Developing a National Security Policy/Strategy: A Roadmap

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Abstract: The paper aims to demonstrate how the political process of developing national consensus on a new or revised national security strategy (NSS) can be facilitated, with an emphasis on the decision-making logic behind such a process. It is meant as a 'roadmap' for how a national security policy (NSP) could be developed and extended to become a fully fledged NSS. The paper outlines key concepts and definitions and discusses seven 'building blocks' in the development of an NSP, including implications of decisions regarding alternative options. Subsequently, the paper discusses ten additional topical 'building blocks' that may help in developing a NSP into a NSS. The 17 'building blocks' discussed are not exhaustive, and supplementary issues may also play a role and be seen as politically important, given the individual circumstances and unique features of a specific country. Nevertheless, many challenges and issues of NSP development are universally shared.

Keywords: Security concepts, national security policy, national security strategy, security sector governance
Sicherheitskonzepte, nationale Sicherheitspolitik, nationale Sicherheitsstrategie, Sicherheitssektor-Governance

1. Introduction

Most countries have what will in this paper be called a national security policy (NSP). The scope of an NSP may vary and the policy may be defined and expressed in various ways – in one comprehensive document or with elements split between several sectoral documents. When an NSP includes *how* to achieve a country's main security objectives – the means or *instruments* – the name normally changes to national security strategy (NSS). A strategy without policy is not a strategy, and a policy without any notion of how its stated objectives are to be achieved and defined security interests protected is not a strategy. In terms of process, it seems logical to start by defining the NSP and then to proceed, as the next step, to developing the NSS.

The purpose of the paper is *not* to give specific advice or recommendations on what an NSP for a given country ought to look like in terms of substance. Rather, it aims to demonstrate how a political process to reach national agreement on a new NSS may be facilitated – with a clear emphasis on the decision-making logic behind such a process. In other words, it is meant as a 'roadmap' for how an NSP may be developed, including how it may be extended to become an NSS. This paper draws heavily on the author's practical experience in the Norwegian Ministry of Defence[1] and in assisting security sector reform (SSR) in other countries, particularly in Southeast Europe.

This paper starts with a brief outline of key concepts and definitions. The next step outlines some of the main 'building blocks' in the development of an NSP and some of the implications of a choice among alternative options. And, finally, the paper discusses some additional topical 'building blocks' that may help in developing the NSP into an NSS.

2. Key Concepts and Definitions

In a complex security environment, the definition of the concept of security on which an NSP/NSS is based – explicitly or implicitly – must be broad in order to be useful. A traditional and narrow notion of 'national security' defined in military terms is insufficient. A modern concept of security must take all significant and diverse aspects of security into account, thus a definition may include three basic dimensions: state, societal and human security. *State security*, representing a fundamental security requirement, includes a situation in which the state may be facing an existential threat that legitimises the use of all its available resources in defence. Traditionally, state security has been linked to territorial integrity (territorial defence), but it also comprises the state's political sovereignty. *Societal security* aims to provide the civilian population with security and protection, including safeguarding key public functions and vital infrastructure against assault and damage in situations in which the state's survival or sovereignty as such is not at stake.[2] Threats against societal security may be man-made, but grave accidents or catastrophes can also create severe damage. Finally, *human security* relates to the protection of individuals and groups of people, in particular in situations when their human rights, right to life and personal security are threatened. Human security is closely linked to the principle of 'responsibility to protect', which has increasingly been gaining ground. In sum, the conceptual division into three 'types' of security should principally be seen as an analytical as well as

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1 The author's previous work on this topic is reflected in a number of official documents issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Defence. See 'Capable Force. Strategic Concept for the Norwegian Armed Forces', Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2009, available at www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/ Capable-force_strategic-concept.pdf. The first version, 'Relevant Force', was published in 2005 and is available at www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/ Dokumenter/Relevant_force.pdf.

2 In some countries a different terminology is used for basically the same thing, for example 'homeland security' in the United States and 'resilience' in the United Kingdom.

an operational tool, to encompass better the complexity of the security challenges a country may face, and help it adapt to those challenges in a globalised environment.

