



FFI Norwegian Defence
Research Establishment

Long-term defence planning in an unsettled security environment

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Background

- Planning for an unknown future is one of the main difficulties in long-term defence planning.
- Scenario-based analyses enable us to plan a flexible force for an uncertain future and a defined level of ambition.
- What is the best approach to review and update our scenarios in an unsettled security environment?



Scenarios in long-term defence planning

Portfolio of scenarios

- A scenario is a description of a hypothetical security challenge where the Armed Forces will be involved.
- The purpose of the scenarios is to establish minimal capability requirements.
- We use the scenario portfolio to interpret and express political levels of ambition.
- Ideally, the portfolio of scenarios should cover the spectrum of relevant security threats.



Scope of the scenario analysis

- The purpose of the scenarios is not to predict future events.
- Scenarios are embedded in a strategic context.
 - Justification of relevance
 - Consistency and plausibility check
- The portfolio contains only national scenarios.
- Other methods are required to analyse capability needs derived from
 - NATO's collective defence
 - bilateral support and reinforcement from allies

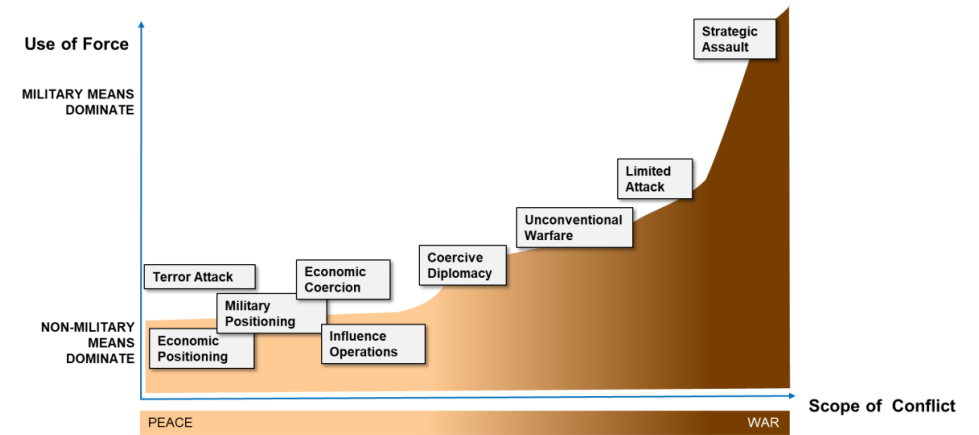


Illustration: Iver Johansen, FFI.



Strategic assault

A *strategic assault* is a scenario where another state (i.e. Russia) takes control over parts of Norwegian territory by substantial use of military force.

The operation includes all domains and is the most comprehensive type of scenario in our portfolio.

The strategic context for such a scenario is a wider conflict between NATO and Russia.

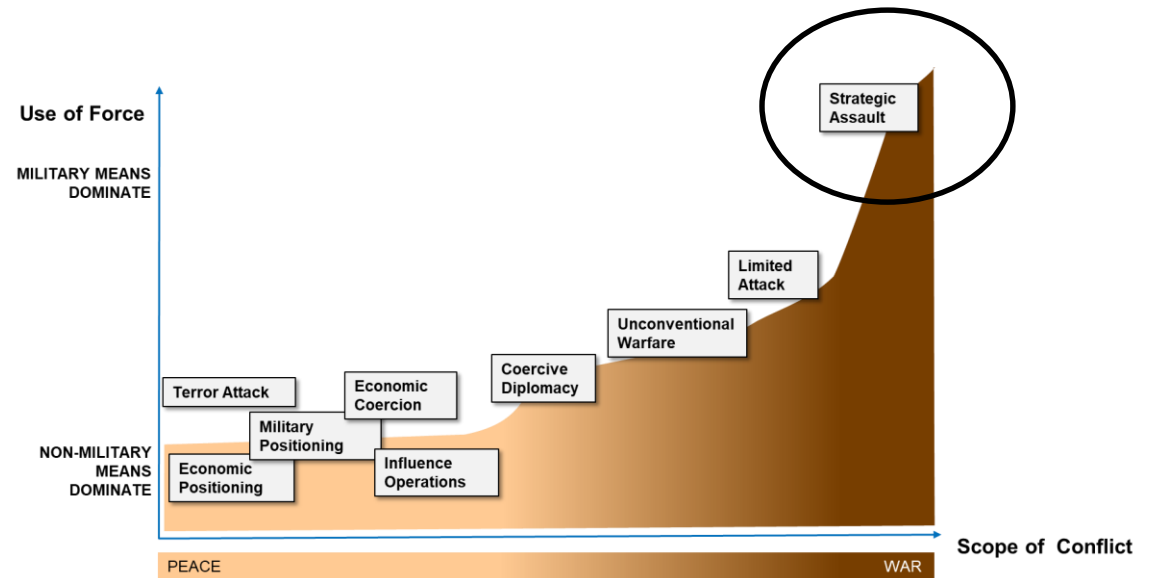
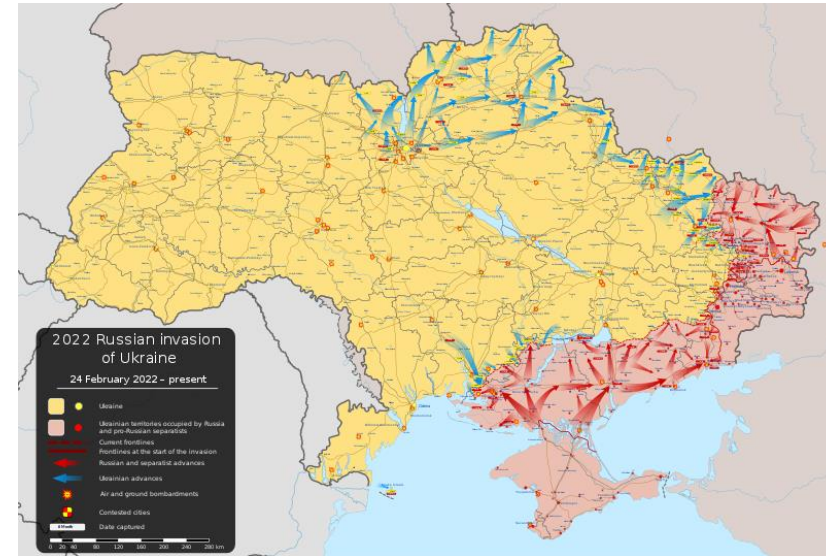


