

The Future of Military Strategy at Försvarshögskolan: An Attempt to Identify some Useful Fundamentals¹

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THE SWEDISH NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE is currently going through one of the most turbulent periods in its long and distinguished history. Much of the debate that has caught the public eye has been about how, and at what cost, the Defence College is fulfilling its mission. However, at various moments the debates about bureaucratic efficiency have been joined by questions about deeper substance as well. The debate about the College's mission is heavily coloured by the fact that Försvarshögskolan became a university in January 2008 and particularly by the fact that this achievement was accompanied by a whole host of, often novel, demands and expectations concerning the institution's education and research. The core mission of the College is not in doubt: it is the education of officers. This task is supported by research, which should also help inform Swedish society on issues of defence and security. However, working out the relationship between academic, higher educational norms and values on the one hand, and vocational educational demands of the military profession on the other, has been a hotly debated topic. This has particularly afflicted one of the core – and for Sweden, unique – subjects that is taught and researched at FHS: *krigsvetenskap*, or loosely translated into English, war studies. *Krigsvetenskap* is both an old professional subject and (at

least in Sweden) a new academic one. A not uncommon view is that there exists a fundamental, and to some perhaps irreconcilable, tension between the academisation of the subject and professional relevance.

In this contribution, I want to examine whether this is the case with respect to one of the sub-fields that makes up the subject of *krigsvetenskap* at the Defence College: military strategy.² As the first occupant of the chair in military strategy at Försvarshögskolan, I will lay out my understanding of military strategy, its relationship with *krigsvetenskap*, its relevance for officer education in the 21st century and present some ideas on the basic value of research in this field. Let me add immediately that despite my official position, this is of course a personal view whose weight derives ultimately from quality of argument. I will start off by situating 'military strategy' in a historical, bureaucratic-professional context, which will serve to outline what I see as the fundamental challenge to the field and its continuing relevance. Then, I will slowly stray beyond the narrow confines of a discussion of military strategy. After addressing a number of misconceptions which seem to afflict not simply the understanding and usefulness of military strategy at FHS but also *krigsvetenskap* in general, I will conclude with some observations on the challenges the College as a whole faces

and which, in my opinion, it needs to address. The debate concerning the professional and academic quality of the Swedish military's premier educational institution can be considered too important to be left to the colonels and professors found within the walls of the Defence College. The recent turbulence indicates that the College is struggling to fulfill the mandate entrusted to it by Swedish society. *Försvarshögskolan* needs help. It is an institution that is too important to fail. The military remain a vital instrument of state and they need, and deserve, the best learning environment they can get. It seems appropriate therefore to publish these reflections outside the College, in the *Kungl Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift*, to inform a broader, interested audience and invite it to join in the debate about the future direction of *Försvarshögskolan*.

The Rise and Fall of Military Strategy

'Military strategy' is, of course, a pleonasm. The adjective is superfluous as its meaning is already contained within the noun. 'Strategy' is a composite of the Greek words for army, 'stratos', and to lead, 'agein'. Hence, in ancient Greek, the military commander was called 'strategos'. The activities associated with commanding armies however did not receive a special denomination until 240 years ago. Byzantine military handbooks, for example, were almost interchangeably called 'Taktika' or 'Strategikon' and covered a whole range of activities from what we would now regard as the purely tactical to the strategic. It was these writings, and in particular the handbooks attributed to the emperors Maurice (r. 582–602) and Leo (r. 886–912), which inspired the soldier and military writer Joly

de Maizeroy (1719–1780) first to introduce the word 'strategy' into the French language as *stratégique* in the 1770's. Defined as 'la science du général, même de l'homme d'état' ('the science of the general, and even the statesman'). Maizeroy coined the term as a complement to the already popular term *tactique* and claimed that it was 'quelque chose de plus élevé' ('something more elevated'). Whereas he saw *tactique* as a geometrical science whose principles and rules could be defined, learnt and methodically applied, *stratégique* belonged 'du ressort de la dialectique, c'est-à-dire, de la faculté la plus sublime de l'esprit, du raisonnement.' ('the sphere of the dialectical, that is to the highest faculty of the spirit, of reason.')

Both *tactique* and *stratégique* were invented, and proved successful, because they met a socio-bureaucratic and an intellectual need. The deepening bureaucratisation and the emerging professionalisation of European armed forces in the 18th century called for a special language to describe their activities in distinction from other walks of life. Within the professionalising bureaucracy specific terms served a further need in defining and separating various functions and, in the case of tactics and strategy, helping to establish a functional hierarchy. Intellectually, the invention of *tactique* and *stratégique* fit in with the ambitions of the Enlightenment project which sought to understand and map every field of human endeavour, including war.

