



RIKSREVISIONEN
The Swedish National Audit Office

RiR 2009:11 Summary

The Swedish Armed Forces' personnel provision
- Focusing on the provision of officers

Summary

Starting points of the audit

For more than a decade now, the Swedish Armed Forces has been undergoing restructuring from a defence against invasion to a mission-based defence force. Its organisation has shrunk, with both personnel and materiel being decommissioned. The readjustment requirements imposed by the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) and the Government have changed the personnel needs of the Armed Forces in terms of both volume and skills.

The new focus of operations generally entails a greater demand for personnel who have the capability and motivation to engage in missions abroad. This means that the structures ensuring the provision of personnel must be adapted so that the supply of personnel meets the needs.

Riksrevisionen (the Swedish National Audit Office, SNAO) has examined the Armed Forces' personnel provision, focusing on its regular officers. The audit deals with conditions in 2005–2007 and 2008. It focuses on how the Armed Forces uses its personnel, i.e. on the efficiency of the processes affecting personnel use.

The SNAO's conclusions and recommendations

The SNAO finds that the Armed Forces has solved priority tasks such as carrying out missions abroad. Even so, there are imbalances in the age and command structure. Further, the Armed Forces does not at present have the personnel that will be necessary to ensure its production in the long term and maintain its operational capability. The audit shows that this shortage has negatively affected efficiency within the Armed Forces and poses a threat to its capability.

The SNAO's overall assessment is therefore that the personnel provision of the Armed Forces has not yet been adapted to the tasks of the Armed Forces.

The Government should take a position on the conditions for the Armed Forces' personnel provision

The Armed Forces is responsible for its own personnel provision. However, the circumstances of its personnel provision are determined by the conditions created by the Riksdag and the Government. This includes the direction exercised by the Government over the Armed Forces, for example to enhance its usefulness and availability, as well as financial and legal conditions as laid down in legislation and elsewhere.

The audit shows that short-term priorities are not weighed up against medium- or long-term priorities in a satisfactory manner. The Armed Forces' production of capability has been relegated to second place when other operations, such as missions, have had higher priority and resources have been scarce. One audit finding is that there is a shortage of personnel in the production of military units. This may lead to a dilution of the skills and capability of the Armed Forces. The SNAO considers this to be in breach of the Government's requirement that the Armed Forces' personnel provision

should be efficient and adapted to its tasks. It has also had an impact on the Armed Forces' creation of capability.

Against the background of the problems identified within the Armed Forces, the SNAO finds that the effectiveness of the medium- and long-term direction exercised by the Government over the Armed Forces jeopardises the build-up, maintenance and development of capability.

The Government, in the direction it exercises over the Armed Forces, should ensure an appropriate balance between short- and long-term tasks and skills, creating propitious conditions for the Armed Forces to build, maintain and develop capability.

The Government should take a position on how conditions for the Armed Forces' personnel provision can improve.

The Armed Forces should use its personnel more efficiently

The SNAO finds that recruitment has been made more difficult by the extensive terminations of personnel resulting from the most recent defence-policy decisions. However, there are also various shortcomings within the Armed Forces which have led to further skills losses and recruitment problems.

What is more, the Armed Forces has made only limited efforts to terminate personnel whose skills are not needed through the 'career-change programme', a four-month programme involving counselling and outplacement. Since 2006, only 40 people – regular officers and civilian employees – have left the Armed Forces through that programme. If the efforts to terminate personnel do not meet the targets set or the existing demands, this will reduce recruitment opportunities and preserve the structural problems of the Armed Forces.

There are several problems leading to inefficiency in the use of existing personnel resources. The present career paths for regular officers do not clearly match the needs of the Armed Forces' core operations. Among other things, this makes it more difficult to find personnel for units, not least as regards officers involved in the training of troops. The audit also shows that the Armed Forces is still experiencing problems linked to the fact that positions are often held only for a short time. Finally, it emerges from the audit that the number of regular officers who are under obligation to serve abroad remains relatively small. Part of the reason is the Armed Forces' failure to meet its own commitments to take action in order to increase the number of regular officers obliged to serve in missions abroad.

The Armed Forces should review and adjust career paths to achieve a clear link between incentives for individuals and the Armed Forces' core operations – missions and the production of units.

The Armed Forces should take action to bring about a significant increase in the proportion of its personnel who are under obligation to participate in missions abroad.

The Armed Forces should give high priority to its efforts to attract and retain key personnel. Further, it must be clarified to what extent career changing will meet the need for personnel termination.

Improve operational control within the Armed Forces

The heavy strain on the resources of the Armed Forces makes high demands of its ability to control and prioritise operations. However, the audit points to problems in operational control that the SNAO believes will affect the Armed Forces' ability to use its personnel efficiently.

There is thus a need to develop control in several areas. Examples include the processes to select personnel for unit production and missions abroad as well as control of unit production. The relationship between personnel frameworks (indicating theoretical personnel needs) and actual personnel needs within the organisational subdivisions of the Armed Forces also needs to be reviewed.

The Armed Forces should follow up the application of the Armed Forces' Control Model and clarify the division of responsibility in the control of tasks and resources.

The Armed Forces should follow up and clarify its measure of personnel quality ('PersQ').

The Armed Forces should take action so that it can more efficiently combine the production of units with the carrying-out of missions.

The Armed Forces should adjust its organisation to match its resources. This would mean, among other things, an organisation with a better balance between personnel frameworks and available personnel.