It is useful to connect the conceptual aspects of 'security' to what is frequently in an NSP/NSS referred to as 'threats, risks and challenges'. *Threat* is typically created by man, and has to be seen in light of both capabilities and intentions. A capability (for example superior military force) is not a threat by itself, as long as there is no intention to use it (for example against a smaller neighbour). Intentions may change, however, and can also be hard to ascertain with a sufficient degree of certainty. Such a situation is likely to cause uncertainty, which contradicts the need for security. The notion of 'potential threat' is an expression of such uncertainty, as is 'risk'. *Risk* is linked to damage inflicted by both man and nature; it is the product of the consequences of an event and the likelihood that the event will take place. In these cases, intention may become secondary or irrelevant. In short, the security of a particular country may be subject to considerable risk even when it is not facing a direct or potential threat. Finally, security *challenges* refer to more general trends and developments that may have implications for a country's security – both in the short and in the longer term. Hence, global warming may be seen as a security challenge even if its concrete implications may be hard to ascertain at present. For countries that are particularly vulnerable to certain implications of global warming, however, like higher sea levels or more extreme weather patterns, climate change already represents a security *risk*.

The term *policy* is used in a variety of ways and frequently means different things. A general problem is that often the term is not defined and may even be used differently within the same document. Therefore, when an NSP is drafted, it is advisable to establish a clear and shared understanding of what is meant by policy. In this paper, policy is seen as a standard for decision-making. Specific policy action, as a consequence, should be seen as the *implementation* of policy. Therefore, under circumstances to which the established policy seems badly adapted, action may deviate from what the policy would normally call for, or the policy may be changed. In sum, action will normally be based on both policy and situational factors, which justifies a distinction between policy and action.

A *national security policy* serves as a common and agreed reference point for a country's decision-makers and helps them keep a reasonable degree of consistency in their day-to-day decisions. It also helps them to prioritise – to keep in mind what is important and what is less so, in terms of both security interests and security objectives. In short, an NSP provides a country's decision-makers with a common basis in their handling of and responses to information and events which represent threats, risks, challenges or opportunities to the country's security understood in a broad sense (as defined above). The most important benefit of an NSP, in fact, may be to have reached a shared understanding on security objectives and priority interests.

The term *strategy* is understood as a plan of action designed to achieve a future desirable state of affairs. Its Greek origin refers to the military domain – the 'office of general' or 'generalship'.

In other words, strategy encompasses the direction and scope of a course of action – normally including many separate steps – designed to achieve certain desired results by overcoming various kinds of obstacles and, sometimes, to defeat an opponent. In a similar way as the term 'policy' is defined as a standard for decision-making, a strategy may also be seen as a standard for decision-making. However, while 'policy' is a rather general standard, 'strategy' goes much further and implies a pre-calculated plan of action over the longer term, through active use of a number of different instruments. Instead of primarily stating a desired state of affairs (safeguarding defined interests and achieving defined objectives), strategy includes a course of action and the instruments needed to carry it out. A *national security strategy*, therefore, as opposed to a national security policy, details the necessary instruments to implement the NSP, how these instruments should be employed over a longer period of time and how they should be used together in order to create synergy. In sum, while an NSP states what a country wants to achieve, the NSS includes *how* to go about doing it. This basic difference is behind the sequential approach of this paper: first to define the NSP and then proceed, as the next step, to developing the NSS.

Neither an NSP nor an NSS can be static: it is necessary to review such documents regularly and adapt them to changing circumstances – both international and domestic. Domestic change with new political groups gaining power or becoming more directly involved in national politics, including the implications of a new constitution, may sometimes cause a major reorientation of foreign and security policies and related strategies. Strategic or geopolitical change externally – in particular international discontinuities caused by major wars or, as happened only a couple of decades ago, the end of the Cold War – will frequently require substantial policy reorientation.

