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## Total Defence: A Comprehensive Approach to National Defence Governance

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DOI - <http://doi.org/10.37502/IJSMR.2023.6511>

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### Abstract

Defence policy, such as total defence (also known as comprehensive defence), are considered a matter of national priority and consensus in some states. Comprehensive defence, viewed as whole government and whole society approach to national defence, plays a critical role in national defence and deterrence credibility. The modern-day concept of comprehensive national defence remains staple in defence planning and the perception of risks to national security as it is based on two fundamental principles – resistance and resilience. Total defence, as a concept, is intended to ensure the best possible utilization of society’s limited resources when it comes to prevention, contingency planning and consequence management across the entire spectrum of crises. The article discusses the idea of comprehensive national defence and represents a basic review of the defence approaches of some states such as Singapore, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Georgia to identify fundamental pillars of comprehensive defence concept.

**Keywords:** Total defence; Comprehensive defence; Comprehensive security; National Defence; National Security.

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### Introduction

A number of security factors that influenced the adoption and implementation of the defence policies / concepts (as a comprehensive approach to national defence) that, in general, encompass the utilisation of all country resources in order to maintain an organised, functional society and to protect the population and the national assets.

Among them total defence (also known as comprehensive defence) occupies a significant place, which includes interoperability among its forces and those of its allies and partners (a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach) (Fiala., 2020). The name of that is now being used to describe a collective defence concept emphasising civil contributions to national security and societal resilience within states (Bērziņa, 2020). It has become an official

government strategy, which encompasses a whole-of-society (Public Sector, Private Sector, Civic Sector) approach to protecting the nation against potential threats requires trust, cohesion and motivation across the whole-of society, which each sector performs a role in creating (NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 2020). A characteristic feature of this comprehensive approach to defence is its coordinated involvement of state institutions, the private sector, civic organizations, and individual citizens in the preparation of defence and its conduct.

The development of the comprehensive defence concept over time provides evidence that it is a highly dynamic concept that is being adapted to the evolving security challenges through addition of new elements that are essential for national defence (Berzina, 2020).

The modern-day concept of comprehensive national defence is based on two fundamental principles – resistance and resilience. Resistance refers to the will and readiness to defend a country in case of military threats. Resilience refers to civilian preparedness to maintain the functioning of society in the event of a crisis, including a military attack. Hybrid threats can be countered if military capabilities are complemented with the society's determination to resist and societal resilience (Berzina, 2020). Resilience is the foundation atop the whole-of-society bedrock. It is defined as "the will and ability to withstand external pressures and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences" in an individual and collective manner. Resilience is built through civil preparedness and is achieved by continually preparing for, mitigating and adapting to potential risks well before a crisis. (Fiala, 2020).

The contemporary concept of comprehensive defence framework incorporates pillars such as: Social and Psychological Defence builds on the qualities of resilience and determination by reinforcing national pride and identity amongst all citizens and residents to overcome any crisis. It also accounts for a nation's ability to communicate factual and accurate information and counter malign messaging; Economic and Essential Services encompasses building and sustaining a strong economy and durable critical infrastructure that can sustain the nation through economic challenges and national emergencies, to include providing essential services to the population; i.e., food, water, medical support, energy, communications, transportation, critical manufacturing, and commercial facilities, financial services and etc; Military Defence is the mandate of the Armed Forces and the responsibility of service members, guided by civilian defence officials, to deter and counter aggression. In some nations military defence includes provisions for civic support to the military, as well as programmes and designated forces established to actively resist in the event of foreign occupation: Cyber Defence focuses on preventing, detecting and providing timely responses to attacks or threats to critical digital infrastructure and information, while ensuring the nation has freedom of manoeuvre required to conduct and support all other Comprehensive Defence functions; Civil Defence focuses on safeguarding all aspects of civilian life from malicious attacks and natural disasters. It accounts for crisis management, emergency management, emergency preparedness, and civil protection, with a particular concentration on emergency operations (prevention, mitigation, preparation, response, recovery); Internal and Border Security are core functions for any comprehensive defence. Internal security includes public safety and law enforcement roles, as well as domestic intelligence. Border security is closely linked to internal security as well as maritime security close to shore and river systems (Fiala, 2020).

