



A SECURE WAY TO THE FUTURE



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A Secure Way to the Future

Supo will be 70 years old this year, and the Finnish Security Police will also celebrate its centenary. In historical terms, we may say that the last few years have been an era of rapid change for Supo. Some people feel that even the rather conservative Security Police have reformed rapidly as well, with Supo transforming into a modern security and intelligence service.

Allowing for the scale of things in Finland, and particularly for the state of the national economy, Supo has gained significant additional resources. The agency currently employs about 400 people. Even though we remain clearly smaller than our peer organisations in other Nordic countries, these additional resources have boosted our ability to respond to changes in our operating environment, with new intelligence legislation further enhancing our capacity to discharge our social obligations.

If the agency has changed dramatically, then the security environment can be said to have changed even more obviously. The thought policing approach of the early Security Police was abandoned decades ago. Nowadays our work focuses exclusively on anticipating and preventing the most serious threats to national security.

Finland has always been a target for espionage, with foreign powers seeking to influence our policymaking in many ways, and their operations against us and on our soil have remained a key field of work for Supo and its predecessors throughout.

Digitisation has helped us develop the use of information and improve both productivity and efficiency, but it has also made us increasingly reliant on information networks. This motivates our adversaries to seek out and exploit the vulnerabilities of such networks. Cyber threats have sadly developed more rapidly than the ability of public authorities to counter them, and it is possible nowadays to cause even greater damage with a smaller risk of getting caught. The leading new threats are online schemes of foreign powers that target Finland and continually transform with technological progress.

2019 is not only a jubilee year for Supo, but will also mark a milestone for democracy as we vote in both Parliamentary and European elections this spring. Supo and other public authorities already had contingency plans in place during the Finnish Presidential elections, anticipating that some outside party might seek to influence the outcome, but fortunately no serious attempts of this kind were detected.

Manipulating an election result proper is difficult under Finland's old-fashioned but secure voting process. Instead, it is more likely that efforts to exert influence will focus on the political debate occurring in the run-up to elections, and on the themes that are considered at this time. Such influence strikes directly at democracy and thereby at the core of national security, and it may not be permitted under any circumstances. Contingency planning has accordingly continued as an ongoing collaboration between several public authorities.

Upcoming intelligence legislation has been the subject of a lively and partly polemical public debate. We welcome the elements of legality control and parliamentary oversight that have been included in the new legislation, which are comprehensive even by international standards. It is essential for overall acceptability that the work of Supo is continually scrutinised. It is also important and a matter of pride for us that the public trusts Supo and appreciates the work of our agency, both at times of celebration and in everyday operation. The values of the agency are legality, reliability and quality. The degree of public trust is measured annually, with the latest results indicating that nearly 90 per cent of Finns feel confidence in Supo.

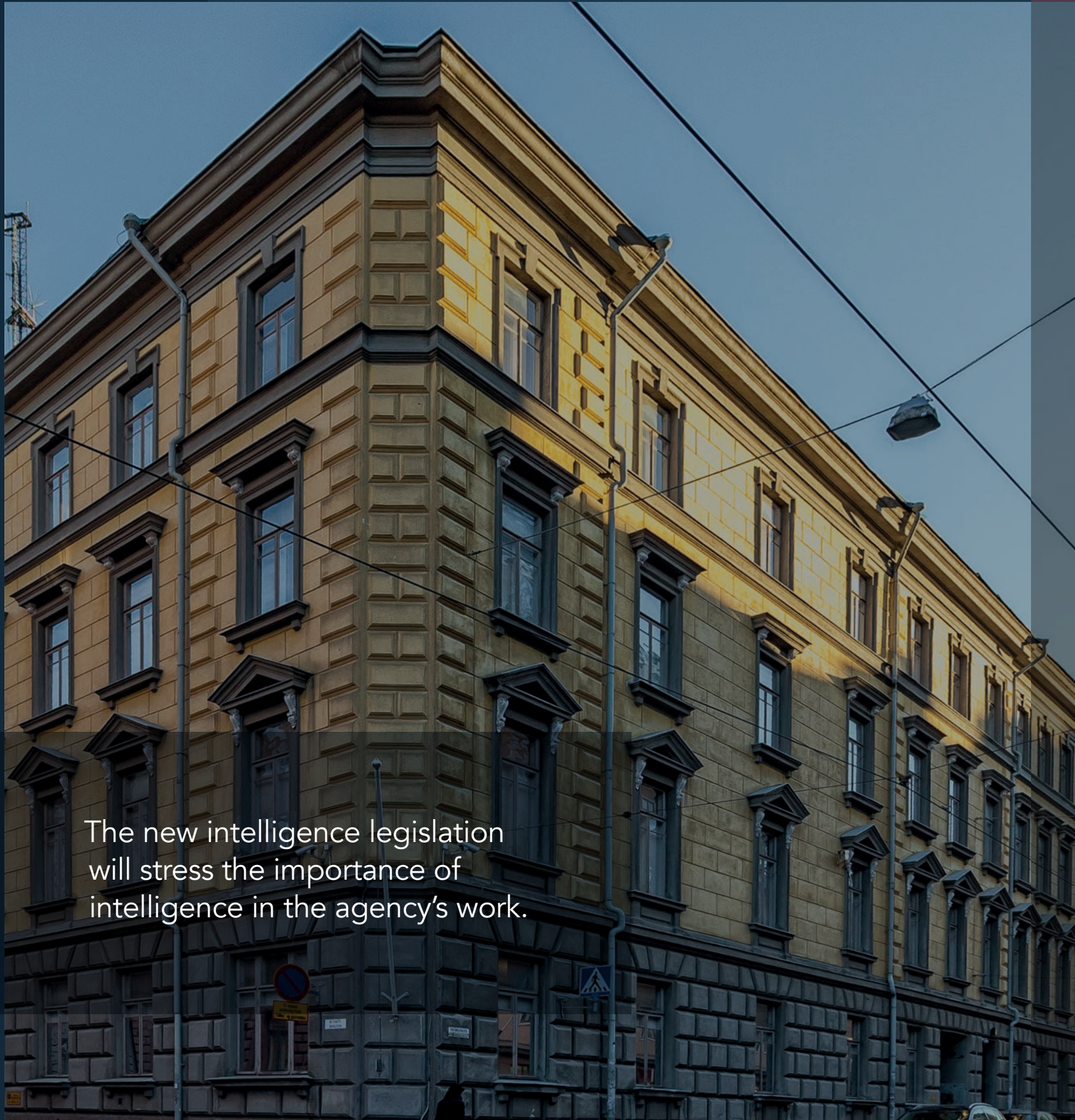
The slogan of Supo in this jubilee year is A Secure Way to the Future. While celebrating milestone years with the appropriate degree of dignity, Supo will look above all to the future and work to develop its expertise for the benefit of Finland's national security and for the people of the nation.

