

**CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL
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STATESMEN'S FORUM

“FINLAND: SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT”

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:
JULIANNE SMITH,
DIRECTOR, CSIS EUROPE PROGRAM**

**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:
HIS EXCELLENCY JYRI HÄKÄMIES,
FINLAND'S MINISTER OF DEFENSE**

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JULIANNE SMITH: Well, good morning. My name is Julianne Smith. I'm the director of the Europe program here at CSIS. And I'd like to welcome you to the Statesmen's Forum here today.

We're very pleased to welcome Finland's Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämies. Pardon the pronunciation, but I've been working hard with our Finnish military fellow to see if I could master that. The minister has had a very distinguished career, both in and out of government. As many of you know, he was appointed minister of defense in April of this year. And he also happens to serve as a member of the Finnish parliament as well, where he has had a number of different positions inside the Finnish parliament, including the chair of the national coalition party parliamentary group. And he's also served on the security and defense committee.

The minister has titled his talk today "Similar yet Different: a Finnish perspective on European Security and Transatlantic Relations." Finland, of course, is a contributor to over a dozen current operations, both military and civilian around the world. They have roughly 1,000 troops deployed overseas. And Finland also recently became part of one of the two fully operational EU battle groups. So we're looking forward to hearing the minister's comments today, both on Finland's current contributions to peace and stability around the world, and also as well as the minister's insight on various broad issues of transatlantic relations. So without further ado, please join me in welcoming Finland's minister of defense.

(Applause.)

JYRI HÄKÄMIES: Madam Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It's really an honor and a pleasure for me to be as a new minister on the stage this morning, because CSIS is well known around the world as a place where global security in an era of global change can be discussed by some of the best minds around. That alone makes an appearance at the forum a particular daunting task.

But ladies and gentlemen, at this particular point of history, most armed forces in the Western world are undergoing a process of profound long-term transformation, as you know. Most countries are abandoning the concept of territorial defense and are emphasizing capabilities to conduct international peace support operations in place far away from their borders – not Finland. Most countries are also discarding the great Napoleonic idea of raising mass armies by conscription; and instead, they are creating small, all-professional armed forces – not Finland. Furthermore, most Western and Central European countries, NATO is the answer to their defense prayers; once again, not for Finland.

How can be this explained? Why Finland still holding on to the concepts of territorial defense, general conscription, and staying outside of the military alliances, while for practically all other countries in the developed world, these concepts are ideas from the past?

To understand Finnish defense thinking, it might be useful to think of Finnish national security interests as three centric circles. The outer circle comprises common values. Finland is interested in promoting and defending such values, as is demonstrated by our support and participation in the United Nations' peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

The second circle brings us closer to home, to Europe, and to security threats affecting Europe. The more stable the European continent remains, the safer Finland will be. As a consequence, our forces continue to be involved in NATO- and EU-led operations, be it in the Balkans, Africa, or even in faraway Afghanistan.

Finally, it is within the third circle where our national interest reigns supreme. Such core issues as national independence, security, and well-being of the Finnish citizens, and even the very survival of the nation at the stake here. To defend Finnish territory, we need strong national defense. And since we are not a member of any military alliance, we have to build up our defense independently.

In sum, the Finnish forces are actively participating in peacekeeping and peace-support operations abroad, at the same time when we are making sure that our powder is dry to defend the country, should our territorial integrity or the nation's very existence become under threat.

Ladies and gentlemen, robust commitment to international operations is nothing new for Finland; for the first Finnish peacekeeping troops were deployed in the Sinai Peninsula in 'VV56, one year after Finland had gained membership in the United Nations. The Finnish troops were battle-toughed – the Second World War veterans – dressed with the searing heat of the Sinai in very heavy winter uniforms – the Finnish battalion must have been quite a sight during those days. Since then, Finns have been regular in these foreign engagements, so that about 50,000 Finns have by now served under UN, NATO, or EU flags.

From the Finnish point of view, one of the most interesting and important developments in the effort of the European Union to build up its military capabilities – here Finland is, of course, a bona fide participant, since we have been a member of the club, the European Union, since 'VV95. It was not long ago when Lord Robertson, the secretary general of NATO, sneered that the European Union, being a political and economic giant but a military dwarf. Since then, serious efforts have been made to beef up the European military capabilities. Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Operation EUFOR DRC in Democratic Republic of Congo, current talk about deploying EU forces in Chad in the near future – all this is a living proof that peace support operations are on the EU agenda to stay.