3. Main 'Building Blocks' in the Development of a National Security Policy

Disregarding whether or not we are talking about a new or a revised NSP, a good start would be to analyse what the answers to a series of basic questions should be. The topics of these questions may be considered as issue areas that are likely to represent major 'building blocks' of an NSP, and the answers or political positions that are agreed would subsequently represent key components of the NSP. Seven such topical issue areas will be presented and briefly discussed.

1) What should be the security vision *of the country (the desired future situation)?* It is advisable to start the discussion on a new or revised NSP by asking what the future security situation ideally should look like. Such a *vision* of the desired future would be closely linked to the particular cultural and political values of the country, even if a number of values might be considered fairly universal. 'Peace' is such a universal value – peace *vis-à-vis* the outside world, and peace within (peaceful relations between different groups of the population, including religious groups, different regions, the population and its government, etc., to name a few aspects). Security and social justice for the entire

population are other values that may be important, as well as the resolution of conflicts that might threaten the country's peace and stability unless they are resolved or handled properly. A discussion and agreement on a security vision of the future may serve as a fruitful starting point to help focus discussions and positions on other issues – difficult issues in particular. When subsequently facing politically contentious issues, the approach could be to find answers and solutions that would contribute in a positive way towards the overall security vision. Early agreement on such a 'guiding vision' may thus prove helpful.

2) What are the main security interests*, and which ones should be given the highest priority?* Interests and values may overlap or, rather, interests may be a consequence of values and not simply of material realities. Security interests are obviously directly linked to the various dimensions covered by a broad concept of security. Consequently, a fairly universal security interest would be the protection of the country's territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Many other and more specific security interests may be a direct result of the situation in which a given country finds itself, including its geographical location, the particular character of its neighbours, its economic, political and military capabilities and dependencies, etc. To make a concrete list of security interests, with a distinction between what is most important and the more secondary interests, provides a basis for evaluating how to guard and protect these interests. A *priority list* of national security interests provides an essential basis for a later national security *strategy*, as the latter includes an evaluation of the *instruments* needed to promote and protect them. Note that a key instrument for providing security may subsequently be considered as a security interest in its own right (for example, countries that rely on a military alliance for their state security may consider it a vital security interest to keep that alliance credible and effective).

3) What is the general nature of the country's external *(international) security environment?* A thorough analysis and understanding of a country's international setting is a fundamental basis for formulating an NSP. Such an analysis may distinguish between the *regional setting*, including the characteristics of the neighbouring states and the nature of the country's relationship with them, and the more *global setting*. Global great-power competition or rivalry, especially if it has or may have regional consequences, will obviously be directly relevant. Furthermore, a more multi-polar global system may have specific local consequences. The analysis of the international setting of a country, with a particular emphasis on security, provides a good basis for the logical follow-up step: to analyse and assess the (potential) security threats, risks and challenges the country may be facing, as well as the opportunities. Such a comprehensive analysis is, obviously, at the heart of an NSP.

4) What is the general nature of the internal *(domestic) security environment?* While the international setting for a country's security is a key issue area, the domestic setting is important as well. One aspect may be that sometimes external and internal issues are connected. Indeed, since 9/11 and its aftermath, the distinction between external and internal security has increasingly been blurred. More important, perhaps, is that potential or unresolved domestic problems may have

serious external security repercussions. While an analysis should be cautious in defining specific groups of people, or certain political convictions, as 'domestic enemies', a proper understanding of actual or latent domestic conflicts as security risks – or even potential threats – is a good starting point to help formulate policies that may reduce and resolve such conflicts. In this respect, the initial focus on a 'security vision' (see point 1 above) for the country might be a helpful tool. Within a broad concept of security, relevant physical, climatic and other characteristics of a country that may have a potential impact on societal security should be included as part of the domestic setting. Especially the potential for serious natural disasters (earthquakes, flooding, mudslides, etc.) should be analysed and included as a necessary input in the subsequent evaluation of internal threats, risks and challenges.