Comprehensive defence is planned and executed according to three phases: a. Preparation - During this phase, the nation establishes and maintains the conditions that allow for resilience. The phase is continuous, as the nation ensures all technical and human components of society have the unceasing “will and ability to withstand external pressures and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences.” Along with reducing the tendency for accidents to occur, resilience through integrated whole-of-society preparedness serves as a strong deterrent to malicious acts that may be contemplated by a potential adversary. In short, resilience is the first line of defence against all potentially threatening events; b. Response - Based on indications and warnings, and sometimes only “weak signals” when confronted with malicious hybrid activity, a nation’s response(s) may begin before or after a threat has presented itself. Responses may range from consequence management to information campaigns to armed or unarmed resistance; c. Recovery - After the threat has been addressed, the nation takes the steps necessary to re-establish the conditions that existed prior to the crises. The post-crisis conditions may differ from pre-crisis situation, insofar as lessons and best practices will be incorporated into the new state of affairs creating (NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 2020).

### **Singapore**

Singapore adopted the concept of total defence due to anticipated changes in the nature of armed conflicts, limited state resources, the nature of the society, and the size of the state. The capacity for total defence covers not only the armed forces of Singapore but also the civilian population. Every sector of society is mobilized and has a role to play in ensuring Singapore’s security and defence against all forms of attack, both military and non-military. The Singaporean concept of six defence distinguishes six areas of activity, including: Military defence (It is about having an SAF that is able to deter aggression. A first-class SAF - one that has the capability to act effectively and decisively should deterrence and diplomacy fail - is essential to building a strong Military Defence); Civil defence (It provides for the safety and basic needs of the population so that life may go on as normally as possible during emergencies); Economic defence (It is the government, business and industry organising themselves in such a way that our economy will not break down in war or under the threat of war); Social defence (It is about Singaporeans of all races and religions living and working together in harmony. It refers to every citizen, especially those with the ability, education and training, having the social conscience to contribute to the larger community and country); Digital defence and psychological defence (It refers to the individual citizen’s commitment to the nation and confidence in the future of our country. It is about having pride, passion and patriotism for our country) (A Singapore Government Agency, 2021).

### **Latvia**

The Latvian approach to national defence builds upon the foundations of the model of total defence adopted earlier by the Nordic states. Since 2018, the national defence system of Latvia has been adjusted to new threats and challenges. At present country characterizes its vision to defence as a comprehensive national defence - this understanding of defence means that society is organized to defend the state against all forms of attack, both military and non-military. The Latvian model of comprehensive defence distinguishes the following pillars: military

capabilities, public-private cooperation, public education, civil defence, strategic communication, economic resilience, and psychological resilience (Ministry of Defence, 2019).

The comprehensive state defence system is expected to enable all governmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute to crisis preparedness and management. Such a system will, according to official documents, “ensure resilience against external impacts, resist and recover from major shocks and challenges”.

An important element of Latvian comprehensive national defence are activities aimed at raising public awareness and shaping patriotic attitudes. Latvia has continued its efforts to develop its comprehensive defence system and strengthen society’s resilience. It puts emphasis on the importance of education. A voluntary state defence education covering civil population consciousness and patriotic education has been developing for some time.

The Latvian model of comprehensive national defence stresses the importance of crisis management and civil protection capabilities. It is anticipated that the improvement of civil-military coordination, the allocation of resources, and the harmonization of capabilities may contribute to the improvement of civil-military cooperation, and, consequently, increase the capabilities of the national defence system.

Psychological defence is a part of comprehensive national defence. The psychological defence of society is intended to strengthen its resistance to negative psychological campaigns and operations against the state, processes occurring in the country, specific events, and so on.

One of the elements of Latvia’s comprehensive national defence is ensuring the economic resilience of the state and society. Preserving economic resilience is expected to ensure that essential government services remain intact in the event of disaster or war.

### **Lithuania**

The term ‘total defence’ is used in the founding documents of Lithuania’s defence policy, which emphasizes that the defence of Lithuania is total and unconditional.

Lithuania developed a formula of effective deterrence founded on three pillars: national defence capabilities, NATO deterrence, defence measures and the whole-of-society/total defence approach. An important pillar of Lithuanian deterrence is described as the whole-of-society/total defence approach. This concept rests on the conviction that if society can maintain awareness of threats, it is immune to the disinformation and develops the ability to defend the country. Its defence is supported by education and motivating citizens to defend the state, boost their resilience, and increase non-violent and armed resistance skills (Minister of National Defence, 2022).