Antti Pelttari

Director of the Finnish Security Intelligence Service



PHOTO: Heli Blåfield



The new intelligence legislation will stress the importance of intelligence in the agency's work.

Supo's special mission

The duties and operations of Supo differ from those of other police units, because Supo focuses on preventing threats to national security. It also produces security information and intelligence to substantiate the decisions of national leaders and other public authorities. Supo differs from other police units, insofar as its work does not prioritise preliminary investigations or intelligence gathering for the purpose of launching such investigations. New intelligence legislation will abolish the preliminary investigation powers of Supo entirely.

Supo is the only Finnish civilian and police agency that co-operates and exchanges information with foreign security and intelligence services. Its operations and intelligence gathering also target activities of foreign powers that enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution under international law.

The new intelligence legislation will stress the importance of intelligence in the agency's work. Supo will become a domestic security and foreign intelligence service authorised to gather intelligence abroad and obtain information from network communications that cross the borders of Finland. Supo will nevertheless remain a police unit of the Ministry of the Interior with continued crime prevention powers. Even after the reorganisation, other police units will continue to serve as key partners of Supo.

SITUATION AWARENESS AND REPORTING

Supo produces proactive and relevant intelligence for the purpose of maintaining national security. Supo gathers national security intelligence through its own operations and with the assistance of partners. It also gathers intelligence from open sources, from police registers, and through national and international co-operation. This intelligence is used for producing analyses that are further refined into operational reports, broader strategic reports, and threat assessments. The reports are circulated to national leaders, government departments, senior police officers and other police units for information or for substantiating decisions. The role of analysis and reporting will become increasingly prominent with the introduction of new intelligence powers.

The duties of Supo also include assessing and reporting threats to national leaders. ■

Supo to play a greater role in combating national security threats

Finnish Interior Minister Kai Mykkänen hopes to reinforce Supo in response to the growing threat of terrorism and the hybrid influencing efforts of foreign powers.

A drizzle of sleet falls with the approaching night as Supo Director Antti Pelttari gets out of his official car and heads into the headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior in the government district of downtown Helsinki.

While it is part of his job to brief the President of the Republic, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and certain other key officials on a regular basis, the closest collaboration is always with his own government department and its leader. Interior Minister Kai Mykkänen is already waiting for him outside the Minister’s private office.

- Collaboration between the Ministry of the Interior and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service has been a model of efficiency, and has grown in importance since a reorganisation in 2016 that made Supo a directly subordinate agency of the Ministry alongside the National Police Board. The Ministry views Supo as a co-operative and crucial player in questions of national security, whose expertise is essential throughout the Interior Administration, Mykkänen explains.

The key functions of Supo include producing proactive and analysed intelligence to substantiate the decisions of national leaders and its role as a provider of relevant information will continue to grow in coming years.

- Supo will increasingly assume the role of a security and intelligence service when new intelligence legislation takes effect and an enlargement of powers boosts its importance in combating threats to national security, Mykkänen says.

Supo Director Antti Pelttari notes that Finland’s security environment has evolved rapidly in recent years, and this has also increased the need for close contact with the national leadership.

- The past few years have seen an increased threat of terrorism, while developments in the near abroad have further intensified the illegal intelligence operations of foreign powers targeting Finland.

Mykkänen explains that the evolving security situation is the principal motivation for seeking to develop Supo, whose expertise is not only valuable to the Interior Ministry, but also benefits partners and other branches of State administration.

- There is a growing threat of internationally inspired terrorism and State-sponsored hybrid influencing. This is the principal reason for needing to strengthen Supo, and it also explains why the Finnish Parliament took the highly unusual step of declaring the urgency of a constitutional amendment and expedited changes in our intelligence legislation by a qualified majority, Mykkänen explains.

A sudden wave of immigration a few years ago finally demonstrated the importance of being able to anticipate rapid change. Problems of uncontrolled immigration and unlawful residence continue to worry the Minister.



“We have a good standard of day-to-day security and we expect this trend to continue.”

PHOTO: Mauri Ratilainen

- The most significant risk concerns an unmanageable increase in suburban crime and violence. Although suburbs in Finland currently remain very peaceful, a significant proportion of residents in some suburbs in Sweden and many other European countries have begun living outside of the ordinary rule of law, applying their own regulations imposed by criminal organisations, and it can be difficult for police to operate in these areas.

Mykkänen also finds it increasingly important for all operators in the Interior Administration to anticipate emerging security threats more effectively, but we should not lose sight of the fact that despite emerging threats we still live in the world’s safest country.

- We have a good standard of day-to-day security and we expect this trend to continue, Mykkänen says. ■

Persistent surveillance can be enough to reveal an espionage operation

But there is much more to intelligence than surveillance and other covert information gathering methods.

It's three in the afternoon. A foreign intelligence officer working in Finland under civilian cover sets off in an official car, tailed by detectives from Supo who are keen to know who their target is going to contact. Tailed by the detectives, the target first spends a few hours in department stores and then heads for home, but suddenly takes a detour leading to an outdoor car park. The man gets out of his car and sets off along a jogging track with the Supo detectives still following. May evenings are, however, irritatingly sunny. The detectives are not wearing jogging gear, and are sadly conspicuous in these surroundings. Their surveillance work is quickly disclosed and the foreign intelligence officer vanishes into the woods, but the detectives keep going and reach a nearby youth hostel. A middle-aged man is standing there, looking even more out of place than the detectives in his dark suit.

This man is clearly waiting for someone, but when nobody turns up, he leaves with the detectives now tailing him instead. They follow him back to the car park and continue in their own car as he drives away. The man in the dark suit drives into the garage of an apartment building and then takes the lift. His pursuers cannot take the same lift, but they note the floor where it stops and the man gets out. They check the registered occupants of the building, but there is no dwelling there that would be suitable for a middle-aged man. Even the car is registered in a woman's name. The detectives decide to come back later.