The term most often used for this activity within the EU is crisis management. It includes military operations, but it emphasizes other tools – political, economic, and other non-military instruments. The growing capability for military crisis management is a significant addition to EU's crisis management tools.

It is the capability for being able to react rapidly that is now in the center of EU's attention. The fact is that there is plenty of traditional military capability in Europe – tanks, airplanes, ships, personnel. However, just a handful of European countries have the capacity to project force far beyond their borders.

For that reason, the focus of attention has been the concept of battle groups, EU battle groups. A battle group is a force package that is based on a multinational combined arms, roughly battalion-size force, about 1,500-2,000 personnel, which will be reinforced with combat support and combat service support elements. It will be comprised of assets and capabilities that will be held at a high readiness of five to 10 days and sustainable for 30 until 120 days of operations.

Finland has been active in supporting the battle group concept. The first battle group in full operation capability, in the first half of this year, had troops from Germany, and Netherlands and Finland. We are also one of the contributors in the new Nordic battle group to be deployed in the first half of next year, along with Swedes, Norwegians, Estonians, and Irish.

Despite their name, the battle groups are not meant for waging war. Their scope of tasks is the so-called enhanced Petersburg tasks. These tasks range from humanitarian support operations, search and rescue operations, as well as evacuation operations all the way to separation of parties by force, if needed. Proper training and modern equipment will be given opportunity to use them confidently in situations where, for example, violent ethnic clashes or even massacres are imminent.

There are several challenges to EU crisis management in the future. But I would argue that these challenges are not specific challenges only to the EU. They are not different from the challenges we all are facing, for example, in places like Afghanistan.

One of the challenges is that we must clearly recognize that in most crises, we need comprehensive crisis management approach and a mixture of different crisis management instruments. We will often need the military among them, of course; but not necessarily. The military instrument, however, often is the instrument we must use first to create a modicum of stability in the crisis area in the first place.

Let's take an example from Europe. The military situation is now stable in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is so stable that we can now consider changing our international presence there from a military operation to a police operation. The biggest security challenges at the moment in Bosnia-Herzegovina are corruption, smuggling, and organized crime. They can be met by better border controls, more professional police forces, improved legal and prison system, and better governance in general; not by keeping foreign military forces in the country.

Another example would be Afghanistan. Military forces were – and continue to be – needed to provide basic stability in that country. There are still serious problems of

instability in the south and east of Afghanistan, as we all know. Taliban forces raid villages and military posts before retreating to safety across the Pakistan border. Instability is on the rise also in the northern parts of the country that have stayed relatively stable so far. I do not see other way but to have a long and resolute presence of ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan as long as the basic stability is reached.

But, we should be very careful at how long we want to carry that burden. Our basic aim should be to bring security, good governance, rule of law, and economic growth to Afghanistan. This will be not done by a division of more soldiers. For this, we need a division of doctors, engineers, lawyers and school teachers. It will be a combination of military, economic, and development assistance tools that we all need to use in a smart way to manage the country and to create a stable and democratic country.

It is also crucial to empower the local population, and to turn the governing of Afghanistan to the Afghans as soon as possible. There is one huge obstacle. Many of the Afghan officials are connected to the warlords or through the narcotics trade. Drugs make up more than half of Afghanistan's gross national product; and there is no sufficiently appealing alternative crop for farmers. That situation is alarming and needs our special attention.

Finnish troops are working side by side with troops from the NATO nations in these foreign operations. In fact, calculated in terms of per capita, Finland is one of the highest contributors in NATO peace support operations. We have been in Kosovo in the KFOR operations from the very beginning, and we entered Afghanistan in January 2002, as one of the first non-NATO contributors. Out of the total of more than 850 troops we are deploying abroad just now, about 500 are operating under the NATO flag.

Therefore, a particularly vexing question for a country like Finland, which has its presence in both camps, is how to get the EU and NATO to work together and set sights on the same goal. One key factor in producing compatible forces capable of working together in crisis management operations is how well we are able to ensure harmonization and mutual reinforcement in between the NATO response forces – NRF – and the EUBG.

So, how to do that job right? According to that EUBG concept that I described briefly above, the EU will develop a number of multinational battle groups available at short notice to undertake autonomous operations, principally in response to requests from the United Nations. It is clear from this description that the EUBG is complementary with the NRF. For many countries, the EUBG and NRF assets are drawn not only from the same pool of forces, but actually are the very same forces.