The fact that *stratégique* is now an adjective in French (as it should be according to the formal rules of word formation) suggests that the term did not immediately catch on in its home country (unlike *tactique* which is now both a noun and an adjective). Translated as *Strategie* it proved more immediately popular in neighbour-

ing Germany and thus the term was probably reimported, as *stratégie*, into French around 1800.⁴ Words, and even word formations, therefore change, adapt and are adopted in often unpredictable ways. Tracing the early definitions of ‘strategy’, as we may call it from here on, confirms this further. A political dimension was integral to Maizeroy’s understanding of strategy. Like the French generals of his generation, he could not yet see the job of a general as non-political in content. He was also elitist by associating strategy with the ‘sublime’ science of reason. Both qualities, the political and the elitist, quickly came under threat. Early German definitions, for example, narrowed it down. Heinrich von Bülow (1757–1807), who famously tried to reduce all war including strategy to invariable geometrical principles, wrote that ‘Strategie ist die Wissenschaft kriegerischer Bewegungen außerhalb dem Gesichtskreis des Feindes, Taktik innerhalb desselben.’ (‘Strategy is the science of military manoeuvres outside the enemy’s range of view, tactics is the same within his range of view.’)⁵ But even more enlightened and open-minded authorities thought along similar lines. Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst (1733–1814) proposed that ‘Die Strategie sei die Kunst zu marschieren, die Taktik die Kunst sich zu schlagen’ (‘Strategy is the art of marching, tactics the art of fighting’).⁶ Gerhard von Scharnhorst (1755–1813), Clausewitz’s teacher and driving force behind the Prussian military reform movement that was instrumental in overthrowing Napoleon, believed rather vaguely but also narrowly, that strategy was ‘the art’ (*die Kunst*) which had as its object ‘die Anordnung zum Feldzuge, die Leitung der Operationen in Großen u.s.w.’ (‘the arranging of campaigns, the

command of large-scale operations, etc.’).⁷ Such understandings suggested that most half-decent officers could acquire the skills necessary for conducting strategy.

Clausewitz, rightly, had much fun with the unhelpful, pseudo-scientific descriptions of Bülow and Berenhorst which reduced strategy and tactics to an essentially meaningless activity. However, even he struggled to resist the temptation of defining strategy as a narrow, distinct, essentially military professional activity that could be taught and learnt successfully by all officers. As everyone knows, Clausewitz infused war with meaning by defining it as a political instrument. However, his definition of strategy as the use of force to achieve the political object of the war, did not establish conclusively, either in intellectual or organisational terms, the ways in which the political made itself felt in war and how war could best be made to serve political interests. On the contrary, his definition of war as the use of force to make the enemy do one’s will, led to an argument that suggested that all political objectives were best served by a singular process of making one’s enemy defenceless through decisive battle.⁸ Such a definition of the strategic object, which was widely shared by the veterans of the Napoleonic wars (most prominently Jomini), possessed the great advantage of providing a seemingly clear-cut professional remit for the military. Destroying the enemy’s armed forces was a job they could do independently, without requiring constant political oversight and inviting potential meddling. The military architect of Germany’s Wars of Unification, Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891), expressed what became a typical professional view in his 1871 essay on ‘Strategy’:

Policy makes use of war to gain its objects, it acts with decisive influence at the opening and at the end of the war in such a way as either to increase its claims during the progress of war or to be satisfied with lesser gains. With this uncertainty strategy cannot but always direct its efforts towards the highest goal attainable with the means at disposal. It thereby serves policy best, and only works for the object of policy, but completely independent of policy in its actions.⁹

Moltke penned this essay fresh from the experience of the Franco-Prussian War in which he had his second bruising wartime experience with political interference from the Prussian prime minister, Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck had prevailed, much to Moltke's chagrin, in moulding military operations according to his political wishes at critical strategic moments, after the 1866 battle of Königgrätz against the Austrians and again during the siege of Paris in 1871.¹⁰ Bismarck's successes, however, were exceptional. The trend was towards separation from politics and towards the narrow professionalisation of the military as 'the managers of violence'.¹¹ Everywhere in Europe, the military became a distinct bureaucracy which was populated by officers who made an exclusive lifetime career in the military and who jealously guarded their professional sphere of activity.