5) What are the security threats*, risks, and* challenges*?* The notion of security threats, risks and challenges points to the *impact* these may have on a country's security. The focus has traditionally been on external factors; however, as argued above, internal security issues must be considered as well. Security threats, risks and challenges should, to the extent possible, be directly linked to the security interests already defined and to the different dimensions of the security concept (state security, the different aspects of societal security, human security). That will be helpful for the drafting of the NSP document. Finally, *transnational* threats or security risks should not be forgotten. The same applies to the role of non-state actors.

6) What are the roles *of the main political institutions and security agencies?* Once external and internal security threats, risks and challenges have been identified, it might be useful to list what the roles of the main political institutions and security agencies should or might be in addressing them. Most security threats, risks and challenges require responses from several institutions and agencies, and that requires cooperation and coordination among them. Once the focus shifts from the formulation of policy to the instruments for its *implementation*, a good understanding of roles, responsibilities, division of labour, problems related to authority and lines of command, as well as problems of cooperation and coordination, is essential. It may be useful to bear in mind that in most countries, security agencies responsible for internal security are separate from those related to external security, although this formerly clear distinction has to some extent become blurred in the aftermath of 9/11 and with the advent of accelerated globalisation.

7) What is the appropriate process *in formulating a (new) NSP that includes* both *external and internal security and promotes accountability?* How policies are developed and subsequently adopted is closely linked to a country's political system. It is also a function of how *inclusive* the process is and how it is designed to facilitate an outcome based on a broad national consensus. Sometimes the council of ministers or president may appoint a broadly representative *commission* to study the issue and come up with policy recommendations to achieve inclusiveness and broad consensus. A more frequent procedure, perhaps, is that the NSP is developed within the executive branch of government, through an inter-ministerial process; for example, led by the office of the prime minister or a national security council. Inclusiveness in the drafting beyond the

executive branch may in that case be achieved through a public hearing process that includes all stakeholders and civil society organisations, before the final draft is submitted to parliament to be discussed, noted or endorsed. In some countries in transition the NSP may be drafted by the parliament itself, through a special committee.

4. Developing a National Security Policy into a National Security Strategy

Once an NSP is to be developed further to become a fully fledged national security *strategy*, the political and institutional order of a country becomes crucial. As already noted a strategy includes the *instruments* to implement the NSP, and instruments – state institutions and agencies, including their roles and responsibilities – are closely connected to the constitutional order and national institutional set-up. Just as an NSP may be formulated on the basis of answers to a series of key questions and issue areas – 'building blocks', as they are called above – developing the NSP into a national security *strategy* may be pursued in a similar way. Here, ten central topics or building blocks that normally will have to be addressed during the drafting process of an NSS will be discussed. They build on the previous discussion of key elements in the development of an NSP, and thus represent an *extension* of the first seven building blocks.

8) What should be the scope *of the country's national security strategy?* Scope in this context refers to which dimensions of security should be included in the NSS. Should it cover external security only? That more or less implies a dominant focus on 'state security'. Or should the NSS encompass both external and internal security, but be limited to a focus on 'state security' and the domestic political order? Or should it cover all main aspects of *both* external and internal security, based on a broad and comprehensive concept of security? This is where the definition of the concept of 'security' becomes part of the equation: should the NSS encompass all three dimensions – state security, societal security and human security? Internationally, the trend in recent years has been in the direction of a comprehensive NSS based on a broad concept of security. Note, however, that most countries operate a distinction between 'security' and 'safety' – the latter referring to food safety, construction codes, traffic safety and other issues that are better covered elsewhere than in an NSS.