Harmonizing between the EUBG and the NRF is therefore crucial. There are at least three areas where the harmonization is crucial. First, commonly defined and agreed, detailed military capability standards and criteria for EUBGs are absolutely necessary. They should be the same for the NRF and the EUBG. Secondly, another area for special

harmonization efforts is the area of training and education. Therefore, the already well-established NATO training program used for the NRF should also be used for EUBG training and exercises. Thirdly, assessment and certification of the earmarked EUBG and NRF units is another important issue. The NATO certification process should be used to the fullest.

Why would somebody from Finland worry so much about harmonizing the EU and NATO rapid response capabilities, you might now wonder? There is a simple answer – since Finland is contributing both to the EU and NATO crisis management capabilities, and because we can afford to have only one set of forces used for both purposes, it is vital for us that the EU and NATO will be able to work together.

The task for both organizations is exactly the same – to get the right type of forces with the right kind of capabilities to a right place at the required state of readiness, and to do it efficiently, economically and rapidly without any unnecessary duplication. That is the reason Finland is here holier than a pop – the EU and NATO will just have to be able to find a way of working together better than they are doing so far.

Ladies and gentlemen, so far I have focused my remarks mainly on global issues, on how we all together could be conducting better the difficult business of crisis management around the world. Let's now, at the end, turn our attention to our immediate neighborhood. What is Finland's security situation like as we are approaching the second decade of the millennium?

In general, Finland is privileged to be located in one of the safest corners of the world. However, given our geographical location, the three main security challenges for Finland today are Russia, Russia, and Russia – and not only for Finland, but for all of us.

It is clear that Russia is, supported by the huge revenues it is reaping from oil and gas, on its way of becoming a world player again. According to the Russian world view, military force is a key element in how it conducts its international relations. As a consequence, there is a determined program to strengthen the Russian military capabilities. If the military program 2006-2015 will be financed as expected, it will mean a much stronger Russia in military terms by the middle of the next decade.

In terms of military capabilities, Russia will have a lot more weight to throw around. Whether it chooses to do it in its immediate neighborhood is another matter. The bronze statue crisis with Estonia raises some disturbing questions. There is no smoking gun that will clearly indicate that the Russian authorities were behind the cyber attacks. Yet, the attacks were well coordinated and gave a foretaste of what could be done in situations where state-level actors would choose to use cyber attacks as a weapon.

Be that as it may, Russia will continue to be a strong regional actor in the high North. Strategic importance of the Kola Peninsula will wake up Russian military interests from their decade-long hibernation, as is attested by the Russian bombers

showing up again in the sea areas around Iceland and northern Scotland. After the well-publicized expedition to the North Pole, the Russian interest in the polar areas is clear, and the Baltic Sea is getting all the more important in the next few years as one of the main routes for Russian energy exports.

Although the Russian suspension of the CFE Treaty can hardly be explained in terms of its growing military interest in the flanks, it is, however, an indication of how far Russia is willing to go to press home a point if it feels its views are not taken into due consideration by NATO.

What does this all mean from the point of view of Finland's national security? I think it would be a foolish – and mistaken – conclusion to draw that the new Russia will threaten Finland's security. This is not the case. What it means, first and foremost, is that those who are at the end of the Cold War were eager to proclaim that the era of geopolitics was over in the north of Europe were just plain wrong. Geopolitics is back, and it is back with force; and we who have the responsibility for Finland's national defense must draw certain conclusions.

At the same time, we see Russia as an opportunity, not only as a challenge. We should be smart about how we draw Russia in to be a responsible player and a partner in our part of the world. Perhaps easier to say than done, but for us in Helsinki, there really is no other choice.

Finally, a few words about the future of Finnish defense. How do we plan to defend our country, especially if we insist on staying outside the alliance? The Finnish government has just nominated a group of experienced government officials – very experienced – to start working on the Defense White Book 2008. What can we expect out of this work?

Without trying to guess the outcome, it will be perhaps safe to say that those who might wish to see radical changes in Finland's defense orientation will most likely be disappointed. There will be certain continuities. Perhaps the most important is the emphasis on maintaining the ability to defend national territory. For that, we will need a high number of trained reserves.

