

Veterans and victims of war have ample experience of what happens when politics fail. Be it a traditional international war between states or an internal violent clash of conflicting interests inside a country. The consequences of a failure to mobilize sufficient leadership to reach out to competing forces before hostilities have become more or less irreversible more often than not means large scale suffering for generations to come.

If human civilisation is anything, it is institutions and methods that in preconceived and agreed ways handle human fragility and vanity. Negotiations however tedious are almost always to be preferred to violent means.

The United Nations and the World Veteran Federation are two such institutions that strive to make the world a little bit more orderly and peaceful. As such they both deserve our full support.

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I'm but a national parliamentarian from Sweden's third biggest city Malmö situated in the Southern part of the country. If you've seen a televised musical contest recently you might just know of this town right across the narrow strait from Copenhagen.

It is my duty as an elected representative to defend the liberal values in which I believe and which got me elected. But I and my colleagues in Parliament must differentiate between policy, which we might or might not agree upon, and our fundamental obligation to express solidarity and a great deal of appreciation for the individual service rendered by all personnel military or civilian who in often difficult circumstances did their best to carry out Swedish official policy in conflicts abroad.

The same holds true to the families and relatives of those who serve in foreign countries. Their wellbeing at home is a prerequisite for those deployed men and women to do a good job in an often far away and dangerous place.

I'm not going to give you a complete list of what Sweden has or has not done for veterans. Whatever we have done has clearly been inspired by neighbouring countries with a far longer and more profound experience of caring for veterans and their relatives. We don't, at least not yet, have a Veteran Centre such as Baereia in Norway or a Veterans Institute as in the Netherlands. Furthermore I'm not an official government representative and thus should not try to speak as one.

Rather than that, I will try to explain my own personal view on Sweden's relations to the European Union and NATO and the potential importance that veteran affairs possibly can play for the multinational integration of defence efforts in this part of the world.

Sweden is a member-state in the European Union and a partner to NATO, but foremost Sweden as any other state is a Nation-state. The armed forces of Sweden are ultimately designed and financed for the protection of Swedish sovereignty. This doesn't mean that Sweden believes in splendid isolation when it comes to defence matters and this has probably never been the case. But we Swedes have been quite apt at propagating the illusion of neutrality. The defence of Scandinavian territory and Scandinavian interests will, as almost always has been the case, be a common effort of many likeminded free and independent nations. This is why the European Union and NATO matter so much for our country.

Concepts such as *Pooling and Sharing* and *Smart Defence* have since some time been tried by the European Union and NATO respectively. I will not dismiss these commendable efforts and the highly desirable results which have been promised. Even so it is my firm belief that these top-down programmes will have to be complemented by more of a bottom-up or why not citizen-oriented approach. Veterans and their

relatives clearly should be able to play a crucial role reaching out across borders. Veteran Affairs should be a central task for the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and likewise for the Secretary General of NATO.

You have all yesterday experienced the inauguration of a National Swedish Veteran Monument on the occasion of the International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers. It is my hope that this monument will serve Sweden and international peacekeeping for many decades yet to come.

This doesn't mean that all has been done for veterans in Sweden. Let me just finally mention three clear and pressing examples of what in my opinion Sweden as a nation-state needs to address. These are the lack of:

- an official national medal of recognition for distinguished service,
- recognition also of veterans which have served before 1992 and
- a memorial for Sweden's hereto only Secretary-General of the United Nations. Dag Hammarskjöld died in the very pursuit of human rights and Peace in an armed conflict in Congo more than fifty years ago.

I wish you all a constructive Peace and Security Summit and look forward to the declarations you are going to adopt here in Stockholm.

WVFF Peace and Security Summit 2013