They return to the garage early next morning, and after some time the man in the dark suit appears with a middle-aged woman. The couple get into their car. The detectives follow again, this time winding up at a nature reserve. They are unable to follow inconspicuously on the track through the woods and the target is lost. Their only lead remains the apartment building from which the couple set off. They stake out the building for several days, but there is no sign of the man in the dark suit. After a week the detectives decide to return to the youth hostel where they first saw the man, suspecting an attempt to repeat the botched attempt at a secret rendezvous at the same time and place a week later, as is often the way.

The detectives hide in the woods, and the man in the dark suit presently appears, soon followed by the intelligence officer who was the original surveillance target. The detectives monitor the meeting and follow the man in the dark suit to his home, at which point his identity is finally revealed. The detectives later decide to interview this man, who openly admits that he has been receiving letters on behalf of a foreign acquaintance. This acquaintance had explained that he could not receive these letters directly for some reason. The man had clearly not understood that he was thereby serving as a dead letterbox for a foreign intelligence service.

This story is a genuine example of counterintelligence surveillance conducted before the turn of the century. Such surveillance is also done nowadays, and this is precisely the kind of operation that many people are thinking of when they talk about intelligence services. The truth is nevertheless that there is much more to intelligence than this.

Intelligence often makes use of public information, such as studies, reports and news items, or such sources as radical Islamist propaganda sites. Intelligence analysts also continually monitor domestic and international news and research in their field, for example participating in seminars and consulting academic researchers.

Open sources are nevertheless often insufficient for the purposes of intelligence related to national security, and it becomes necessary to use the covert information gathering methods that are specially prescribed by law. Besides surveillance, these methods include telecommunications interception and technical tracking. Contact with covert human intelligence sources is also an important aspect of information gathering.

Various public authorities in Finland are important partners for Supo. Most of this collaboration involves other police units. Intelligence operations also rely on information obtained from international partners, such as the intelligence services of other countries. Private individuals and businesses may also provide important tipoffs.

Besides surveillance, these methods include telecommunications interception and technical tracking.

So why do we engage in intelligence gathering operations? The principal clients of Supo are the national leaders for whom Supo produces reports on various phenomena related to national security, thereby providing sufficient information to substantiate their decisions. Other public authorities or businesses that are crucial for ensuring emergency supplies, for example, also need information on potential security threats.

The intelligence analysis provided by Supo is strictly factual in foundation. No reports are forwarded until they have been peer-reviewed by analysts, inspected by supervisors and approved by management. Supo intelligence seeks not only to describe, explain and evaluate various phenomena, but also to assess what will happen next. The importance of proactive analysis will be further emphasised in future with new intelligence legislation, when the mission of Supo will be to provide even more comprehensive support for foreign and security policy-making. Functions related to the detection and prevention of terrorist attacks and other serious threats such as espionage will nevertheless also continue. ■

Supo searches proactively for weak signals

One of the functions of Supo is to predict the broad trends that will affect the future of national security in Finland.

Supo is responsible for identifying and preventing endeavours and criminal offences that jeopardise the social order and national security. Merely responding when a threat to security emerges is not enough to perform this mission successfully. Effective prevention requires the ability to identify risks, threats and opportunities in advance.

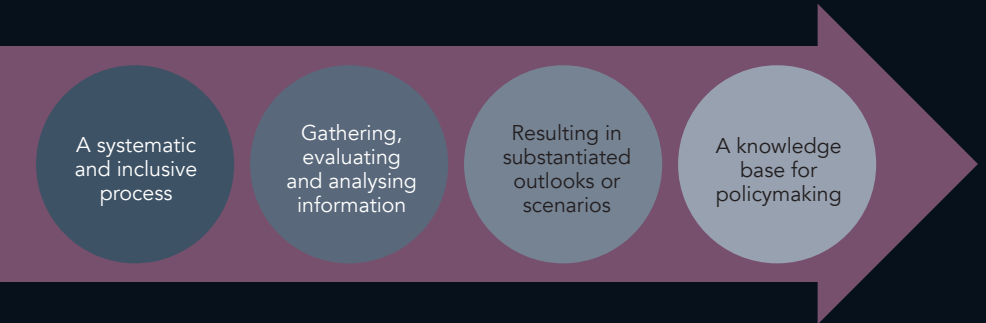
This anticipation is the cornerstone of all contingency planning. We can only prepare to face various risks if we can be aware of them in advance.

While there is no reliable way to forecast future developments in most phenomena, we can use such factors as trends, statistical propensities, dynamics and weak signals to assess how the future may unfold. We can also evaluate the future by formulating alternative scenarios of future events to assist in parallel contingency planning for more than one possible outcome.

The practicalities of forecasting require a sound grasp of the operating environment, an appreciation of dynamics and processes and creative thinking that also enables contingency planning for unlikely or surprising outcomes.

The point of forecasting at Supo is to support the decision-making process, both in respect of individual operations and strategic planning for the entire agency. Forecasting also seeks to substantiate the decisions of Supo’s clients, meaning the national leadership, specialists and other public authorities.

Forecasting is frank reflection on future options and opportunities, questioning and critical scrutiny of assumptions, and outlining of possible futures and assessment of their likelihood and desirability.



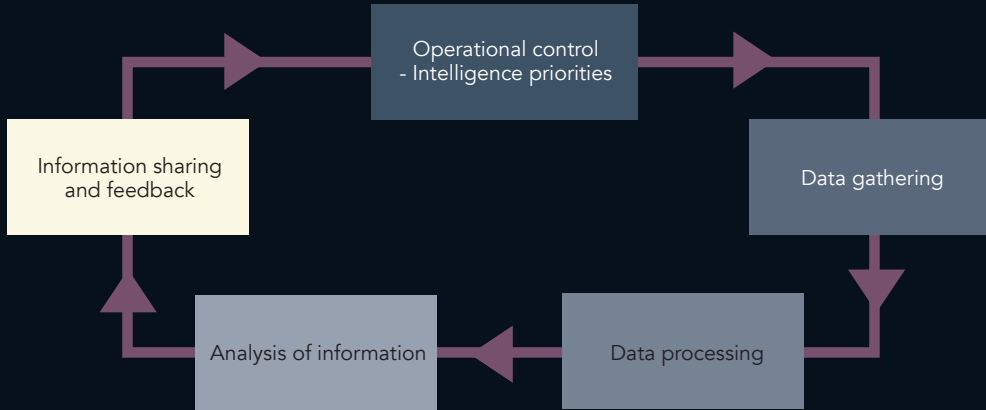
FORECASTING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Intelligence analysis is strategic analysis by Supo based on a wide variety of information sources, including intelligence gathered in the course of Supo operations or received from Finnish and international partners and gleaned from open sources. Intelligence analysis is guided by intelligence priorities that are determined according to the need for external and security policy information and drafted annually in partnership with the Ministry of the Interior. The end product of intelligence analysis often takes the form of a report for national leaders, specialists or other public authorities that summarises the analysis results.

