

II-E. Profile of Finland

Version 1 – 14 June 2006

*Prepared by Johannah Bernstein
with the assistance of Steven Schindler
and Laura Leland*



1. Finland's Approach to Environmental Security

The global problems, development crises and regional conflicts that have risen following the Cold War have had broad consequences for Finland's internal and external security. The challenges presented by governance, terrorism, foreign direct investment, informal economies, environmental degradation, AIDS and other health threats, human trafficking, and illegal small arms and light weapons have affected Finland's approach to foreign and domestic security policy.

Finland recognizes that the cross-border nature of new and emerging security threats and challenges will require it to increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to strengthen local, regional, and global relations. These factors have been accentuated by the Finnish Prime Minister in a press release of *Foreign and Security Policy* as the instruments through which security, abroad and domestic, will be increased.¹

The 2005 *Strategy for the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs*² affirms the government's emphasis on the concept of comprehensive security and in the new threats arising from failed states, terrorism, organized crime, human rights violations, global health hazards, environmental disasters and degradation. Within this context, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has identified five strategic goals to implement its mission to "promote the security and welfare of Finland and the Finns, and work for a secure and fair world." These goals are to ensure that Finland is influential in the international community, that the international community generates security, that a fair world is realized, that Finland is successful, and that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is open and service-orientated.

According to the Finnish Government report entitled "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2004", Finland recognises that environmental problems are linked to security problems in several ways. First, the state of the global environment has worsened despite international cooperation and pollution and these trends have contributed towards the increase in conflict around the world.³ Finland also recognizes that cross-border pollution may strain relations between countries where one country pollutes the territory of another. Moreover, the environment is also affected by armed conflict.

Moreover, Finland's 2004 *Finnish Security and Defence Policy* report emphasizes that environmental security has a dual nature, including "acute threats such as oil and chemical accidents and gradually accumulating, creeping threats, such as climate change and the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea."⁴ Immediate threats have long been incorporated into Finnish security policies, thereby ensuring an environmental dimension

¹ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

² Finnish Foreign Ministry. *Finland's Interest – Global Responsibility: A Strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. 19 Oct 2005. Helsinki. www.Formin.Finland.Fi. Pages 8-9. 9 June 2006. <http://formin.finland.fi/netcomm/lmgLib/2/229/mfa_strategy_2005_en.pdf>

³ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

⁴ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

of security. However, Finland recognises that those threats that accumulate over time, where awareness is raised gradually, are more difficult to manage. Restoration of the damages can take decades and makes preventative measures the only feasible way to control such threats.

2. Finland's Overarching Environmental Security Priorities

Finland affirms the concrete relationship between environmental security and human security and has elaborated its environmental security priorities along these lines. The Helsinki Process is a concrete example of Finnish activities to enhance a multi-stakeholder dialogue on these linkages.

Finland has acknowledged most recently in *Development in an Insecure World* that climate change has far-reaching security consequences and therefore is at the forefront of Finnish environmental security priorities.⁵ Climate change-related environmental impacts are directly related to poverty, deprivation, and conflict. Finland understands that the state of the earth's environment has worsened despite international cooperation and that global phenomena such as climate change affect Finland, too. The 2004 report on *Finnish Security and Defence Policy* emphasises that "Finland will be active in preventing and combating environmental threats, one of the main areas being predicting the effects of climate change."⁶

In association with other factors, such as disparities in scarce resources, climate change has the potential to contribute to environmental stress that could result in bilateral and regional conflicts. In order to reverse the effects of climate change, the Finnish Minister of the Environment at the recent *Austrian-Finnish Economic Forum*, stressed the need to base economic growth on reduced levels of natural resource consumption and with increased levels of resource efficiency."⁷ Renewable resources should be favoured so as to diminish the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources. Finland asserts that the unsustainable consumption and production patterns of industrialized nations must be significantly reduced to protect the natural, social and human-made capital base.

Under-Secretary of State Marjatta Rasi in a recent speech, *Security, the new paradigm of interconnectedness*, affirmed Finland's commitment to "finding concrete, critical human security concerns and [formulating] steps forward to overcome them through joint action."⁸

⁵ Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Cooperation. *Development in an Insecure World: New Threats to Human Security and Their Implications for Development Policy*. 30 March 2006. Global.finland. 9 June 2006. <<http://global.finland.fi>>. Path: English, Publications.