It should be added that in many countries narrow military professionalisation was also favoured by governments and politicians since it promised to keep the military out of politics. However, this separation into discrete spheres of activity could create significant problems when it came to war. The German officer corps is the most famous example of a professional group who ultimately found that their professionally favoured military strategy failed to translate into political success. They lost

two world wars. The victors in these conflicts, however, were also not wholly immune the challenges the Germans faced. Both world wars required the unprecedented mobilisation of whole nations for war. This led to two conflicting pressures. On the one hand, there was a mounting demand to turn the organisation of the whole war effort, and not simply the conduct of operations, over to the military. Many militaries, both in the aptly named 'totalitarian states' as well as in liberal democracies, argued that the total mobilisation of society for total war required a far-reaching handover of powers to them already in peacetime.¹² Moreover, the all-consuming effort to survive the onslaught of 'total war' made it difficult to keep a clear political aim in view and avoid the dangers of all-out escalation in which war ended up only serving itself.¹³ This led to a counter-vailing pressure which demanded the overt politicisation of strategy. The term 'grand strategy' was invented to reflect not simply the need to master all the resources of the state to further the national interest, of which the primary one was the survival of the state, but also the requirement to retain overall civilian, political-instrumental control over war.

But even so, since the understanding of the political stakes involved in the world wars and also later in the Cold War were existential – the total victory of capitalist democracy over fascism and later communism – the appropriate military strategy appeared to be one of overthrow, of making one's enemy defenceless, in order pave the way for regime change. The fact that both the First and the Second World Wars did not ultimately descend into Hobbesian wars of all against all was largely due to two factors. First, only the Nazis designated whole nations as their enemy. Both

the USSR and the liberal democracies believed their main enemies consisted of unpopular regimes. They therefore directed their military efforts primarily against the agents protecting the regime. Second, even the Germans turned out to subscribe to a system of conventions which kept war by and large limited to a fight between regular, conventional armies and which also decreed that war would end with the destruction of opponent's armed forces and the occupation of the capital.¹⁴

So the experience of the world wars led to two contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, there was a strong perception both in the capitalist and communist camp (though perhaps for slightly different reasons) that war was a political instrument. On the other hand, war was believed to be so serious that it could only be justified by high stakes. This supported the already strongly established professional military strategic paradigm which called for making the enemy defenceless through the use of overwhelming force. Nonetheless, during the Cold War, the threat nuclear escalation made that military advice proffered in line with this paradigm did not generally meet with a welcoming political response. Hence the sacking of General Douglas MacArthur during the Korean War when he began to advocate widening the war to China with the use of nuclear weapons. Hence also the speedy exclusion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from advising the decision-making process in the White House during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. In Vietnam, loosing the war ultimately appeared a more acceptable outcome to the US political leadership than following the military strategic advice that was on offer.

Since the end of the Cold War, with the waning nuclear threat, the risks associated with paradigmatic military strategic ad-

vice may have receded. But, on the whole, military advice has rarely been wholeheartedly welcomed by the elected Western political leaders because the stakes in recent conflicts were not considered commensurate with the cost associated with the proposed military options. The military may argue – and they often do – that politicians simply do not understand how war works and that the paradigm of overwhelming force works best. To quote a typical comment by the commandant of the US Marine Corps, General David M. Shoup, secretly recorded on tape after what turned out to be the Joint Chiefs' last advisory meeting with President John F. Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis:

He [President Kennedy] finally got around to the word "escalation." That's the only goddamn thing that's in the whole trick. Go in and out and get every goddamn one [of the Soviet missiles in Cuba]. Escalation, that's it.

Somebody's got to keep them from doing the goddam thing piecemeal. That's our problem. Go in there and friggin' around with the missiles. You're screwed. Go in there and frig around with the lift. You're screwed. [In the background, the famously hawkish US Air Force chief of staff and former Strategic Air Command commander, General Curtis LeMay, is heard to interject 'That's right.'] You're screwed, screwed, screwed. Some goddamn thing, some way, that they either do the son of a bitch and do it right, and quit friggin' around.¹⁵

Such colourful language may be used rarely in the military's direct dealings with their political masters, but it expresses well the central tenor of much military advice on how to conduct war to this day. The arguments over Kosovo between NATO governments and the politically tone-deaf US Air Force general tasked with directing

the air operations against Serbia presents one notable recent example.¹⁶ His military superior, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, US Army General Wesley Clark, tried to broker strategy between USAF and NATO only to find himself sandwiched in-between an uncomprehending US Joint Chiefs and US Air Force on the one hand, and the politically cautious US and European governments on the other. Clark soon lost his job, suggesting that he did not possess the politico-military skills of generals George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight Eisenhower who went on to become US Presidents. However, his illustrious predecessors had also been far luckier generals than Clark in having been called upon to fight wars in which professionally preferred strategies were more closely attuned to the overall political objectives.