9) How should the country's fundamental security objectives *be formulated?* Defining a limited number of fundamental security objectives is useful as they may serve as guidelines for defining more specific objectives for the various institutions and agencies that have roles and responsibilities in the field of security. The security *vision* of the country (point 1) is a relevant initial input. The answer to the question of *scope* (point 8) obviously helps to determine which institutions and agencies are relevant in terms of defining secondary-level *sectoral* objectives as subsets. Each of these institutions and agencies may be considered to be an instrument, and defining their specific objectives helps to determine their tasks and needed competencies. Furthermore, such secondary sectoral objectives contribute to establishing

complementary responsibilities – which again helps to streamline and organise the entire security sector better. The formulation of fundamental and secondary-level security objectives may also be useful in terms of how the implementation of an NSS is managed. *Management by objectives* is an approach that focuses on the desired *results* of policy implementation. In line with the division of roles and responsibilities of the various instruments, specific objectives for each relevant security agency should be defined as *subsets* of the fundamental security objectives. As noted, such secondary-level and sector-specific objectives may help defining and delimiting the *tasks* in the field of security for these agencies and institutions. Once the tasks are defined, requirements concerning the needed *resources* (personnel, equipment, operating budget, etc.) may be determined, in line with the set level of ambition. As accountability is key to good implementation, and the responsible actors within a country's security sector should be no exception, all actors should be made accountable for whether the objectives defined in the NSS are reached within their area of responsibility.

10) What should be the country's main approach (strategy) concerning international relationships*?* For most countries the answer to the above question is at the *core* of a national security strategy. The overall security vision (point 1), evaluation of main security interests (point 2) and nature of the international security environment (point 3), and frequently also of the domestic security environment (point 4), as well as the conclusions concerning security threats, risks and challenges (point 5), are crucial input factors. The same applies to the country's fundamental security objectives (point 9). Determining the approach and strategy concerning international relationships should include both *bilateral* and *multilateral* relationships and encompass the *regional* setting as well as the *global*. Different kinds of relationships may have to be balanced *vis-à-vis* one another – how ow to do that in an optimal way is not always easy, as complex considerations may include several and sometimes competing answers and trade-offs. Generally speaking, historical and geographic factors, a country's relationship with its neighbours, its own national value priorities, its economic and military potential, dependencies, estimated security threats, etc., will determine its approach towards the external world. Traditionally, three different and fundamental answers in that respect have been *isolationism*, *neutrality* and *alliances*. Isolationism has become rather irrelevant in a world characterised by interdependence and globalisation. A policy of neutrality has frequently been the response to the potentials for conflict between other states in one's neighbourhood – especially in cases where a smaller country wants to stay out of rivalries between two great powers. Alliances have normally been a response to (potential) external threats – to reduce one's own vulnerabilities and/or exposure to intimidation, and to deter the use of force or a military attack. Today, closer *integration* with 'like-minded' states, normally at a regional level, may be seen as a fourth fundamental answer to a country's relations with the outside world.

11) Which security institutions and agencies should have the lead roles *in the implementation of the NSS, and which should have* supporting roles*?* Once again, the scope of the NSS (point 8) will be a determining factor. Instruments in NSS

implementation should, to the extent possible, be defined in terms of *functional* responsibilities; however, especially with a broad definition of the concept of security, many different institutions and agencies may have a role to play in the same policy area. The result may be some grey zones of partly overlapping responsibilities. Consequently, it may be useful to specify the actual roles further at the outset, like 'lead' and 'supporting role'. Some instruments may have only (or primarily) *external* responsibilities. Examples include the armed forces (although they may have a supporting role domestically in the field of societal security), the ministry of foreign affairs, the diplomatic service and the external intelligence service (normally there is an institutional split between external and domestic intelligence). Generally, there should be fairly *complementary* roles in terms of external responsibilities and tasks, based on a functional division of labour. In case of need, the 'lead role' of an institution within a specific issue area may be determined. The same applies to instruments with *internal* responsibilities. They will normally not have external responsibilities in addition but may, in many cases, have slightly overlapping roles among themselves. In that case much emphasis should be given to defining roles and responsibilities as clearly as possible in terms of a *division of labour*. In the field of societal security and other complex and multi-dimensional issues, a definition of lead roles versus supporting roles may prove crucial. Difficult political challenges like, for example, emergency response in crisis situations demand clear lines of command and no ambiguity concerning who has the authoritative *coordinating* role – overall and within specific areas of responsibility. While the president and/or council of ministers/prime minister obviously have responsibilities that combine external and internal security, ministries and their subordinate security agencies will have more narrowly defined roles and responsibilities. They may, as already noted, be considered as *instruments* in the implementation of the NSS. Detailed rules and regulations – especially for the subordinate security agencies – may be defined in separate second-order documents.