⁶ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

⁷ Finnish Ministry of the Environment. "Is strong economic growth compatible with a good state of the environment?" 7 Mar 2005. Austrian-Finnish Economic Forum. 9 Jun 2006. <<http://www.ymparisto.fi>>. Keyword: Austrian-Finnish Economic Forum.

⁸ Rasi, Marjatta. "Security, the New Paradigm for Interconnectedness". 7 Sep 2005. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. 9 Jun 2006. <<http://www.formin.fi>>. Keyword: interconnectedness.

3. Geo-political and other Factors that have influenced Finland's Approach to Environmental Security

The Finnish Government's 2004 Security and Defence Policy asserts that environmental risks in Finland's neighbouring areas are becoming more serious, in large part because of the sizeable environmental problems originating from Russia.⁹

Finland perceives the most important of these changes to be the rapid growth of oil and chemical exports and the transfer of shipments to new oil harbours at the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland. With projected increases in oil transportation to reach 130 million tonnes by 2010, in a worse-case scenario a major oil spill would cause serious damage to Finland's population, environment, and economy. Therefore, protecting the Baltic Sea, in particular preparing for risks associated with accidents in neighbouring countries and increasing the safety of international shipping lanes will be the immediate environmental security priorities for Finland.

Finland recognises that the state of the earth's environment has deteriorated, regardless of the efforts of the international community. The degradation of the environment has resulted in climate change that has in recent years generated extreme weather conditions throughout many European countries. The 2004 Finnish Security and Defence Policy indicates that Finland will be commencing preparations "for climate change and the related increase in extreme conditions."¹⁰

4. How Finland Mainstreams Environmental Factors into Foreign and Security Policy

Finland's 2004 Defence and Security Policy recognizes that global developments, regional conflicts, and new threats have become significant factors in its approach to foreign policy.¹¹ These factors have prompted the need for a broad range of instruments to respond to these threats and to take the necessary preventive action. Finland practices an active policy of conflict prevention and crisis management as an essential part of its security policy.

The Foreign Ministry's 2005 Strategy further affirms the commitment of the Foreign Ministry to promote cooperation to prevent new security threats from materializing.¹² In terms of practical action this means: promoting the concept of comprehensive security, encouraging conflict prevention and crisis management, fostering cooperation between different actors, strengthening the EU's external capacity to act, strengthening global governance, improving the quality of development cooperation, and strengthening partnerships for sustainable development. According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as indicated in the 2005 document *Finland's Interest – Global Responsibility: A Strategy for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs*¹³, the "change in Finland's international operating environment places an emphasis on the concept of comprehensive security", with global

⁹ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

¹⁰ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

¹¹ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

¹² Finnish Foreign Ministry. *Finland's Interest – Global Responsibility: A Strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. 19 Oct 2005. Helsinki. Formin.Finland.Fi. Pages 8-9. 9 June 2006. <http://formin.finland.fi/netcomm/lmgLib/2/229/mfa_strategy_2005_en.pdf>

¹³ Finnish Foreign Ministry. *Finland's Interest – Global Responsibility: A Strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. 19 Oct 2005. Helsinki. Formin.Finland.Fi. Pages 8-9. 9 June 2006. <http://formin.finland.fi/netcomm/lmgLib/2/229/mfa_strategy_2005_en.pdf>

health threats and environmental disasters recognised as significant factors influencing international peace and security.

Throughout the past years, Finland has worked to incorporate environmental concerns into both foreign and domestic security policies. The Finnish Foreign Ministry maintains that “the environment has increasingly established itself as one important aspect of Finland's foreign and security policy...Therefore at present the environmental security does not need to 'compete' on importance with, say, political-military security issues.”¹⁴ Finland acknowledges the different dimensions and orientations in which security can manifest and perceives these different aspects of security, as part of a comprehensive definition of security.