The challenge of 'modern war', to quote the title of Wesley Clark's memoir, is how to generate politically desired effects with the limited application of force. The combination of limited political commitment and limited use of force makes contemporary wars, as Clausewitz already argued, more deeply permeated by the political than the total wars of the 20th century. Arguably, the US presents an extreme example and the smaller European powers may possess militaries with a more sophisticated strategic practice which is more attuned to political demands. I do not, however, know of many countries in the developed world where the military have a generally high opinion of their political masters' understanding of the nature of war and for what they see as the requirements for success. It is notable that in all the interventions since the end of the Cold War, the militaries in these countries have strongly and consistently resisted becoming embroiled in war. When intervention could not be avoided

and when only limited resources were committed, the overwhelming desire was to avoid the use of force in operations and to keep them limited to peacekeeping.¹⁷ The fact that many interventions have nonetheless willy-nilly slid towards war, as the current war in Afghanistan once again painfully illustrates, underlines not only the general abhorrence our societies and our militaries have of war, but also that we, civilians and military, do not possess any clear ideas of how to conduct such wars deliberately and effectively, or in short, strategically. That message was powerfully put forward by one of the few eminent modern military thinkers and practitioners, Rupert Smith, in his 2005 book *The Utility of Force*. Smith rightly argued that the traditional professional paradigm of war had its day. It presents a way of war that is no longer politically acceptable and, critically, it does not win wars against the new political actors that are emerging in the world.

We have begun to inch our way towards new conceptualisations and practices of war.¹⁸ This is a difficult and unsettling experience. It threatens to erase, or at least blur, the established boundaries between the military and the civil, and in particular between the military and the political. It goes against the trend of the ever further-going functional bureaucratic specialisation that is so characteristic of modern societies. The distinctions between grand strategy, military strategy, operations and tactics, which sought to divide war into neat spheres of responsibility and action, are fading. We see a compression in the levels of war which were so painstakingly developed over the past two centuries and which was given such intricate doctrinal and bureaucratic form in hierarchical military organisations.¹⁹ And if that is indeed what is happening, then the relative importance of

strategy, shorn of the adjective ‘military’, is increasing. Strategy provides the bridge between the political and the military. It is the vehicle, or the mechanism if you like, that gives the military meaning and purpose. Separated from the political, the military, and what we still regard as their special attribute or expertise, the application of organised armed force, make no sense. It should be added, of course, that a primary focus on force should not preclude a consideration of other means which armed forces could deploy or develop, now and in the future, to achieve political effect. The West’s military operations of the past two decades have demonstrated that we do not understand very well how to use of force in a politically effective way, nor do we understand very well how the military more broadly can contribute to generating positive political effect. The great challenge of understanding how war works therefore suggests strongly that strategy, and by implication the field of war studies, should be an intellectually open-minded and wide-ranging field of study. That is a particularly appropriate mission for the institutions which provide higher education for armed forces.

I just wrote that strategy should be shorn of the adjective ‘military’. I reiterate that, for one thing, adding ‘military’ is redundant. For another thing, if other fields of human endeavour, like the business world,²⁰ can appropriate the term strategy without any specifier, then surely the military can, with their claim to birthright. Most importantly, however, the emergence of the adjective can be seen to reflect an attempt to protect the military profession against unwelcome encroachments from outsiders which is now threatening to backfire by making the field unfit for purpose. No longer (if it ever could) can the military

achieve success independently of politics. Dropping the adjective might thus assist in no longer feeding the fiction that strategy can be an independent, unpolitical, purely professional activity. At the same time, I note that the chair I occupy still bears the tag ‘military strategy’ and that professors should perhaps be careful with redefining their field and appearing to wish themselves away. So, for now, it may be advisable to keep the designation as long as this does not preclude, I say it again, an intellectually open-minded and wide-ranging approach to the field which is not in any way barred from identifying and discussing the central issues.

(Militär)strategi, Krigsvetenskap and Försvarshögskolan: Some Further Challenges and Common Fallacies

Developing an open-minded and broad approach to militärstrategi and *krigsvetenskap* at FHS that permits a focus on the central issues, while respecting both academic and military professional expectations and needs, has been a difficult process. Many of the more serious ideas that have been put forward as providing help in developing the subject can be characterised as rather conservative and narrow responses to the challenges that the subject and beyond it, the College, faces. Some of the more popular ideas seem, at the very least, to require careful, additional thought, while a number, I will suggest, should perhaps even be rejected as unhelpful.

Much ink has been spilled and many hours spent within FHS on defining the subject of *krigsvetenskap* and writing an endless series of *ämneshögläsningsplaner*. The subject is, rightly, seen as central to the military profession and the education of officers. It

is also, again rightly, seen as a unique subject. *Krigsvetenskap* seeks to understand what war is and how it works. And given the College's task to provide vocational professional training, one should add that *krigsvetenskap* also includes the study and teaching of how war can be made to work. Strategy, as I argued above, plays a special role in the subject, since its focus is on how war is given meaning and purpose through politics. No other academic discipline or vocational educational programme exclusively focuses on these tasks.