Supo engages in forecasting at various stages of this cycle. An assessment of future trends in the phenomenon under review is appended to the report produced at the analysis stage. The forecast will cover the short, medium or long term, as necessary or as warranted by the subject in question.

The forecast of future events and phenomena also involves assessing their likelihood.

Supo endeavours to work with several other public authorities, and with researchers and organisations when making forecasts. It has arranged seminars, workshops and conferences related to forecasting. »



GLOBAL MEGATRENDS AFFECT NATIONAL SECURITY

The pace of global change is continually accelerating, and we cannot keep up without comprehensively monitoring the operating environment and anticipating changes. It nevertheless remains possible to observe fairly stable regularities and trends.

The major trends in global development that have a clear direction and are generally expected to retain their significance and direction in future are known as megatrends. Megatrends comprise numerous sub-phenomena that vary by region and may even change direction without diverting the megatrend itself. The boundaries of internal and external security of States are increasingly blurring, with global megatrends also affecting Finland’s national security.

The following megatrends have security impacts that are also visible in Finland.

GLOBALISATION. States are becoming increasingly interdependent due to trade, international treaties and cross-border flows of materials, information and people. This interdependence yields systemic stability, but also a need for co-operation. Both positive phenomena and various threats are now spreading with increasing speed from one country to another.

CLIMATE CHANGE. Global climate change is causing regional heatwaves, drought, desertification, flooding, rising sea levels, increased rainfall and storms that impair living conditions in many areas. Besides these direct effects, climate change is increasing instability and multiplying the risks of conflict. Migration flows are growing and tensions are increasing, for example in the Arctic.

CHANGES IN GLOBAL POWER STRUCTURES. Emerging economies, such as those of China and India, are increasing their global influence. Russia is also seeking a more substantial international position. The global order is becoming more complex, with a re-examination of old power structures and operating models. Changes in power structures affect general stability, relations between States and confidence in the international system.

SCARCITY OF RESOURCES. Consumption of clean water, fossil energy sources, minerals, metals, forests and land is increasing globally and reserves are shrinking, leading to increased demand for remaining natural resources and to rising prices. Competition for these dwindling resources and their uneven distribution are causing problems of availability, restlessness and conflict.

DIGITISATION. Information transfers are accelerating and expanding into new areas. The number of data communication hook-ups is increasing both regionally and in absolute terms, with items and devices increasingly connected to the Internet. Data volumes are rising, with ever more opportunities for security intrusions, leaks and cyber attacks. Society is increasingly dependent on a functioning electricity network and the availability of emergency supplies.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS. Machine learning, artificial intelligence, robots, automation, autonomous vehicles, biotechnology, biometrics, block chains, 3D printing, nanotechnology and many other emerging technologies and their combinations are changing society fundamentally. New technologies will have a major impact on work, culture, industry, education, politics and economics, incorporating great opportunities, but also risks and vulnerabilities. Technological progress can create new operating opportunities, both for intelligence organisations and extremist movements.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES. Rapid population growth, especially in the poorest countries of Africa and South Asia, and the greying of populations in Finland and other industrialised countries, are changing the structure and dynamics of societies. A flow of people away from poor countries and conflict areas, and rising migration globally, are creating tensions and challenges for policies on migration and immigrant integration.

URBANISATION. Urbanisation is migration from rural to urban areas. Cities are becoming larger and more important as their populations grow, accompanied by increasing social problems such as unemployment, social unrest and economic inequality that can create a breeding ground for various extremist ideologies.

Supo monitors these phenomena and studies their progress and potential impacts on social order and national security.

FORECASTING REQUIRES COURAGE AND BREADTH OF VISION

The contemporary world has been described using the acronym VUCA, indicating a world that is rapidly changing, complex and difficult to predict, offering no way to detect and prevent all risks and vulnerabilities.

A VUCA world is characterised by the following features:

- V** = Volatile, meaning an unstable place in which changes in the operating environment are rapid and variable in direction and strength
- U** = Uncertain, meaning hard to forecast
- C** = Complex, indicating a large number of change factors and difficulty in finding causal connections
- A** = Ambiguous, referring to difficulties in conceptualising and specifying

Operating in a VUCA world is a challenge for individuals and organisations. Conventional planning approaches that rely on previous trends continuing into the future cannot reliably predict future developments. Working in a VUCA world requires flexibility, adaptability, resilience, an active approach, tolerance of uncertainty, decentralisation and continuous learning. It also requires anticipation. Even though the operating environment is difficult to forecast and foresight is sometimes quite impossible, assessing future options and opportunities and boldly considering even unlikely trends will prepare us for surprising changes and unpredictable threats.

A bold approach is required in forecasting, as new ideas about the future will often sound surprising or incredible at first, only beginning to normalise gradually over time. The first symptoms of change are often called **weak signals**. Some of these lead to significant social shifts, while others fade away with no major change occurring. Forecasting involves the risk of predictions seeming incredible when first suggested, or in retrospect if they envisage things that do not come to pass. Even though some forecast development does not occur as projected, this does not signify any failure of analysis. Often the very process of forecasting yields a new understanding of the subject that could be beneficial elsewhere.

Black swans are events that are extremely unlikely and difficult to predict. No signals of these events have necessarily been detected in advance, or insufficient attention has been paid to signals that were detected. The matter may have been politically sensitive or so unpleasant that people refused to see the approach of the event.

Though many future trends seem worrying, it should be noted that several indicators suggest more favourable progress. Reductions in poverty, improvements in living conditions and higher literacy have increased and will probably continue increasing the wellbeing of the world’s people in the future. The overall development of humanity will not necessarily regress at all if it manages to respond to the major challenges of megatrends and avoid the greatest risks and conflicts. By many standards, Finland remains the world’s most stable, free and safe country. Finnish people are among the happiest in the world and trust one another. Supo is working to guarantee that this security continues. »

Artificial intelligence and machine learning bring new dimensions to influence operations by foreign states while enhancing and accelerating the achievement of objectives.

