



FINNISH SECURITY AND  
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

**NATIONAL**  

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**SECURITY REVIEW**

5.12.2019

## Phenomena falling within the field of competence of the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) and their development are evaluated in the national security review.

### INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES TARGETING FINLAND AND FINNS

**Foreign intelligence activities targeting Finland remain large-scale. Finland is of interest especially for Russian and Chinese intelligence services.**

Foreign intelligence targeting Finland is active. Dozens of foreign intelligence officers are permanently stationed in Finland. Furthermore, it is assessed that approximately the same number of foreign intelligence officers carry out short-term operational assignments in Finland every year.

Typical features of foreign intelligence services' activity in Finland are planning and long duration. Intelligence-gathering themes concerning topical phenomena vary, but primary intelligence aims include forecasting Finland's policies in various fields and influencing political decisions. In addition, foreign intelligence services take interest in Finnish technology and the related knowhow. Finland is of interest especially for Russian and Chinese intelligence services.

In the longer term, foreign states are interested in the debate in the fields of foreign and security policy, relations between the EU and NATO, Finnish energy policy, Arctic dimension, security situation in the Baltic Sea region, and Finland's economic activities and security of supply. Recently, the primary topics of interest have been, among others, Finland's actions as EU Presidency, Finland's position in EU's sanctions policy, national innovation activity, and high technology products. Supo has observed that foreign intelligence services also show interest in Finland's new intelligence legislation, as well as cyber security structures and protection against information influencing.

In the last few years, intelligence actors have been increasingly interested in investments made in Finland's critical infrastructure and other strategic fields. In addition, the security and intelligence services of certain states make efforts to control and exert pressure on their current or former citizens living permanently or temporarily in Finland. Citizens of other countries who reside in Finland or persons belonging to the native population may also become targets of such activity.

Finland has been used as transit country in the illegal export of dual-use goods. In the known cases, the seller has been misled about the end-user. Efforts are made to use the acquired technology for military purposes.

**ASSESSMENT:** Foreign intelligence activities targeting Finland will remain large-scale also in the next few years.

### CYBER ESPIONAGE

**Certain states continue to conduct cyber operations against Finland also in the near future. The interest by intelligence services in Finland's critical infrastructure has grown.**

Cyber espionage is activity where a state unlawfully acquires classified information from foreign data systems, either by intruding into the systems by technical means or by exerting pressure on an influenceable entity that has a technical access to classified information stored in another state.

Many states possess the technical capabilities to intrude into an information system but that does not mean, however, that they would use their capability to damage Finland's national security. Choosing cyberespionage as a regular approach presupposes a particular readiness to violate another state's sovereignty and a disregard for the rights of the individuals and businesses targeted by the espionage activity. The choice is easily made only in closed authoritarian regimes, where the benefits for those in power override all other interests.

Finland is constantly targeted by cyber operations for the purposes of state-backed espionage, mapping the technical environment, or exerting influence. Cyber espionage is not merely targeted at public administration information, but also at businesses' key R&D information and individuals' confidential communications. According to observations, Turla is used for targeting foreign and security political decision-making in particular, whereas some other cyber operations aim at promoting a newly industrialized country's status as a technological great power at the expense of foreign businesses.

**ASSESSMENT:** The threat to national security in the cyber environment is significant, even though it would not entail physical damages. A spying state can exert influence on the decision-making in Finland against Finnish interests and substantially restrict Finland's room for manoeuvre. The financial results of the companies essential to Finland's national economy are based on technical R&D work. The competitiveness of these companies, and thus also Finland, is hampered, if rival companies are able to steal the fruits of the companies' labour with the help of their own state apparatus. In open democratic countries governed by the rule of law the citizens' basic rights are also protected against illicit actions of a state. The states conducting espionage try to operate out of the reach of the rule of law. The smooth functioning of society is based on information, and namely on its timely availability and integrity. Critical infrastructure ending up in the control of a state conducting active cyberespionage or cyber influencing constitutes a threat to national security already before the spying state decides to use its force.

**TERRORIST THREAT IN FINLAND**

**It is likely that in the short run, the terrorist threat will remain elevated (level 2 on the four-level scale). One significant factor affecting the threat is the possible return of foreign terrorist fighters from the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq to Finland.**

The terrorist threat in Finland is elevated (level 2 on the four-level scale). In Finland, there is significant support activity for terrorism but our country does not seem to be a prime target for terrorist attacks. Supo has identified groups and individuals who have both motivation and capacity to carry out a terrorist attack. The most significant threat is posed by individual actors or small groups motivated by radical Islamist propaganda. The “Islamic State”, or ISIL terrorist organisation with its supporters remains a global threat and tries to develop new tactics in order to mount attacks.

The number of CT targets is approximately 390. The number keeps rising. The CT targets have more connections with international terrorism than before and an increasing percentage of them have taken part in armed activity or received terrorist training. Important factors affecting the terrorist threat and the rise of the number of CT targets are the increase in indigenous radicalisation and the spill-over effects of the Syria/Iraq conflict on Finland. In the short term, one key factor affecting the terrorist threat is the possible return of foreign terrorist fighters from the conflict area.

**ASSESSMENT:** It is likely that in the short run, the terrorist threat will remain elevated (level 2 on the four-level scale). The most significant threat is posed by individual actors or small groups motivated by radical Islamist propaganda and foreign fighters possibly returning from the conflict area.

**HYBRID INFLUENCING**

**The readiness of state actors to use even efficient hybrid influencing means against Fin-land remains high.**

Finland is subject to active hybrid influencing. State-run influencing activity consists of actions carried out e.g. on military, political, economic, and information and cyber sector. Efforts are made to use economic power, for example, in order to steer relations between countries towards a wanted direction. Beneficial activities are financially rewarded, whereas unwanted operations may result in asymmetric, both economic and political, countermeasures.

**ASSESSMENT:** Internationally speaking the last few years have been characterised by the diversification of the range of means used in hybrid influencing. These means include, for example, election hacking or large social media campaigns that make use of statistical analysis. This kind of development is expected to continue in the near future. The readiness of state actors to use even efficient hybrid influencing means in order to promote their objectives remains high and moderate influencing activity can also rapidly be changed towards a direction that undermines the stability in Finland. On the other hand, the investments made by Western countries in the prevention of hybrid influencing help to reduce the threat posed by it.

THREAT LEVELS
4. Severe
3. High
2. ELEVATED
1. Low

*Threat levels are used to describe the terrorist threat against Finland and Finnish interests. The factors taken into account when assessing the threat level are the available intelligence, the operational capacity and motivation of terrorist organisations or individuals and groups linked to them, and the time span of possible attack plans.*

**Terms used in the report: probability**

Highly probable	90 %
Probable	75 %
Possible	50 %
Improbable	20 %
Highly improbable	5 %

**Terms used in the report: time**

In the near future	0–6 months
Short term	6 months–2 years
Medium term	2–5 years
Long term	over 5 years



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