But how do we go from here? How do we do *krigsvetenskap*? One sometimes hears that a subject is not defined by its study object but by its distinct method. *Krigsvetenskap* can therefore only become a full-fledged, academic subject if it develops its own distinctive analytical methods.²¹ The definition and development of method is thus our most immediate task. I would counsel caution against such a categorical approach. War Studies, to use for once deliberately the English term, avoided becoming a discipline in such terms. Those academics who clustered in this field in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, for example, came to believe that the problem of war was sufficiently daunting and important not to let it become the prisoner of one or another narrow academic method.²² Multidisciplinary, even interdisciplinary, approaches should be the order of the day in *krigsvetenskap*. Such an approach may go against the way academic professionalisation moves, but, to paraphrase Clemenceau again, war is surely too important to be left in the hands of one discipline.

Others argue that *krigsvetenskap* is unique because it is 'owned', not by a set of academics, but by the military profession and that this profession has a set of

definable tasks to perform. If there is a role for academics, it is to support and help develop the ability of the professionals to execute the tasks as efficiently as possible by handing them solutions. Often one finds the medical profession and its relationship with medical academic research referred to as an example to be imitated. I have two major reservations about this. First, the comparison with the medical profession should not be pushed too far. Medics cut up the body into areas of specialisation. War, and certainly modern war, resists this kind of dissection and compartmentalisation and associated task specialisation.²³ Furthermore, medics do not enjoy the kind of variegated career structure that the military do. Medical specialists specialise and thus stay in their narrow field throughout their careers. Some become professors, most just stay doctors. They do not move up the ranks from lieutenant to lieutenant-general and are not challenged in the same way by the officer's requirement of an ever expanding skills set and range of expertise. General Practitioners – the doctors who look at the body as a whole – mostly stay ordinary, lowly GPs. In the medical profession, specialists rule the field. In war, specialists lose, generalists win.

My second reservation is that the emphasis on traditional understandings of profession and the comparison with the medical world suggest that the military face narrow technical challenges which can be solved with narrowly technical means. That kind of approach holds serious dangers. First, war is fundamentally different from the medical world in that the military deal with a highly developed animate object: a thinking opponent. Second, the world of war is politically and morally contentious to a degree that is not shared by those who fight disease. The study and teaching of war and

military professionalism must engage with that challenge. I fully accept that there are parts of the military profession that require technical training, but that does not apply to the whole. Especially the study and teaching of strategy must look beyond the narrowly technical and put into practice what is the fundamental aim of higher education: responsibly to equip individuals with the intellectual skills necessary for an effective (and fulfilling) career.

I therefore also reject the view that military strategy is exclusively to be understood as a level of command and that at the centre of its education should be the teaching of staff routines and strategic planning procedures, with perhaps a scientific component provided by leadership studies to teach the exercise of command. These are, of course, important issues to the profession and should be part of the curriculum. But, as I argued in the first section, such a narrow technical approach has a spotty historical record when it comes to delivering success in war. It is therefore questionable whether they should be at the centre of teaching strategy. One could further add that bureaucratic practice and procedure is a constantly moving target with which education would constantly be playing catch-up. Not only do national staff and planning practices evolve, but more critically, international practices vary and change. It is hard to argue that they are evolving towards some grand common shared practice governed by an explicit set of stable regulations. The experience of the past twenty years furthermore illustrates that one cannot always safely predict which particular international staff or allies a Swedish officer might find him- or herself partnered with. Education does better by emphasising the variability and contingency of practice and focus on developing an understanding

of the underlying factors that lead to their establishment and those that drive change.

To avoid misunderstanding, I repeat that practical training is an important part of the curriculum and that the key is achieving a balance between practice and reflexive understanding. I am not sure we are getting the balance entirely right: we teach an awful lot of bureaucratic procedure and if a broader context is provided, it is generally a descriptive context of organization, from EU and NATO downwards, which is slowly adjusted year on year as the organisations and their procedures change. This is not wholly a bad thing. Staff routine and strategic planning are critical in creating the predictability and dependability that a military institution needs to overcome challenges in an organised fashion. But they can easily degenerate into a sterile 'Methodismus' which, as Clausewitz already warned, is unable to withstand the test of war. History is littered with examples of defeat – from the Prussians in 1806, to the French in 1940 and the US in 2003 – of inflexible and lazy routine and planning quickly becoming unstuck after the shooting started. We are fortunate that we face no dangers that can bring our states down in a matter of days. The Americans had time after the opening campaign in Iraq to redress their earlier errors and, in Afghanistan, we have now had nine years of repeated trial and error. Strategy, of all the levels of war, should be most careful and avoid teaching too much routine so as to avoid imbuing students with a sense of certainty that ultimately may prove false.