12) What should be the role and responsibilities of a national security council *(NSC) and how should such a council be composed?* Not all countries have a designated national security council, even if many of the *functions* of such an institution are normally there. Parliamentary democracies may, for example, include a special sub-committee of the council of ministers. In short, the composition, role and powers of an NSC or equivalent institution may vary considerably. The establishment of an NSC may be based on provisions about national security in the constitution, or on a separate law on national security. We may distinguish between four general 'models': a senior civil servant body composed of representatives of the main security institutions/agencies, with an *advisory* role to the president/prime minister or council of ministers (depending on the constitutional system); a senior civil servant body composed of representatives of the main security institutions/agencies, with an *advisory* role to the president/prime minister or council of ministers but also with an authoritative *coordinating* role *vis-à-vis* the security agencies, in accordance with political guidance/instructions received from the president/prime minister or council of ministers; a high-level body composed of the heads of the main security institutions/agencies and ministers responsible for external and internal security, chaired by the prime minister or president (as determined by the constitution or other legislation), with an *advisory* role to the president/prime minister or council of ministers and an authoritative *coordinating* role *vis-à-vis* the security agencies; and a high-level body composed of the heads of the main security institutions/agencies and ministers responsible for external and internal security, chaired by the prime minister or president (as determined by the constitution or other legislation), with a *decision-making* role on important security issues and an authoritative *coordinating* role *vis-à-vis* the security agencies.[3] In sum, an NSC – or similar institution – will be tailored according to constitutional provisions and/or other legal provisions (for example, a separate law on national security). This underscores the close relationship between the constitutional order, the country's governmental structure and the role and functions of an NSC.

13) What should be the procedures *for national security* decision-making? Again, the answer to the question will depend on the constitutional order and other legal provisions. One possibility is to detail the procedures for national security decision-making in a separate law on national security. Another solution would be to include such procedures as part of the NSS document itself. Regardless of how the decision-making procedures are provided in legal terms, the substance of the procedures will be closely related to the roles and responsibilities of the relevant governmental institutions and security agencies. The question of lead versus supporting roles, as discussed above (point 11), will obviously influence the procedures to a large extent.

14) Implementing *the NSS: what are the requirements concerning instruments and capabilities?* A strategy without physical instruments to implement it (institutions, people, competences, budgets, equipment) will remain a paper exercise. Budgets and budgetary planning represent a separate political process in which the executive branch proposes and the parliament decides. Defining the appropriate levels of ambition for the institutions concerned is closely linked to the amount of resources that are made available. An important issue is whether the *capabilities* of the instruments for implementing the NSS should be detailed in the NSS document itself, or whether it should only provide some *general* guidelines on such matters (that is, limiting itself to the roles and responsibilities of the relevant security institutions and agencies). The most flexible answer is to avoid including very specific and detailed provisions in the NSS and leave that to subordinate and supplementary documents (see point 15).

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3   In some countries with the latter kind of NSC, representatives of parliament may also be members, for example the president of the parliament and/or the chairperson of the standing committee on security and defence. A problem with that approach, however, is that it may conflict with the normal political lines of command and normal constitutional division of power between the executive versus the legislative branch of government. Decision-making authority in the field of security policy will normally belong to the executive branch (president or council of ministers), with the legislative branch having control and oversight functions. Furthermore, the last 'model' also implies decision-making powers for security institutions and agencies that are *subordinate* to the political level of the executive branch. That is hardly in line with basic democratic principles.

