbia – with Kosovo and Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

*Patterns of security.* There are some regions in the world that have been free from armed conflicts after the Second World War and have developed in a direction towards “security communities”. A pattern of security has emerged.

Such security regions are:

*North America* (Canada, Mexico, USA);  
*The Nordic countries* (Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden);  
*The European Community* (France, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg and Italy);  
*The Australia/Pacific region* (Australia, New Zealand, Pacific states).

These regions all have a history of violence. For some of them this goes far back in time. The Nordic countries have not experienced an interstate war since 1809. The last Mexican-American war ended at the beginning of the 20th century. France and Germany, now considering forming a security community were major belligerents on the European continent up to 1945.

The security regions have all established democratic systems since the early part of the century, with the sole exception of Germany with its periods of Nazism and weaker democratic institutions in Mexico. Trade patterns have been an important feature in the creation of patterns of security. The European Community was created expressly with

## Patterns of Conflict and Security

European security as a major objective. More recently, formal trade agreements between the Nordic countries in the framework of EFTA and between Canada, USA and Mexico in NAFTA, have emerged.

The end of the Cold War led to two different global processes: new peace agreements were made in a number of conflict situations (such as Namibia, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Cambodia), while in other areas new conflicts emerged (such as in former Yugoslavia, and the Caucasus region). In addition, a number of nations in the Baltic region regained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Thus the outcome of the end of the Cold War was of both positive and negative in character when it comes to peace and security aspects.

There is a possibility that southern Africa, which is a conflict region today, may develop into a security region. The conflicts following the end of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique seem to have come to an end. The apartheid system in the Republic of South Africa is being abandoned. Democratic institutions are slowly developing with new multiparty elections. Yet the war in Angola has been recorded as being the worst in the world in terms of casualties. Positive developments are also seen in Central America, where important steps towards internal demilitarisation have been taken.

There is also a third category of regions or states, where neither war nor peace has reigned in the post-World War II period. We will not count these as security regions, but as *suppressed regions*. States that did not allow pluralist views about their own society are included in this category. Examples are a majority of African states from independence up to 1990, the Soviet Union, China/Burma/Mongolia, and military dictatorships in Latin America from the 1950s up to 1992. However, it is important to note that even if many of these suppressed regions has either been broken down or is undergoing a process of liberalisation, there are still a great number of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes left. These regimes exist not only in remote parts of Africa and Asia, but also in the Baltic region of today.

Thus, we can see three types of regions in the post-World War II period: “security regions”, “conflicting regions”, and “suppressed regions”.

The Baltic region has experiences from two of the three types of regions. This heritage shapes the conceptions of security in different countries of the region, as well as opinions about how security can be achieved in the future.



Map 36. Major armed conflicts / Security regions. See map on page VIII. Ill.: Radosław Przebitkowski

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