STATE INFLUENCE IS INCREASING, WITH METHODS GROWING IN SUBTLETY

The influence of foreign states has become more diversified as a phenomenon. From the perspective of Supo, this is no longer confined solely to illegal intelligence operations nowadays, but encompasses a wide range of methods of influence that are often hard to recognise, practiced by agents who may be difficult to identify with certainty. Current information networks enable innovative ways of engaging in both conventional political, military, economic and technical scientific intelligence, and in other forms of State influence. For example cyber attacks, fake news spread over social media and information leaks are ways for a foreign State to act on its desire to influence the social atmosphere and policymaking in a target State. Artificial intelligence and machine learning bring new dimensions to such operations while enhancing and accelerating the achievement of objectives.

As a basic function of a democratic system, elections are a particularly attractive target of influence, and various attempts to subvert elections will probably be encountered in Finland also. Direct or indirect efforts may be made to influence political parties, candidates and discussion themes. Attempts may also be made to influence a target State through economic operations, such as corporate acquisitions or real estate purchases. The critical infrastructure of society is a potential target of influence in particular.

Methods of exerting State influence are likely to become increasingly diverse and subtle, and will be applied in increasingly novel ways, so that the challenge of the future will become one of identifying and counteracting such attempts. Particularly in the cyber environment, identifying vulnerabilities and guarding against attacks is becoming increasingly important. The overall amount of State influence will probably increase, as many States are keen to expand their power but seek to avoid direct military conflict.

Supo is working to anticipate and combat harmful State influence targeting Finland. Effective collaboration and communication with other public authorities, the business community and citizens are important aspects of this work.



CONFRONTATIONS INCREASE THE POPULARITY OF RADICAL IDEOLOGIES

Global megatrends also affect the phenomenon of terrorism in Finland. Climate change, scarcity of resources and demographic changes are causing regional instability, with unstable regions in turn providing potential breeding grounds for conflict and various forms of radicalisation. Political fragility, social exclusion and the construction of hostile figures increase confrontation between various population groups and increase the popularity of radical ideologies.

Radical Islamist terrorism remains the principal form of terrorism affecting Finland's national security. Its roots are highly extensive, with new coalitions emerging from old networks, even as some older organisations wither. While the decline of the ISIL terrorist organisation in the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq is currently undermining the organised operations of terrorists, radical Islamist ideology remains a strong global influence that also affects Finland. The significance of Al Qaeda remains crucial, and this movement may also seek to organise spectacular terrorist attacks claiming huge numbers of victims. The recent terrorist attacks that tend to be implemented by lone radicalised operators using simple methods have been typical of ISIL and of terrorists inspired by its activities.

Technological progress is also providing new opportunities for terrorists. Machine learning, artificial intelligence, robots, autonomous vehicles, biotechnology, 3D printing and nanotechnology are also within reach of terrorists, and their applications will probably also be used for terrorist purposes. Faster and more extensive communications enable more rapid planning of terrorist attacks, and quicker access to feedback on their impacts that sustains the interest of those responsible.

The overall threat of terrorism has grown with the spread of radical Islamist ideology and the deepening of radicalisation. Technological progress may diversify this threat, but simple ways of acting will also remain, as they are easy to implement and copy.

Extreme right wing and nationalist movements also draw motivation from global changes. While the popularity of these ideologies largely reflects concerns and tensions arising from migration, the wide range of background factors also includes the fear of social exclusion, racism and nationalism. Extreme right-wing movements will continue to affect Finland's security situation, as their followers are often predisposed to using serious violence in order to achieve their own goals. Domestic extremism in its present form nevertheless poses no threat to national security. No substantial change is likely in this respect, even though the movement shows no immediate signs of weakening. ■



PHOTO: Akseli Valmunen

"The Chief Strategic Analyst must be up to speed on all phenomena that fall within the purview of Supo; something that cannot be done working alone."

Working for Supo: Saana Nilsson

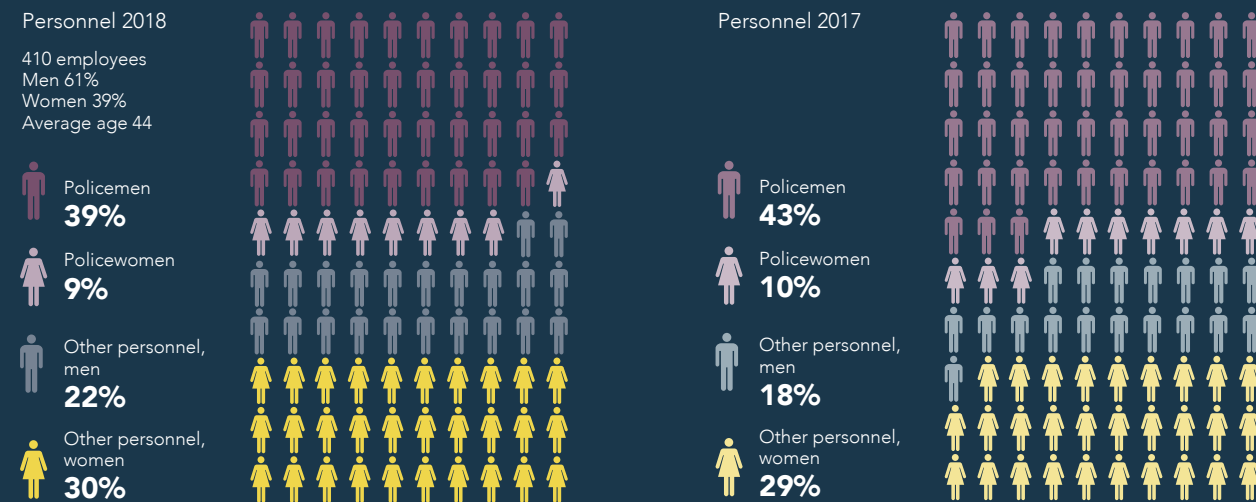
"My name is Saana Nilsson, and I am the Chief Strategic Analyst at Supo. My working days consist of intelligence analysis management, development and training. Analysis work calls for a combination of perseverance and a capacity for rapid reaction. It demands creativity, objectivity, self-criticism and humility. You have to be able to learn and absorb new things all the time.

The Chief Strategic Analyst must be up to speed on all phenomena that fall within the purview of Supo; something that cannot be done working alone. One of the best aspects of this job is working with Supo subject specialists.