15) How should a hierarchy *of national security documents be organised?* Provided that the NSS only includes general guidelines concerning capabilities and other aspects of the strategy's implementation, more *detailed* and *specific* provisions will need to be set out in other documents. In that respect, the approach would be to determine which additional documents subordinate to the NSS will be needed, and organise them in a document *hierarchy*. In practical terms an easily manageable and flexible solution would be separate strategy (or planning) documents for each main instrument in the security sector, defined as being at a lower level in the document hierarchy than the NSS (for example a military strategy document, police strategy document, intelligence strategy document, etc.). And even though certain general requirements concerning capabilities may be included as part of separate laws like a law on the armed forces, law on the police and law on intelligence, such more detailed follow-up documents subordinate to the NSS seem advisable. These documents might also be the natural place to define and detail *sectoral* security objectives, based on the country's fundamental security objectives (point 9). In sum, separate documents that may be more easily adjusted than legal provisions, in accordance with evolving circumstances, are preferable since they provide greater flexibility. The documents subordinate to the NSS may still be presented to parliament, discussed and noted or endorsed.

16) How often should the NSS be reviewed and updated*, and under what* procedures*?* If not regulated by law, like a law on national security, the NSS document may include a provision about a review and update at regular intervals (for example, every four or five years). Alternatively, such a review/update may be subject to a specific political decision when seen as appropriate. To determine the review/update procedures *in advance* may be helpful in promoting national consensus and predictability in the field of national security decision-making. The procedures for how to review/update the NSS may be part of the document. Such provisions may also be included in a law on national security or other legal provisions for national security decision-making. Another possibility is to include the procedures in a law on the national security council.

17) Should the NSS be a classified *or* publicly available *document?* The traditional approach in many parts of the world has been to consider an NSS – contrary to the NSP – a politically very sensitive and therefore highly classified document. The international trend after the end of the Cold War, however, has been to make such documents publicly available. Hence they will be subject to *political scrutiny*, both domestically and internationally. There are many reasons for this change. Greater emphasis on democratic openness and transparency is one, and the disappearance for a large number of countries of an existential external threat is another. A general international trend towards *cooperative security* and *confidence-building* may be seen as both a consequence of and a driver towards greater transparency. In short, a publicly available NSS enhances political accountability and democratic

involvement domestically, and helps a country's entire security sector to operate in a more coordinated and efficient fashion. To promote a shared national understanding in the field of security, a publicly available document is preferable. To the outside world a public document clearly signals what the country considers to be its legitimate security interests, and it enhances regional and global transparency by openly stating objectives and intentions. While this may leave room for an element of deceit *vis-à-vis* particular neighbours or potential adversaries, governments in democratic countries can hardly afford to mislead their own populations, as that may cause serious electoral backlash. Hence, in democracies a publicly available NSS may be considered to be a quite *valid* presentation of true political objectives and intentions. In some cases the various drafts during the process of developing the NSS may be considered confidential, while the final document will be made public. And sometimes a country may decide to finalise the NSS in two versions: a publicly available document, and a more detailed and therefore politically sensitive document that remains classified. In other cases the NSS itself may be public while the sectoral implementation documents may not.

5. Conclusion

This paper has outlined and discussed some main topics and issues that may be included in the drafting of a national security policy. It also points to some additional issues that are of relevance once the NSP is developed further into a national security *strategy*. The 17 topics discussed above are not exhaustive, and supplementary issues may play a role and be seen as politically important, given the individual circumstances and unique features of a specific country. In addition, the border for when an NSP should be considered an NSS is not a fixed line but rather a very flexible one. A number of the issue areas listed here as a further development towards a national security strategy may also be included in a document called a national security policy.

The intention of this paper is to present and discuss a number of basic questions whose answers may be seen as 'building blocks' for the drafting of either an NSP or a fully fledged NSS. However, it would go too far to consider the presentation as a recipe for what should be included in such documents and how they should be drafted. It would be more fitting to consider the paper as 'food for thought' and a potential 'roadmap'. In the end, the particular domestic and international situation of a given country, with its political traditions, visions and values, challenges and opportunities, will be decisive. Nevertheless, there are certain challenges and issues that are universally shared – beyond the unique features of each individual state and its particular domestic and international setting. This paper has attempted to list the most important ones.