Illustration: Iver Johansen, FFI

Unsettled security environment

Possible observations from the Russian invasion of Ukraine:

- 1. Russia is willing to engage in large-scale military conflict in Europe.*
- 2. Russia spend significant resources.*
- 3. Sweden and Finland are likely to become NATO members.*
- 4. The relevance of nuclear weapons in conflict has increased.*



Map of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Viewsridge, CC BY-SA 4.0 [Creative Commons – Wikipedia](#), via Wikimedia Commons

- How should such observations impact on our analysis?
- And more generally, how can we review our scenario portfolio in a changing and unsettled security environment?

Modelling the strategic context

Method for modelling the strategic context

We apply NATO's Alternative Analysis method
Creative Combinations:

1. Identify dimensions
2. Identify values
3. Consider different combinations

And we add the following step:

4. Evaluate implications for scenarios



NATO, "The NATO Alternative Analysis Handbook," Second edition, 2017.

Step 1 – identify dimensions

Question:

What strategic factors are important for evaluating the plausibility of scenarios in which Russia is the adversary?

Examples of strategic factors:

- *Political, military and economic development in*
 - *Russia*
 - *USA*
 - *EU*
 - *NATO*
 - *China*
- *Swedish and Finnish security relations*
- *Role of nuclear weapons in conflict*
- *Climate change*
- *Technological development*
- *...*

Step 2 – identify values

For each strategic factor, we identify some possible and simplistic lines of development:

- Baseline assessment
- Strengthening of current trend
- Reversed trend
- «Wild card»

The purpose is to describe a range of possible outcomes, and not to evaluate the probability of each of them.

Example: Russian political development

Autocracy

Continuation of current situation.

Increased isolation (towards dictatorship)

Strengthening of today's regime or regime change to a leadership which is worse in Western view.

Western orientation (towards democracy)

Break-down of current regime.

Chaos

Break-down of current regime with subsequent unresolved situation.

Legend:

Baseline assessment
(before February 2022)

Step 3 – consider different combinations

Russia political	Russia military	Russia economic	NATO/EU political	NATO/EU military	US	Sweden and Finland	China
Autocracy	Regional great power	Stagnation	Existing cohesion slowly deteriorating	Slowly increasing capability	Increased security interests in Asia	NATO enhanced partners	Security interests in Asia, economic interests globally
Increased isolation	Increased military capability	Economic growth	Increased cohesion	Significantly increasing capability	Increased security interests in Europe	NATO members	Increased global security interests
Western orientation	Reduced military capability	Economic recession	Disintegration / diverging interests	Reduced capability	International withdrawal	Turn away from NATO	International withdrawal
Chaos	Radical military concepts	Backed by partner				Nordic defence union	Strong Russian supporter

Legend:

A possible strategic context

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Step 4 – evaluate implications

Legend:
A possible strategic context
Decreased plausibility for strategic assault on Norway

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A possible strategic context

Decreased plausibility for strategic assault on Norway

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Western orientation	Reduced military capability	Economic recession	Disintegration / diverging interests	Reduced capability	International withdrawal	Requires rethinking of strategic assault scenarios.	National withdrawal
Chaos	Radical military concepts	Backed by partner				union	Russian supporter

Conclusions and further work

Conclusion and further work

- The purpose of this work has been to identify some important strategic factors and how they impact on our portfolio of scenarios.
- We need to validate our findings by involving a broader range of experts, and work on the cross-impact of the different factors.
- The method allows us to revisit and reevaluate scenario relevance on a regular basis.
- The work demonstrates the usefulness of defining the strategic context explicitly.
- Our findings underline the need for Nordic scenario development when Sweden and Finland join NATO.



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