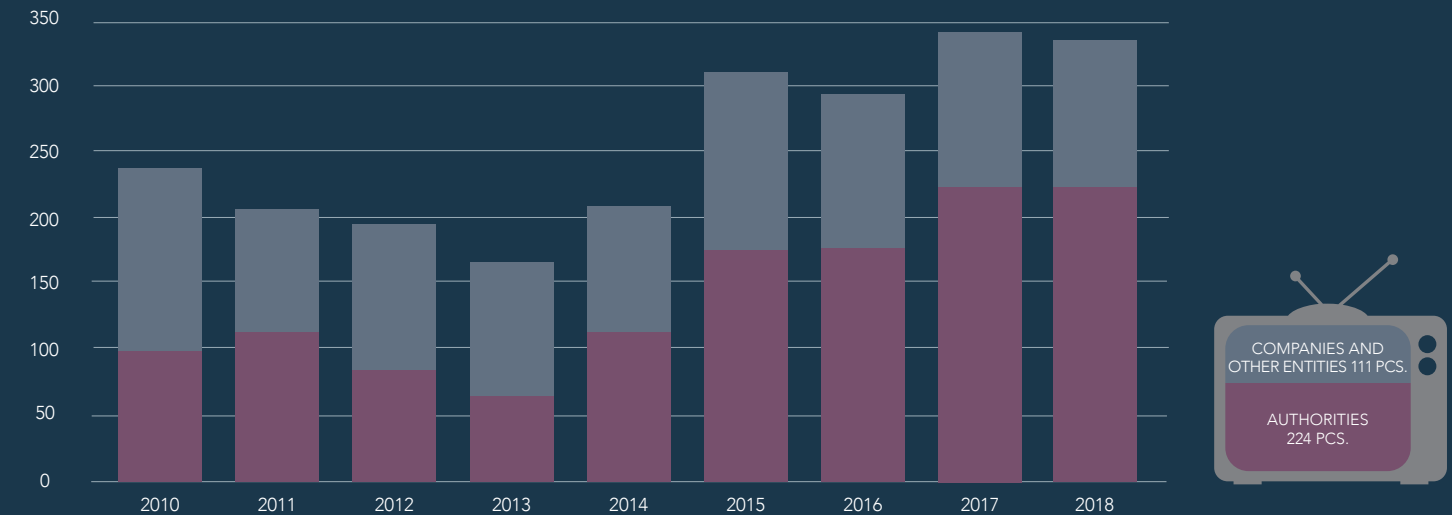
My own academic background is a Master's degree in political science from the University of Helsinki, majoring in political history. I have already been working at Supo for more than a decade, holding various positions and discharging a range of duties at the Situation Centre and in international specialist and analytical functions." ■

Supo in figures in 2018

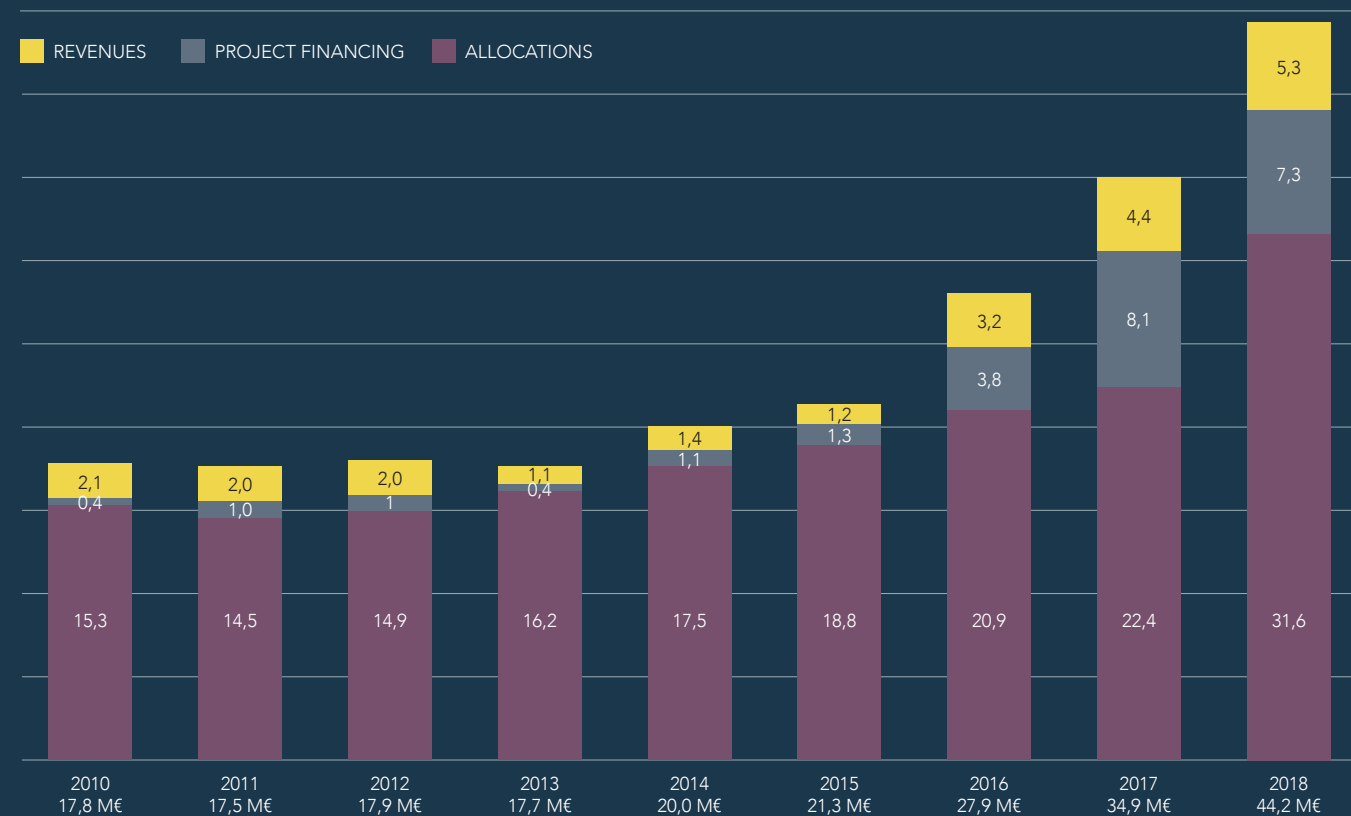
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL



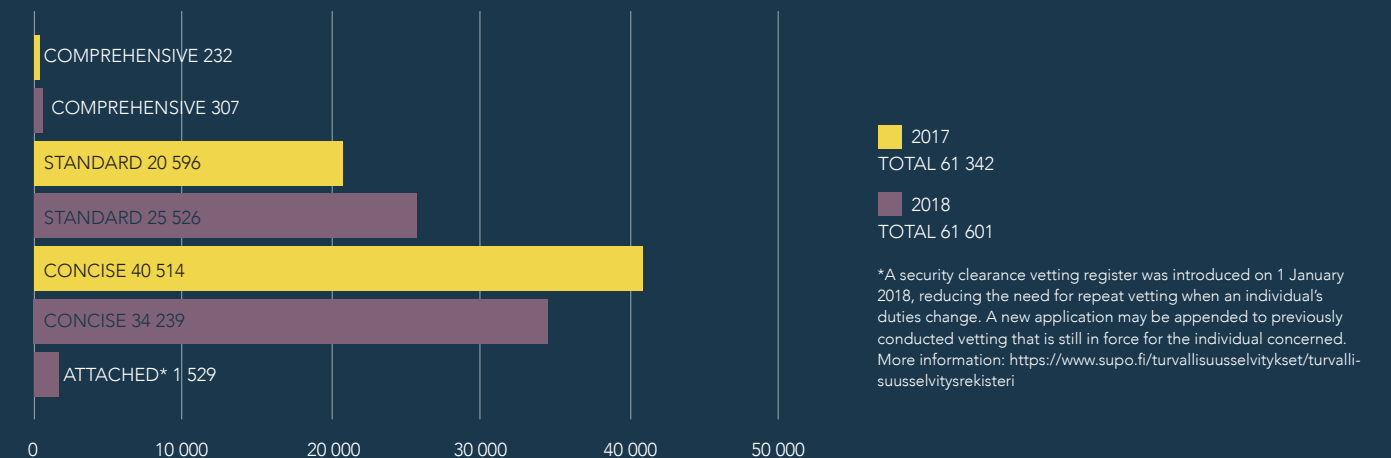
BRIEFINGS HELD BY SUPO



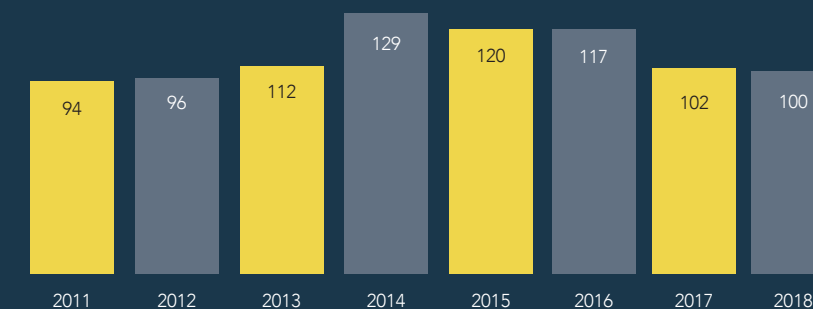
ECONOMY



SECURITY CLEARANCES



REPORTS BY SUPO



"There's always information in Supo reports that you can't find elsewhere"

Though Supo analysts prepare briefings for national leaders, meeting partners is an equally important part of their work.

The office bookshelf is loaded with publications on international politics, and a large map adorns the wall. A Supo analyst taps away diligently at the computer, putting the finishing touches to the latest report for the national leadership.

PHOTO: Akseli Valmunen

Reporting proactive and relevant information to substantiate the policy-making of national leaders and government partners is one of the most important functions of Supo. The information is shared with partners both in written form and at various briefings that provide opportunities to meet representatives of stakeholders and partners. Some reports in 2018 were even prepared as public editions for release on the Supo website.

About one hundred written reports are compiled annually, dealing with subjects of importance for foreign and security policy leaders. No report is ever created by a single analyst working alone. They are all the work of many minds.

- There's always some information in our reports that you can't find elsewhere. This is the only way that we can discharge our mission of providing proactive and relevant information, explains one analyst who left a career in higher education to join Supo.

The information collected in these reports comes from various sources, including details gathered in the course of Supo operations, information obtained from partners, and material gleaned from the public domain. New civilian intelligence legislation will give Supo better opportunities for effective information gathering.

Besides producing written reports, Supo engages with stakeholders by meeting key operators in the fields of ensuring emergency supplies and national security, including government departments and other operators in State administration, and certain private businesses. About 340 meetings of this kind were arranged in 2018.

These meetings provide opportunities to advise particular concerned parties of information relevant to them that has come to the notice of Supo. The process begins by setting out the broader context, and then moving towards more tangible details that a business or other organisation would be wise to take into account in its own operations.

Often these meetings concern an issue that an organisation may have overlooked and Supo is keen to take this up proactively, but bilateral exchanges of information are also common.

- This is the only way of jointly formulating an optimally complete overview of a case, the analyst explains.

Stakeholder work is an integral part of the job of a Supo analyst, and much of this work is done with partners beyond the confines of the agency.

- Our partners are often closer to the phenomena that interest us, so their views are important indicators for us. ■

Supo's core duties

SUPO COUNTERS ESPIONAGE

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service (Supo) is tasked with countering foreign intelligence activities directed against Finland and preventing damage caused by them. Supo

- » counters illegal human intelligence and influence operations conducted by foreign powers against Finland.
- » counters espionage conducted by foreign powers against Finland on data networks.
- » prevents the dissemination or transit of technology, devices and expertise required for making weapons of mass destruction from or via Finland.
- » maintains situational awareness and reports on phenomena or projects that endanger Finland's national security.

SUPO COUNTERS TERRORISM

Supo is responsible for counter-terrorism operations in Finland. Supo

- » conducts intelligence operations with a view to detecting and preventing the terrorist offences referred to in chapter 34a of the Criminal Code of Finland.
- » counters terrorist attack plots against Finland.
- » is responsible for exchanging international counter-terrorism intelligence.
- » serves as an operational specialist organisation in relation to terrorism.
- » develops, maintains and promotes national situational awareness related to the threat of terrorism.

SUPO AND EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS

- » Supo is tasked with monitoring the nature of activities conducted by domestic extremist movements and assessing whether these activities pose a threat to national security.
- » Local police departments are responsible for assessing security threats to public safety and public order.