### **Estonia**

The Concept of National Security of Estonia, adopted in 2017, promotes a broad approach to national security and defence issues. Security is defined as the ability of the state and its citizens to defend their inherent values and goals against various external political, military, economic,

and social threats and risks, as well as the ability to neutralize these threats and risks (National Security Concept 2022).

Estonian understanding of national defence results in integration of national military defence, activities of all of the governmental ministries, participation of the society in national defence and the protection of the population within comprehensive approach to national defence (Basic National Defence Documents, 2022).

In the National Security Concept, a special chapter was dedicated to the resilience and cohesion of society. It included considerations about the integration of society, strategic communication, and psychological defence to enhance society's resilience based on the assumption that a united society could be less prone to hostile influences (Riigikogu, 2017).

The comprehensive nature of defence is reflected in using both military and non-military capabilities as well as integrating activities and resources from the public and private sectors and civil society - the comprehensive national defence of Estonia develops, therefore: “military defence, the civilian support for military defence, international action, domestic and internal security, maintenance of the continuous operation of the state and society, and psychological defence” (Riigikogu, 2017). This concept favors deterrence as a means for assuring national security.

In order to ensure reliable deterrence and the organisation of effective defence, Estonia pursues the following six main courses of action: Military defence; Civilian sector support to military defence; International efforts; Ensuring internal security; Ensuring vital services; Psychological defence. These six main courses of action, which comprise the structure of national defence, are closely linked, while the activities conducted within their framework support each other. Civil defence, which involves both the timely notification of the population as well as the application of measures required to protect the population, forms an essential part of national defence. Issues that contribute to civil defence are taken into consideration at all levels of national defence.,

### **Poland**

The national security strategy of Poland adopted in May 2020 introduced the term ‘common defence’. That term, along with the state’s resilience, has been discussed as one of the pillars of the security of the state and its citizens. The strategy called for a system of common (comprehensive) defence based on the efforts of the entire country. This defence system was supposed to integrate capabilities and actions of the state and local government institutions, entities of the education and higher education system, local communities, business entities, non-governmental organizations, and citizens (Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolite, 2020).

### **Finland**

In 2017, Finland’s government announced the Security Strategy for Society, which extends the concept of total defence to include the civilian aspect. Its aim is to harmonise the principles of preparedness across various administrative branches. The principles form the concept of comprehensive security, in which all the vital functions of society are jointly safeguarded by

authorities, businesses, organisations, and citizens. They refer to the readiness of response and effective crisis management in various incidents and emergency situations at the central, regional, and individual level (Grzela, Kochanowski, 2022).

The Security Committee defines seven vital functions of Finland's society, which are essential for society to be prepared for different crisis situations: Leadership; International and EU activities; Defence capability; Internal security; Economy, infrastructure and security of supply; Functional capacity of the population and services; Psychological resilience. The vital functions cover all major aspects of social life that are the responsibilities of the government and the relevant ministries.

Finland's comprehensive approach to providing security of the population is viewed as a model for Europe. The Finnish concept of comprehensive security is part of the philosophy of a modern functional model of a country's management, based on political and social consensus (Grzela, 2022).

### **Sweden**

The Swedish Government Bill Total Defence 2021-2025 contains proposals on an overall objective for total defence, new objectives for military and civil defence, the direction of the force structure of the Swedish Armed Forces, changes to the Swedish Armed Forces peacetime organisation, as well as legislative amendments as a result of the Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency's name change. Furthermore, the government bill contains the Government's assessment of both security policy development and the long-term direction of defence and security policy, including for Sweden's international defence partnerships (Bill Total Defence, 2021).

Sweden returned to the total defence concept in 2015 when the defence bill covering the period from 2016 to 2020 was passed (Sydow, 2018). Sweden maintained the Cold War-era name of the concept and retained the idea that total defence primarily consists of military defence and civil defence, which nevertheless are complemented with other elements, such as psychological defence, cyber defence and others (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015, 5). However, in essence, Sweden's total defence system includes the same basic principles put to use elsewhere, where a comprehensive national defence approach might be used: 'The Total Defence concept entails that when the government orders the highest state of alert, all functions of society are engaged in the defence effort, both military and civilian' (Sydow, 2018). To ensure the involvement of the whole of society in national defence, attention should be paid to aspects such as the ability to quickly mobilise military and civilian resources; the ability of the population to provide for themselves in the first days of a crisis; the will of society to defend the state; preparation for wartime conditions; protection of democratic values; countering disinformation; coordination and integration of the efforts of the public and the private sector; creation of material reserves; cyber capability, transportation; healthcare system; cooperation with private enterprises; finances and others (Sydow, 2018).