This brings me to a further point. Most employers prefer to take on workers who do not require on-the-job training. The Swedish armed forces appear no exception to this rule. Hence there is a strong perception that FHS must train people to perform

specific functions. However, this is not how higher education in general is understood. As suggested by the fact that most higher education is enjoyed before one embarks on a lifelong career, it focuses on the inculcation of intellectual skills, that is on those skills which can last a lifetime's use and which give its beneficiaries the mental agility and flexibility to work in a range of functions and positions of increasing seniority and responsibility. We are fortunate that we have three chances at providing higher education at different stages of officers' careers and so can introduce an element of functional training. However, I would posit that the general principle still holds that we do not educate for particular functions, but for a military career. This applies especially strongly for the higher courses which should last any graduate a good many years. The ultimate, higher staff course (known as HSU) teaches 35 to 40-year-old officers who have at least another fifteen to twenty years ahead of them before retirement. It makes little sense to prepare them just for the current crop of functions the armed forces have available. Such an education is in danger of becoming largely irrelevant within a couple of years. Aiming to teach for a long-term career is, of course, more challenging than teaching particular functions, especially since teachers would be called upon to prepare officer-students for positions and ranks they have never held themselves (another critical difference with medical education). How does a lieutenant-colonel, or a professor, teach future generals? How does one counteract the natural tendency in teachers to wish to recreate their students in their own image?

The issue of educating for careers, and not for functions, is one with which we have not yet engaged deeply. The solution, in my opinion, lies in moving education

in a direction which privileges intellectual skills over practical skills and area competence over functional competence. This is arguably what the military profession in the 21st century, in the face of manifold, uncertain and unpredictable political, social, economic and technical challenges, needs and should expect from us. The teaching of strategy in all programmes, and particularly the higher ones, is central to that endeavour.²⁴ This teaching needs to be backed up by thorough, quality research of a kind that is open to highest degree of critical scrutiny. That scrutiny must include an international dimension to counteract the insularity that tempts all military organisations and which perhaps poses a special danger to the Swedish armed forces which have two centuries of splendidly successful neutrality behind them. Research is a pre-eminent means for identifying the central issues in a given field of study and practice and developing a sustained and critical engagement with these issues. Through international publication, research opens itself up to quality control and improvement. Thus quality research provides an indispensable basis for the ability to introduce the best thinking into the curriculum. Understood in this way, academisation should be considered critical to military professional career development. If done right, and with proper sensitivity, academisation helps keep the organisation alert and performs the necessary function of educating the armed forces for future flexibility.

Bridging the current gap between academisation and professional relevance and turning the natural tension between the two into a strength requires strong and visionary leadership. That has been in short supply, especially in *krigsvetenskap*. The academisation of Försvarshögskolan is a strikingly recent phenomenon. The first

civilian professors were only appointed as recently as the 1990's, and in *krigsvetenskap* only in the past decade. In a European context, this is remarkably late. Perhaps this indicates how strongly a professional ethos had taken hold in the Swedish armed forces and how strongly defined the separation between the civil-political and military spheres in this country was. In a society that deeply valued democracy, while also seeing a need to prepare for total war, one can understand and appreciate the strong desire to avert the danger of creating a 'garrison state' in peacetime. The Swedish model was extremely successful. Although the potential mobilisation of society for war was taken much further in Sweden than anywhere else in Cold War Europe and North America, democracy was not militarised. Success is hard to beat. Academisation may not appear an obvious necessity for the many who remember and value this extraordinary achievement.

The recent scandals that have hit the research side of the College's activities have led to serious questions about its ability to maintain and deliver academic quality. They have reinforced a desire in some powerful quarters to reduce the academic component and retrench officer education within the armed forces. In my opinion, that would be a serious mistake. Not only would one lose the achievements of the first generation of trail-blazing professors who have now reached their well-earned retirement, but it would suggest that the Swedish armed forces are out of step with their partners and allies abroad who are all broadening and academicising their military education and research. It would, in short, make it more difficult for the armed forces to play a full and effective role in the world, in concert with international partners.

That said, the College is in need of serious reform. It is too expensive. It has a truly astonishing 'tail-to-teeth' ratio. It suffers too much from a bureaucratic culture that persistently privileges process over product and that confuses planning with output. Culture and cost actively disincentivise research output.²⁵ A weak research culture prevents fresh ideas from flowering and as a result the teaching is much the poorer for it. There is a strong tendency for many parts of the College to shut themselves off from the outside world (how often have I heard at FHS that 'you have to understand, in Sweden we do things differently'!) and concentrate on the debates of yesteryear – which a recent leader in the *International Herald Tribune* noted were also features of Swedish political society.²⁶ These are characteristics that, of all Swedish institutions, FHS can least afford to maintain. It is a truism that national defence no longer starts at national borders. The armed forces require a top-notch education supported by top-notch research which is plugged in to the world and which prepares them for tackling an ill-defined and highly varied assortment of threats. Time has not yet run out for *Försvarshögskolan*. The institution is still relatively wealthy. It can afford to attract talent, including visionary leadership, which can implement an agenda for reform. However, if it chooses to continue down the current road, then the case for abolishing the College may soon become overwhelming. Surely, once a perception of unreasonably high cost gets wedded to a perception of persistent failure to perform and deliver, its days – even in Sweden – are numbered?