The feature that will stay as a way to train the reserves will be general conscription. That will guarantee both the quantity and quality of national reserves. If we mobilize fully today, we now have an armed force of about 350,000 soldiers. That number will perhaps come down somewhat, maybe to around a quarter of million men. What we have found out is that the Playstation and Nokia generation young men and women just make an excellent soldier when given proper training and equipment. The reservists also form the bulk of our troops in peace-support operations.

It is also important to note that neither of the concepts I have mentioned – neither the defense of territory nor the system of general conscription – will be seriously contested by the Finnish citizens. To the contrary, in the public mind they are the

cornerstones of Finnish national defense, and as such, they are fully supported by the huge majority – more than 80 percent of the population.

There will be of course room to improve the current system. There will be Finnish transformation too. All the opportunities will have to be used to reap the benefits of modern technology. I just paid a visit to the JFCOM and ACT yesterday – commands in Norfolk, Virginia – and realized that Finland is one of the most advanced countries in terms of network-enabled defense (NED) capabilities. It is force multipliers like the NED that we have to develop and carefully nurture in order for us to be able to defend our territory.

Our cooperation in defense procedure matters with the United States is extensive. We fly F-18 Hornets; and we are now in the middle of the midlife updates – MLUs – for these fighters. There will also be discussions on other technology releases during my meetings in Pentagon tomorrow. And it is not a one-way street; there are high-tech defense solutions in Finland that our American friends are interested in.

It is also certain that Finland's strong commitment to participation in international peace support operation is there to stay. Given the future economic constraints, it is role of specialization, use of high-tech contributions, and cooperation with like-minded nations that will be required. But I can guarantee you that the Finnish blue and white flag will continue to be there where well groomed and rigorously trained soldiers are needed for international operations.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in a world where new threats and challenges to stability and security are global, complex, and multidimensional. There are no set solutions that we can apply to these threats and silent challenges. There are different ways of facing the new threats, and there are different tools we can develop to use to defend ourselves when we are threatened.

What I have tried to argue in my brief remarks is that a country like mine might produce the necessary tools in a different way from the others. But the end, the result is similar. We are there to stand up, to protect our common values, to produce security and stability, and even to defend our national territory, whenever and wherever such threats emerge.

I would like to stop here and answer your questions. One last point, though – the new Finnish Government in its government program promised to produce a study on the pros and cons of NATO membership, in order to provide a basis for our future policy orientation. That review will start any day now, and the results will be part of the parcel of the 2008 Defense White Book.

Perhaps this is a good place to stop, now that I have whetted your appetite on the question, to be or not to be. Once again, it has been a real privilege to be here and now I am willing to hear your comments and questions. Thank you.

MS. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. We appreciate those insightful remarks. And I'm sure we're going to have many questions.

I just wanted to start off and ask you, however, a question about the European Defense Agency. We're a couple years into its development. It's been slowly building up its staff, its resources. It is intended, as you know, to address many of the points that you brought up with standardization, acquisition, looking at the EU-NATO relationship to a certain extent. I'd be curious – from Finland's perspective, how would you look back and review EDA's initial first few years out of the gates in its beginning? And what are your expectations for the European Defense Agency in the years ahead?

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Thank you for your question. First of all, Finland has been a strong supporter and active member in EDA work. And I'd say that the idea of EDA is quite similar than EU – the single market in different business areas and also in the defense area. And we all know that the defense material area is quite closed still.

And EDA's work and the purpose is step-by-step open market. And by that, to make European defense industry more stronger, and also there are of course countries who want to create new jobs. But still, have to say that the sticks are quite short at the moment, but we are hoping to reach. And what we need? We need success stories and still they are in the future. But at the moment, I would say this is the situation.

MS. SMITH: Great, thank you. We're going to open up the floor. I'll start with you, sir. Could you introduce yourself before your question?

Q: (Off mike, inaudible.)

MS. SMITH: We're going to have you actually wait for a microphone, if you wouldn't mind.

Q: Mr. Minister, I'm General Acheson, former assistant Army attaché in Helsinki, and now with the Institute of Land Warfare. My question – you inferred that you include women in your draft. And I don't quite understand that. The Lotta Svärd is forbidden by treaty, as I understand it. I would think that that would carry forward to this problem. Can you clarify that – the idea of drafting women into the army, which was forbidden after World War II – at least this Lotta Svärd organization was forbidden. And I wonder if that carried forward to the current lot.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Well, women in the army is now voluntary. And it has been – let's say – it's about 10 or 15 years. And the amount is not very huge. And we, of course, try to promote that more women would go to army, would come to army; not only because through that element we can have good peacekeepers. And what we need in operation is women who has background of being a nurse, or women who has a background of being a teacher, when we are talking about the challenges in crisis management. But so, at the moment, this is the situation.