5. How Finland Mainstreams Conflict Prevention and Livelihood Protection into Development Cooperation

Finland emphasizes that development cooperation is an important instrument of security policy. The Office of the Prime Minister in Finland's 2004 Defence and Security Policy asserts that development cooperation helps to strengthen economic resources on a long-term basis and encourages developing countries to introduce the political and administrative reforms that can reduce their vulnerability to crisis and violence. In addition to the preventive effect of long-term development cooperation, Finland maintains that targeting development cooperation at crisis areas also has considerable benefits for enhancing security.

In the Background of Finland's Development Cooperation it is indicated that Finland will assist developing countries in finding the right balance between growth, environmental considerations, and income distribution. In order to achieve this, Finland stresses “consideration for environmental factors in all development cooperation projects, not merely to combat existing threats, but also to create the preconditions for security and well-being based on multiple use [s] of natural resources.” Additionally, the principle of gender equality will be advanced by Finland in all development cooperation projects so that female and male resources will be utilized fully and redeveloped equally.¹⁵

Finland has been contributing to the promotion of peace and security through many of its bilateral projects with both its long-term cooperation partner countries and other countries, such as the Arab states and the Balkans. Finnish development cooperation increasingly will include more systematic actions and approaches for promoting internal and regional security as well as conflict prevention. Also, regionally targeted development cooperation will be further improved through Finnish support of projects that promote regional integration and stability or which have an impact on the resolution of regional problems, such as the growing environmental threats, infectious diseases, crime and drug trafficking.

6. How Finland Engages in Environmental Cooperation in Conflict-Affected Zones

Finland is increasing its efforts to strengthen multilateral cooperation in dealing with the new generation of global problems, development crises, and regional conflicts that have become significant for security. The Office of the Prime Minister in the 2004 Finnish Security and Defence Policy report maintains that the “increasingly cross-border nature of

¹⁴ Email-correspondence with Anu Parnanen-Landtman. May 16, 2006.

¹⁵ Background of Finland's Development Co-operation”. 14 Apr 2005. Embassy of Finland. 1 Oct 2006. <<http://www.findland.org.zm/backgr2.htm>>.

security threats and challenges will require increases in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in neighbourhood relations, regionally and globally.”¹⁶

As a member of the EU, Finland continues to contribute towards the strengthening of the EU's common foreign and security policy. It is developing its capacity and readiness to participate in the EU's civilian crisis management activities and military crisis management operations, including rapid response forces. Although not a member of the NATO, Finland is further developing its cooperation with the organization through participation in “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) activities. Finland also participates in promoting stability and the development of democracy in Europe within the context of the EU's new Neighbourhood Policy, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe.

In addition, Finland has been a strong proponent of environmental protection and cooperation having had an extensive array of environmental legislation already in place before joining the EU.¹⁷ Finland believes that environmental threats can only be solved through cooperation with other countries. One of Finland's primary goals in international environmental cooperation is promoting and influencing the development of legally binding international agreements and their implementation. Finland is party to more than a hundred international agreements addressing issues including: the protection of the atmosphere, ozone layer, climate change, protection of the marine environment and watercourses, access to information and participation, wastes, chemicals, environmental impact assessment, protection of flora and fauna and biological diversity, environmental protection of the Antarctic, in addition to multilateral agreements between Nordic countries and bilateral agreements with third party countries. In addition, cooperation with other member states plays a major role in Finland's environmental policy-making in the EU. The upcoming Finnish EU presidency in 2006 will provide a platform from which Finland will be able to strengthen its contribution to EU environmental policy.

7. How Finland Includes Environmental Factors in Monitoring, Mapping, and Early Warning Systems

The 2004 *Finnish Security and Defence Policy* emphasizes that early warning systems play an important role in conflict prevention and have a central role in all security matters.¹⁸ Post-conflict situations must be used to build bridges between humanitarian assistance and reconstruction so that conflict is prevented from reasserting itself. Finland, through regional cooperation, monitors the state of the environment and its changes, and is currently investigating the reasons for these changes. By the year 2008 the Ministry of the Environment will have developed indicators for the timely observation of environmental risks.

8. How Finland Promotes Environmental Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Finland engages in an active and comprehensive policy of conflict prevention and crisis management and endeavours to promote coherent objectives in terms of its security, human development, and trade policies. According to the 2004 Finnish Security and Defence Policy report, Finland considers it important to deal with conflict prevention, civilian and military crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction as a comprehensive strategy where a wide spectrum of instruments are available to different

¹⁶ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

¹⁷ Ministry of the Environment. “Finnish environmental policy in the EU – setting high standards”. 17 Jan 2006. <<http://www.environment.fi>> 23 Feb 2006. <<http://www.ymparisto.fi>>.