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Notes

1. A version of this paper was presented at the *krigsvetenskaplig seminarium* at FHS on 23 September 2010. I thank all the participants for their input and criticism. I alone am responsible, however, for the views expressed in this debate article.
2. As part of the process of preparing SNDC for university status, the College defined *krigsvetenskap* as consisting of three sub-fields – military theory, military strategy and military operations and tactics – in which it established professorial chairs.
3. de Maizeroy, Paul Gédéon Joly: *Théorie de la guerre, Où l'on expose la constitution et formation de l'Infanterie et de la Cavalerie, leurs manoeuvres élémentaires, avec l'application des principes à la grande Tactique, suivie des démonstrations sur la Stratégique*, Lausanne, 1777, pp. lxxxv–lxxxvi. Maizeroy first used the term in his translation of emperor Leo's *Taktika* (which was extensively derived from Maurice's *Strategikon*): *Institutions militaires de l'Empereur Léon le philosophe, traduites en français, avec des notes, avec une dissertation sur le feu grégeois et un traité sur les machines de jet des anciens* par Joly de Maizeroy, Paris, 1770, 2 Vols.
4. *The Dictionnaire universel de la langue française*, edited by the famous French lexicographer Pierre-Claude-Victor Boiste (1765–1824), defined 'stratégie' in 1808 as the 'science des mouvements d'une armée éloignée d'une autre.' <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/strategie>. 'Stratégie' only appeared, as an adjective, in 1819.
5. Cited in Rothfels, Hans: *Carl von Clausewitz: Politik und Krieg*, Dümmler, Bonn 1980; orig. 1920, p. 56.
6. Ibid.
7. 'Vortrag', [Berlin?, October 1801/1802?] von Scharnhorst, Gerhard: *Private und dienstliche Schriften*, Vol. 3: *Lehrer, Artillerist, Wegbereiter* (Preußen 1801–1804), eds. Johannes Kunisch, Michael Sikora & Tilman Stieve, Böhlau, Cologne 2005, Doc. no 124 p. 663. Cf. also "Die Strategie begreift die Anordnungen zum Kriege im Großen, den Plan eines Feldzuges, die Pläne der einzelnen Operationen der verschiedenen Korps usw. in sich." "Verfassung und Lehrinrichtung der Akademie für junge Offiziere ..." (1805) in von Scharnhorst, Gerhard: *Ausgewählte militärische Schriften*, ed. by Hansjürgen Usczeck and Christa Gudzent, Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin (East) 1986, pp. 204–5. J. W. von Bourscheid, the German translator of Leo's *Taktika*, described the 'erste Pflicht der Strategie' as 'Rath zu pflegen, und Entwürfe zu bilden': *Kaisers Leo des Philosophen Strategie und Taktik*, Vienna 1777, Vol. 1, p. 159.
8. Honig, Jan Willem: "Clausewitz and the Politics of Early Modern Warfare" in Herberg-Rothe, Andreas; Honig, Jan Willem and Moran, Daniel (eds.): *Clausewitz: Staat und Politik*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart forthcoming); Honig, Jan Willem: "Clausewitz's On War: Problems of Text and Translation" in Strachan, Hew and Herberg-Rothe, Andreas (eds.): *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 57–73; and Honig, Jan Willem: "Interpreting Clausewitz", *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Spring 1994, pp. 571–580.
9. Quoted in Von Caemmerer: *The Development of Strategic Science during the 19th Century*, trans. Karl von Donat, Hugh Rees, London 1905), p. 85.
10. On these episodes, see Craig, Gordon A.: *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1955, pp. 180–216 and Ritter, Gerhard: *The Sword and the Sceptre, The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, Vol. 1: *The Prussian Tradition, 1740–1890*, trans. Heinz Norden, Ian Allen, London & University of Miami Press, Coral Gables, Fla. 1969, pp. 187–260.
11. The most developed statement of this idea as the core of the military profession is Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1957).
12. For Germany, see Wette, Wolfram: "Ideologien, Propaganda und Innenpolitik als Voraussetzungen der Kriegspolitik des Dritten Reiches" in Deist, Wilhelm et al.: *Ursachen und Voraussetzungen des Zweiten Weltkrieges* Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 1989. For the US, see Smith, R. Elberton: *The Army and Economic Mobilization, The United States Army in World War II: The War Department*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 1959 and Thatcher, Harold W.: *Planning*

