

4-1 The Finnish Concept for Comprehensive Security by Petteri Korvala

Date : 2026 June 13 14:00

Speaker : *Petteri Korvala, Secretary General of The Security Committee in Finland (MoD)*

Petteri Korvala presented Finland's comprehensive security concept which emphasizes societal resilience across four core elements including defence, threats and risks, preparedness and response, and individual security responsibilities.

1. Finnish Comprehensive Security Concept (Petteri Korvala)

Finland's **Comprehensive Security Concept** is described in the **Security Strategy for Society**, adopted by the government early last year. It is the fifth version we have in place today.

Core Principles:

- **Holistic Approach:** Security is not just military defence but includes all aspects of societal resilience (e.g., crisis preparedness, infrastructure, cybersecurity).
- **Legal Framework:** Based on the *Security Strategy for Society* (updated annually), which sets a **common framework** for all actors (authorities, private sector, NGOs, citizens) to implement crisis preparedness and response.
- **Four Core Elements:**
 1. **Vital Functions of Society:** 25 pre-identified critical functions (e.g., healthcare, energy, communications) must be safeguarded in all circumstances.
 2. **Threats & Risks:** Addresses 21 risk scenarios (natural, human-made, technological) across all domains (land, air, cyber, space, information).
 3. **Strategic Tasks:** 156 tasks assigned to ministries, often involving **public-private partnerships** and **volunteer organizations** (e.g., Finnish Volunteer Rescue Service).
 4. **Multi-Level Governance:** Scalable from **individual to national/EU level**, with municipalities playing a key role. Citizens have both the **right and obligation** to contribute to security (e.g., training, shelters, preparedness).

Comprehensive security forms the foundation of resilience in society. The vital functions of society are safeguarded through cooperation not only among authorities but also with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and all citizens—**at all levels and in all circumstances**.

Core Elements of Comprehensive Security

We have **four core elements** in our security concept. The **third and most important** is **society's vital functions**.

- **25 years ago**, we identified certain **vital functions** that we decided to safeguard in all situations—whether in peacetime, during crises, or in wartime.
- These functions are visualized in a **diamond diagram**. The idea is that if one corner of the diamond is affected, it can collapse the entire structure. **Defense is one of these corners**.

The **second element** is **threats and risks**, which can be:

- **Human-made** (e.g., conflicts, terrorism),
- **Natural** (e.g., pandemics, climate disasters),
- **Technological** (e.g., cyber threats, AI risks).

Our strategy covers **all operational domains**: land, air, sea, **cyberspace**, the **information domain**, and **space**.

Our risk assessment is based on **national data**, updated in line with the **EU and Singaporean recognition frameworks**. It includes **21 different threat scenarios** and assesses their potential impacts on society.

Strategic Tasks and Implementation

We have **156 strategic tasks** assigned to different ministries, based on their expertise. In most cases, the **competent authority** takes responsibility. These tasks are not limited to the public sector—they are **strengthened by contracts with private sector actors** and supported by a **high level of volunteerism** in Finnish society.

Only 2 out of the 156 tasks are related to defense. This shows that our security approach is **holistic**—it addresses risks from all sectors, not just military threats.

The **fourth element** is **scalability**. Our security model is **not just national**—it is adaptable to **regional, local, and even individual levels**.

- At the **local level**, municipalities play a key role.
- Our model is **compatible with NATO and EU preparedness activities**.
- **Individuals are central** to our concept. According to our Constitution, every citizen has both the **right to security** and the **obligation to contribute** to it—whether through physical, mental, social, or ethical means. Security-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes are at the heart of our societal resilience.

Good Practices and Examples

On this slide, I've highlighted some **best practices**:

- **Voluntary participation** in civil defense (e.g., emergency services, civil guard) strengthens **social cohesion** and a **sense of responsibility** among participants.
- **Emergency preparedness requirements** provide an **additional toolbox** for serious crises.
- **Defense exercises** at national and regional levels (running since **1961**) bring together leaders from different sectors to integrate their activities into a **comprehensive security arrangement**.
- The **Emergency Supply Network** is a platform for **public-private partnerships** and **NGO collaboration**, ensuring broad societal inclusion.

Example: When Russia invaded Ukraine, **willingness to participate in military defense in Finland increased significantly**. NGOs initially faced challenges in meeting the population's needs, but we adapted quickly.

At the **national level**, we have a **Societal Security Committee** that integrates preparedness methods across all actors.

Public Perception and Trust

Let me share some **figures**:

- According to a **December 2023 survey**, **80% of the Finnish population** believe Finland is **well or very well prepared** to respond to various types of disturbances.
- **Trust in institutions** is high. Finland has been ranked **#1 in happiness** for **9 consecutive years** (OECD report). This satisfaction with public services leads to a **high willingness to defend the country**—**78% of Finns** are ready to do so by **all means necessary**, not just military.
- However, there is **room for improvement** in **citizen activation**. We need to identify **which areas require better coverage** and **what opportunities** we can provide in the future.

Key Factors for Finland's Security

Question from the audience: *What is the main security factor in Finland, in your opinion?*

Petteri Korvala:

From Finland's perspective, it's **extremely important** to focus on both the **current security environment** (including our eastern neighbours) **and the future**. We must **look ahead**, follow global trends, and assess the potential impacts of changes—such as **climate change, technological shifts, and geopolitical developments**.

From a **community perspective**, the **most critical factor** is **social cohesion**. We cannot take for granted that we will be as united as we are today. We must **avoid fragmentation**—if we lose cohesion, trust, and unity among the population, **the entire security system could collapse**.

Politicization is another challenge. Due to **economic pressures**, we see increasing polarization—for example, **families with four children or single parents** (often women) may feel excluded from the welfare system. We must ensure **no one is left behind**.

Global Context and European Cooperation

Audience comment: *We always talk about security, but the top 20 countries responsible for global emissions are not doing enough. Europe is only a small part of this—China, Iran, Russia, Brazil, South Africa... they contribute the most. Shouldn't we focus on holding them accountable?*

Petteri Korvala:

I **disagree**. Europe **is doing great work** in many areas. Globally, we should be **proud of our achievements**—whether in **green technology, digital innovation, or security cooperation**. However, we must also **lead by example** and **convince others** to follow.

China, for instance, is making **major strides in green technology**. We hope these advancements will **accelerate globally** and become accessible to all. But someone has to **take the first step, share experiences, and demonstrate success**—that's what Finland and Europe are doing.

Closing Remarks:

The **Finnish model** is based on the idea that **security concerns everyone**. It's not just about cooperation between institutions—it's about **society as a whole**.

Thank you very much.