### **Norway**



The modernised total defence concept encompasses mutual support and cooperation between the Norwegian Armed Forces and civil society in connection with contingency planning, crisis management and consequence management across the entire crisis spectrum - from peace via security policy crisis to armed conflict. Total defence, as a concept, is intended to ensure the best possible utilization of society's limited resources when it comes to prevention, contingency planning and consequence management across the entire spectrum of crises. It is no longer a prerequisite that emergency preparedness legislation enters into force for the support to be said to lie within the framework of the total defence concept. Comprehensive and obligatory civil support to the Norwegian Armed Forces in crisis situations will still be contingent on whether emergency preparedness legislation may be applied. Today, the main principle in respect of civil support to the Norwegian Armed Forces is based to the greatest possible extent on commercial arrangements and cooperation with civil protection and emergency preparedness agencies. This also applies in cases where civil protection and emergency preparedness legislation may be applied (Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2018).

### **Georgia**

The 2008 Russian attack and creeping occupation of Georgia and security environment had a special impact on the development of the concept of total defense of Georgia.

The concept "total defense" is given in National Security Concept of Georgia (2011), where it is stated that "Georgia's defense planning is based on the principle of "total defense, the successful implementation of which requires the introduction of a civil defense system, the development of appropriate infrastructure, and the creation of an effective military reserve system.

Total defense was mentioned in the 2017 "Strategic Review", according to the indicated that, resistance will persist in both traditional and unconventional methods. The establishment of the civil defense system, the growth of the necessary infrastructure, and the development of a good reserve and mobilization system are all necessary for the approach's successful implementation.

From 2017, the term "total defence" appears in the guidance documents of the Ministry of Defence. In particular, the introduction states that "effective defense planning should be based on a total defence approach which involves providing defence throughout the country, with the full national effort, using both military and civilian resources." This approach envisages the continuation of resistance in both conventional and unconventional ways. The successful implementation of the approach requires the introduction of a civil defence system, the development of an appropriate infrastructure and the creation of an effective system of reserve and mobilization. Within the framework of the total defence approach, the following should be implemented: Strengthening the process of interagency cooperation and coordination in order to consolidate state resources in times of crisis/war; Development of mobile and combat-capable armed forces based on the balance of active and reserve forces in order to ensure the country's defence; Establishment of a new reserve and mobilization system which will be aimed at improving the quality of the training of reservists, their management and control and the broad involvement of the population in ensuring the country's defence. It should be noted that

this document shows serious considerations about the need for total defence and its organization (Surmava, 2021).

Much of the Minister's Directives for 2018 were devoted to total defense. There is nothing fundamentally new in this document other than mentioning the important role of strategic communications and cooperation with the Scandinavian and Baltic countries which is really important if we take this issue seriously. The Minister's Directives of 2019 actually repeat the content of the similar document of the previous year (Surmava, 2021).

According to the Defence Code draft (to be considered by the Parliament), organization of national defence based on the approach of total defense (definition by the Defence Code draft - the use of military and civilian resources and assets by a state against a superior adversary to provide national defence that serves to achieve national resilience), strengthening of national resilience (definition by the Defence Code draft - maintaining constant pressure on the enemy by military and non-military methods, which will prevent him from establishing full or partial control over the territory of the country), organization of national resistance (definition by the Defence Code draft - the ability of the state and society to withstand external military and non-military impacts, cope with the consequences of said impacts and be able to maintain/restore normal functioning).

### **Conclusion**

Conducted research shows: understanding the fluid nature of the total defence (as a comprehensive approach to national defence policy) is important for any states especially small states in focusing their defence policies on the specific context and security risks of their strategic environment; total defence (as a comprehensive approach to national defence governance) concept represents a modern functional model of a country's management, based on political and social consensus (a "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach) based on two fundamental pillars – national resistance and national resilience.

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