MS. SMITH: Ann Sopha, in the back, would you wait for the microphone? Please introduce yourself.

Q: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I am Ann Sophia Dodd. I am a Swede, and I am here at CSIS. Thank you so much for your comments. I was wondering if you could comment on the pattern that we are seeing right now of intensified cooperation in the Nordic region with Sweden engaging in very close cooperation in Norway, and with talks about talks setting up a joint Finnish-Swedish navy or naval force. I would be interested in hearing about that, what you think of that, and what that means for Finland.

And also, a second point, as the founder and former president of the Swedish Atlantic Council, I would love to hear some more about the possibility for a Finnish membership in NATO. Thank you.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Are these questions alternatives? A Nordic one or NATO? No, okay. I will start. Yes, we have a good history and a good background of cooperating with Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. And Sweden and Norway did together a report of deepening this cooperation, for example, in the field of training and investment and et cetera.

But we had a ministerial meeting before summer; and we analyzed the work every country is doing. I mentioned that Finland is preparing this white paper 2008; Norway is doing the same. Sweden and Norway has this special work. We agreed to be very open and exchange information in order to find new possibilities for cooperation; not only for saving money, but that's one interest, of course.

So it's very open. And next week, I think there is a meeting with Nordic foreign ministers. And I think this could be on the agenda, but at least when the ministers of defense will meet. So at the moment, we are just analyzing, and this Swedish-Norwegian report is open to Finland, and we can analyze it and maybe join some of the elements if possible. And in political ways, it's very accepted in Finland to do Nordic cooperation.

The second question that the membership of NATO. It's a daily basis question in Finland. And sometimes, I feel that the debate needs more facts. One part of this white paper I mentioned in my speech is that one part is analysis of what NATO membership could bring us, what are the pros and cons, and also the financial approach – how much it cost or how much it will bring to us. And I hope that this fact research would be healthy to Finnish discussion, that it would give more fact background. And it also says in our government program that Finland states that they keep the NATO option open; but at the moment, there are a few steps. And the first step is this white paper, which we believe will be ready next year.

MS. SMITH: I'm going to take two questions here. First and second row, start second; go first. And again, wait for the microphone. We'll lump these two together. Neil, right here.

Q: Good morning. Sanjit Choi (ph), Institute for Defense Analysis. Thank you very much for your splendid remarks. I'd like to follow the previous questions on NRF participation. My understanding is that, Minister, there is close coordination or cooperation between Sweden and Finland, participation in NRF announced in November. However, in light of yesterday's resignation of Swedish defense minister, I was wondering what impact on the joint announcement in November?

And then, follow-up, your comment on NATO review – my understanding is that Ambassador Hamelau (ph) will take a look in those issues along with Ambassador Seeyela (ph). You said you need more justification for host of the membership. However, when you mentioned about important necessity of harmonization of EU and NATO, what else do you need? And I think, one of the best justifications for me is Ambassador Asaloniya's (ph) argument when Finland joined EU, first became a member of an FTA; it paved the way to EU membership. So now Swedes perhaps and Finns now participating in NATO exercises – PFP – and perhaps joining NRF will be the best way to harmonize the EU battle groups in the near future.

And I'd be interested also your views on energy issues and EU as a whole import 25 percent of energy in oil and gas from Russia. What is your views on energy security issues, because there is a disagreement between EU competition commissioner vis-à-vis energy commissioner? Thank you.

MS. SMITH: And let's pass it to you, sir.

Q: Let me reiterate – wonderful comments on EU-NATO relationship, and very helpful. I guess I would ask you –

MS. SMITH: Could you introduce yourself?

Q: Oh, I'm sorry. Mark Clark with the Raytheon Company. I guess I would ask if you could give a few comments on how you see the bilateral relationship with the U.S., which was not in your prepared remarks. Thank you.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Thank you. I will start by answering the lady's questions, even though you had good answers yourself. But concerning NATO response force, it's good to know the background that Finnish and Swedish government announced before elections – it was in March – for something to NATO that in principle they are ready to consider to join the NRF concept. This was about six months ago. And of course, we have shared information after that.