- for *Industrial Mobilization, 1920-1940*, Historical Section, General Administrative Services Division, Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington, D.C. 1943. For France, see Doughty, Robert A.: *Seeds of Disaster: The Development of French Army Doctrine, 1919-1939*, Archon, Hamden, Conn. 1985; Young, Robert J.: *In Command of France: French Foreign Policy and Military Planning, 1933-1940*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1978, esp. pp. 13-32 and Challener, Richard D.: *The French Theory of the Nation in Arms, 1866-1939*, Russell and Russell, New York 1965, pp. 184-214.
13. An ironic example is presented by the German chief of the general staff, General Ludwig Beck, who in the 1930s as was a greater supporter of preparing for total war than Hitler and lost his job in 1938 as a consequence. By 1943, as Hitler was finally moving towards total mobilisation and losing the war, Beck condemned total war as an 'insatiable Moloch', joined the resistance against Hitler and lost his life as a consequence of that choice: Beck, Ludwig: "Die Lehre vom totalen Kriege: Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung", in Beck, *Studien*, ed. Hans Speidel, Koehler, Stuttgart 1955, pp. 227-258. See also Müller, Klaus-Jürgen: *General Ludwig Beck: Studien und Dokumente zur politisch-militärischen Vorstellungswelt und Tätigkeit des Generalstabschefs des deutschen Heeres 1933-1938*, Harald Boldt, Boppard 1980 and Müller, Klaus-Jürgen: "Colonel-General Ludwig Beck, Chief of the General Staff, 1933-1938", in Müller, Klaus-Jürgen: *The Army, Politics and Society in Germany, 1933-1945: Studies on the Army's Relation to Nazism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1987, pp. 54-99.
 14. The book I am currently writing for Cambridge University Press investigates the subject of how conventions govern war fighting and winning.
 15. Quoted from May, Ernest R. and Zelikow, Philip D. (eds.): *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis* Belknap, Cambridge, Mass. 1997, p. 188 in Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 2000, p. 186. On the Joint Chiefs' strong preference for escalation, see also *ibid.*, pp. 177-181.
 16. See Honig, Jan Willem: "A Revolution in Strategy? Conducting War in an Age of Rogues", in Gärtner, Heinz and Cuthbertson, Ian (eds.): *European Security and Transatlantic Relations After 9/11 and the Iraq War*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2005, pp. 33-47, esp. pp. 39-42.
 17. A classic example of this attitude and approach was the UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose. See Honig, Jan Willem: "The Utility of Force: General Sir Michael Rose in Bosnia, 1994-1995", in Mona Fixdal, (ed.): *Ways Out of War: Ten Peacemakers and Their Experiences* (forthcoming). Note the contrast with his more 'political' successor, Rupert Smith, who successfully conducted limited war: see Honig, Jan Willem and Both, Norbert: *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime*, (rev. ed.) Penguin, New York 1997, pp. 141-159 and also the 'memoir' part of Smith's *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, Allen Lane, London 2005.
 18. For rare, yet impressive, analyses that seek to map the interaction between fundamental political change and strategy, see Bobbitt, Philip: *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History*, Penguin, London 2002 and *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century*, Penguin, New York 2008.
 19. Cf. Kelly, Justin and Brennan, Mike: *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Penn. September 2009).
 20. E.g., Mintzberg, Henry: *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, FT Prentice Hall, London 2000, which in view of my comments on planning below, contains some pertinent criticisms of interest to FHS and the Swedish military.
 21. For a consideration of this issue, see the chapter by two, much missed former colleagues, Petersson, Magnus and Ångström, Jan: "Krigsvetenskap som samhällsvetenskap", in Brehmer, Berndt (ed.): *Krigsvetenskaplig årsbok 2006*, Swedish national Defence College, Stockholm 2007, pp. 131-153.
 22. Cf. the 'mission statement' by the founder of the Department, Howard, Sir Michael: *Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace*, Continuum, London and New York 2006, pp. 160-161.
 23. One might add that the proliferation of spe-

cialisations in the medical world has achieved truly astounding proportions and comes at a cost which the Defence College simply cannot afford to follow.

24. It was in view of these kinds of considerations that, in the past decade, the UK Royal College of Defence Studies re-focused its one-year programme (which includes the possibility to obtain an MA in International Security and Strategy) on strategy broadly defined.
25. *Krigsvetenskap* has a research budget that compares very favourably with international peers, be it academic or government. The research budget is, for example, far larger than that of the Department of War Studies at King's College London. It is therefore somewhat puzzling to find so little output of international, or even national, note. Such wealth one would ordinarily expect to be put to good use by attracting good quality researchers.
26. "Even Sweden", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 September 2010, p. 8.