¹⁸ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

stages of conflict.¹⁹ Finland also aims to develop crisis management in both the civilian and military crisis management sectors, stressing coordination between the sectors. In international fora Finland is working to ensure greater policy coherence between WTO regulations and MEAs (Multilateral environment agreements).²⁰

Finland is also contributing to conflict prevention in accordance with the EU's 2001 conflict prevention programme through participation in international and regional organisations, through bilateral political relations, and through the use of financial instruments. As noted above, Finnish development cooperation will include more systematic actions and approaches for conflict prevention, with particular emphasis on improving responses to changes occurring in partner countries.

9. How Finland Contributes to Post-conflict Environmental Rehabilitation, Environmental Cooperation, and Peace-Building

The 2004 Finnish Security and Defence Policy report asserts that in post-conflict situations it is particularly important to establish bridges between humanitarian assistance and reconstruction to prevent the conflict from reasserting itself. Finland emphasizes the need to strengthen democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, with particular attention to the position of women and minorities. During the period of rehabilitation, Finland will take part in election-monitoring, in developing electoral systems, and in post-conflict reconciliation processes. Finland will contribute to the support given to the security and defence sectors, thereby supporting the ability of the country in question to take responsibility for its own security.²¹

Additionally, Finland has addressed the concern that "armed conflicts create environmental problems" in the report *Development in an Insecure World*.²²

For this reason, Finland supports the efforts of the Post-Conflict Assessment Unit (PCAU), established by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The function of PCAU is to investigate the environmental impacts of conflicts and pre-existing chronic environmental problems; to identify risks to human health and environmental health; recommend strategic priorities for clean-up and remediation; promote an environmental agenda and regional environmental cooperation; strengthen the capacity of authorities for environmental management and protection; catalyze and mobilize international support for projects; and integrate environmental considerations into the recovery and reconstruction process.²³

10. Finland and Natural Disaster and Conflict Mitigation and Adaptation

The risk of natural disasters has been emphasized in the 2004 *Finnish Security and Defence Policy*, especially in terms of Finland's vulnerability in recent years to violent storms and floods that threaten the security of country's people and infrastructure.²⁴

¹⁹ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

²⁰ Email-correspondence with Anu Parnanen-Landtman. May 16, 2006.

²¹ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

²² Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Cooperation. *Development in an Insecure World: New Threats to Human Security and Their Implications for Development Policy*. 30 March 2006. Global.finland. 9 June 2006. <<http://global.finland.fi>>. Path: English, Publications.

²³ www.unep.org and follow links to Post-Conflict Assessment Unit.

²⁴ Finnish Prime Minister's Office. *Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004*. 24 Sep 2004. Prime Minister's Office. 9 Jun 2006. <www.vnk.fi>. Path: English, Publications.

In the wake of 2004 tsunami disaster in South East Asia, the measures taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were reviewed and revealed that while crisis management activities commenced immediately, the scope of the crisis exceeded available resources. Specific sources of weakness were observed in the physical and technical resources, the insufficient number of staff members, the organization of crisis activities, and weaknesses in crisis response readiness. In response to the tsunami disaster, Finland has increased advocacy for the development of an early-warning system to mitigate the devastation that will be caused by future natural disasters, contributing where applicable.

11. Conclusion

Finland views security as comprehensive, including the new threats arising from failed states, terrorism, organized crime, human rights violations, global health hazards, environmental disasters, and degradation. The environmental security priorities to the Finnish government include mitigating the effects of climate change on poverty, deprivation, and conflict. Protecting the Baltic Sea and preparing for risks associated with accidents in neighbouring countries and increasing the safety of international shipping in the Baltic Sea is an immediate environmental security priority for Finland.

The Finnish government has also prioritized the concept of human security in its development cooperation. Through its development assistance, the Finnish government has provided support to projects that promote regional integration and stability, as well as those which have an impact on the resolution of regional problems, such as growing the environmental threats of infectious diseases, crime, and drug trafficking.