In the Finnish government program, it says that Finland will make decisions based on the experiences what we have from EU battle groups. So I think that the timetable to Finnish government to decide how to forward will be within a couple of months. And there are several options, and one key question is of course resources and timetables, because we are quite committed to certain EUBGs, and Kosovo, and Afghanistan. So we have to analyze very carefully our resources. But the main thing

would be this combination NRF and EUBG, to use same elements also in the Finnish side.

Then you asked about Swedish minister's resign. What's the course of what will happen? I can't say at the moment. What can I say is that during the history, we have a good cooperation; and we have done quite a lot of things at the same time together. But let's see what happens when the new minister starts.

The energy – Russia's energy, especially the growing traffic of oil in the Baltic Sea is, of course, worry to Finland of environmental reasons. And we have to prepare civilian ways to protect and prevent that these accidents don't happen. But it's a more-or-less civilian problem; we see it as an economic civilian question more than a military.

Okay, then the question of bilateral. We appreciate a lot – and it says also in the government program – that we develop transatlantic relations, and we – for example – yesterday when I visited JFCOM and ACT, I heard good example of practical cooperation. And like I said in my speech, we can also give something, especially in the field of telecommunications and net-based development.

Finland is also – we feel that we are a good customer for USA. We have bought F-18, and we are updating them. And we have future questions. So in that respect, it's very important. And these questions will be on the agenda during my meeting.

Q: (Inaudible) – Berry, I'm a reporter for Euro Politics. Just you mentioned cyber attacks, and particularly the Estonia question. Could you talk about how you think the military needs to respond to cyber attacks, given that it's so difficult to trace cyber attacks – your particular government – and also what the military's role could be in the case? And do you think that the response in the Estonian situation was the appropriate one?

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Good question. And there are, I suppose, many examples of cyber attacks after this Estonian case. What can I say is that, for example, we are preparing our white book based on the broad security concept. And if the terrorist was the big threat last time, it's still – but when we are talking about new threats, I think this cyber attack will be a serious case.

I am not expert on that, but I'm sure that we will have to pay very strong attention to this matter and, of course, Finland is really one of the leading countries in this field, when we are talking about preventing cyber attacks. But it's a common problem, and very difficult to prevent because there are no armies behind them; there are individuals who can do these things very easily. They know how to do it.

Q: Thank you very much. Jan Alexander, George Washington University. Just to follow up on the cyber threat, if I may, Minister, ask you where are you going to place the challenge of terrorism within the broad spectrum of threats? For example, this week, there was a report about the arrest in Denmark. Is Finland concerned with, number one,

homegrown terrorism, radicalization – (inaudible) – as well as the international networks such as al Qaeda? And finally, what role do you see for the military to combat terrorism?

MR. HÄKÄMIES: It is, for Finland, we can say, of course, that terror has a different meaning, because we have been luckily outside of these attacks. But of course, when we are talking about terror, what does it affect, for example, to economic life? Then it's also affected Finland. And of course, we are active part. I think the main achievement has been made inside the EU – the police cooperation in EU. And that's one of the key works, key challenges for EU is to develop this to prevent terrorism, immigration, all these things.

Q: My name is Padrizia Padraji (ph). I'm an intern here with the Europe program. And I was wondering if you could tell us more about Finland's contributions, if any, to the new police mission in Afghanistan. Thank you.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Yes, this police mission in Afghanistan is very important. But there are certain problems between NATO and EU. You know them. But we have offered, I think, it's around 10 police to that mission, and we have already there four or five. And the meaning of this police mission is, of course, to train police administration and rule of law, and maybe judges later on. But this is our contribution to this police mission.

Q: Minister, Stephen Flanagan from CSIS. I actually also have a question on Afghanistan. There have been a number of well reported incidents in Afghanistan operations recently, of conflicting mission and operations between the NATO ISAF forces and the U.S. forces operating under Operation Enduring Freedom more in the direct counterterrorism kind of insurgency area. And I wonder if, Mr. Minister, if you and your military commanders have found this to be an enduring problem, and whether still this is something that has to be discussed at higher political levels in terms of sorting out a common operational practices within Afghanistan, or at least harmonization of the efforts of NATO ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom?

And secondly, turning back to the NATO-EU discussions, which you articulated so well, I think Finland has tried to play – particularly during its presidency – a constructive role in moving some of the high-level political discussions off of a dead stop. Do you see any promising avenues of discussion in the coming year or so in terms of moving and advancing the NATO-EU dialogue forward?

MR. HÄKÄMIES: Thank you. First, if I understood right, you asked of cooperation between ISAF and Enduring Freedom. And I'm not expert to say a lot, but when I visited Afghanistan in June and we met the commander of ISAF, I think that this cooperation – for example – in the meaning of avoiding civilian casualties has a very high priority. But there are always in these operations – I don't know if between ISAF and Enduring Freedom – but always in these operations, there is challenges in exchanging information, that everyone has the same information what was done yesterday and what will be done tomorrow, for security reasons.

And also, when NATO members and partnership countries are on the same table, it is one of the themes every time, and it was also in the last meeting. And it's said that the problem is very concrete, and it concerns the security of the troops and also how to develop the work. And I think also, at that table, they are working on it and we are awaiting results, because we are the partnership country.

MS. SMITH: Okay, yes, in the back?

Q: Thank you. Kenoa Abikai (ph), Milton Davis. I have a couple questions related to territorial defense. The one question relates to, you mentioned or there was a mention of the Swedish-Finnish naval working together, and would that lead to a Nordic type navy; in other words, not a Finnish or Swedish navy, but something different?

And the second question relates to the previous activity that Finland had called the civil guards. And the civil guards, as you know, were done away with. But there is some discussion in the papers I'm reading now that the Finnish people would like to see some involvement of the local areas, local militias, in the territorial defense of Finland. Would this bring back the civil guards, maybe under a different name because of the political problems that had developed with them many years ago, or will it just develop a reserve system that is more locally orientated? Thank you.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: You talk about your question about a Nordic navy, and say that – I said previously that we are analyzing carefully in order to find new solutions and to save money. But Nordic navy, at the moment, is – in that field we have a common training and we have common investments – but this is quite ambitious proposal.

About the civil guards, I think one reason – of course – even Finland is so secure country that there is critics in domestic politics concerning budget cuts in police sector. People want to see police on the streets and these kind of things. But at the moment, I don't see it as a – that it goes further.

MS. SMITH: Yes, you had a question, on the end? Maybe we lost our microphones? Okay, we'll have to have you shout. Oh no, we've got one coming.

Q: Thank you. Isabel Williams, I'm with the Nuclear Threat Initiative, NTI. I was just wondering if you could talk about Finland's position on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation priorities. And also, if there was any reaction to the Wall Street Journal ope-ed that was cowritten by Nunn, Schultz, Kissinger, and Perry in January? Thank you.

MR. HÄKÄMIES: (Off mike, inaudible.) I would like to pas this question to our generals. Here – (laughter) –

MS. SMITH: We'll bring the microphone for you, yeah.

MR. : (Inaudible, laughter.)

MR. HÄKÄMIES: That was the reason. I noticed that you were sleeping.
(Laughter.)

MR. : Could you please kindly repeat the question?

Q: Sure. I was wondering if you could just talk a little about Finland's position on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. And also, I wondered if you had any – (inaudible).

MR. : I may be – (inaudible) – here. Of course, Finland, as you know, is a non-nuclear country. We don't have nuclear weapons and we are not actually supporting any nuclear arsenal increase in the world. That's definite. And in population, we are supporting efforts, and that failed, so I don't have any specific details in that respect to give you.

MS. SMITH: Thank you, general, for stepping in so soon. Do we have another final question or two for the minister before we have to send him on his way? Yes, in the back, please?

Q: My name is Alex van Ost (sp). I work at the Foreign Service Institute. In the context of these battle groups you mentioned earlier, you talked about military threats and ethnic violence. But I'm thinking also about environmental emergencies – floods, fires, or an industrial catastrophe. Would Finland be in a position to help out in this situation?

MR. HÄKÄMIES: It's a good question. And at least in my mind, those situations would be possible. If we compare NATO's work, they have helped in Pakistan and in Katrina crisis, et cetera. So at least in theory, and I hope also in practice, it could be a possible choice if something that kind of happens.

MS. SMITH: Great, well, Mr. Minister, thank you so much for making a stop at CSIS while you're here visiting in Washington. We appreciate the full tour de force you gave us on a variety of European and transatlantic issues. And just please join me in thanking the minister for coming by today.

(END)