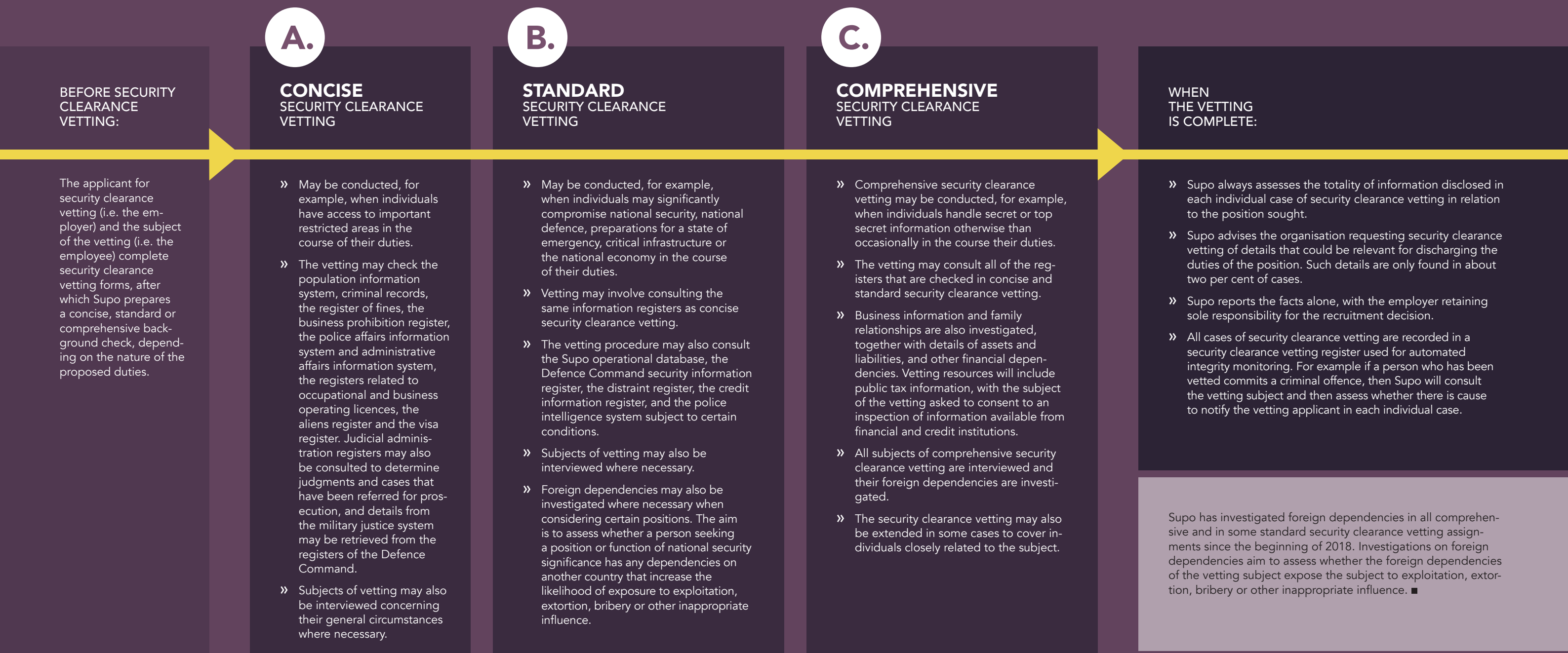
SUPO GRANTS SECURITY CLEARANCES

- » Supo conducts all Finnish security clearance investigations, with the exception of investigations within the defence administration.
- » The security clearance procedure seeks to prevent activities that endanger national security or significant private economic interests.
- » Supo also conducts facility security clearance investigations, and issues opinions on citizenship and residence permit applications and other subjects.



The stages of security clearance vetting

Security clearance vetting is a procedure for checking the background of employees appointed to positions of particular importance for national security or for very substantial private economic interests.



Radical Islamist ideology retains a firm foothold of support in Finland

The greatest immediate threat still comes from radicalised individuals and from radical networks with international connections.

The potentially radicalised loner, the internationally networked terrorist fighter, the charismatic and influential ringleader, the foreign terrorist fighter returning to Finland and the prospective major financier. These are all the kind of people who could be identified as targets of counter-terrorism operations in Finland. While the number of such targets almost doubled in the space of a few years, this increase stabilised in 2018 and now stands at about 370 people. On the other hand, there has been no significant reduction in this respect and the terrorist threat assessment remained at **level 2: Elevated** throughout the year.

The conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the phenomenon of foreign fighters also had repercussions in Finland during 2018, with men, women and children who have travelled from Finland still remaining in the conflict area. They continue to be linked to people living in Finland who support or endorse terrorist activities. The operations of the terrorist organisation known as Islamic State (ISIL) and its efforts to encourage acts of terrorism extend beyond the confines of the conflict area despite the losses sustained by the organisation in recent times. ISIL and its supporters pose a security threat in the long term, and territorial losses will not eliminate the networks that it has established. Foreign fighters and their international links will continue to affect the terrorist threat in Finland.

The propaganda output of ISIL has also experienced setbacks, although some propaganda targeting Finland did appear during 2018. This propaganda still describes Finland as a potential, though not a prime target for attacks. The volume of professionally produced terrorist propaganda has

fallen overall, with propaganda increasingly shifting over to various instant messaging platforms and independent creation by individual users. This propaganda and the radical Islamist ideology that it propagates have retained a firm following in Finland. Lone operators form a broader challenge associated with propaganda, and the threat that they pose continues to be critical both in Finland and throughout Europe. Attacks inspired or assisted by lone radicalised individuals or small groups remain the principal threat.

In June 2018 a District Court issued its judgement on a terrorist attack that took place in the south-western city of Turku in 2017, sentencing the perpetrator to life imprisonment on two counts of terrorist murder and eight counts of attempted terrorist murder. The judgement became legally final after the defendant withdrew his appeal in January 2019. Individuals have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment for various terrorist acts across the whole

of Europe, and one upcoming concern is that these individuals will continue their radical activities after they are released. Such individuals could also make their way to Finland. The foreign fighters and local members of terrorist organisations captured by various parties in conflict areas also pose a security problem in the long term.

2018 was a fairly quiet year for domestic extremist movements in Finland, with no developments emerging that would significantly jeopardise national security.

Propaganda increasingly shifting over to various instant messaging platforms and independent creation by individual users.

An action to disband the National Socialist Nordic Resistance Movement continued in August at the Appeal Court of Turku, which upheld the previous judgement of the Tampere Region District Court and ordered the dissolution of the organisation's Finland section together with its subordinate branches and associations in a judgement issued at the end of September. The Nordic Resistance Movement then sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The crimes associated with the far right were mainly individual cases of assault and menace. Anarchist radicalism mainly took the form of sporadic attempts to disrupt or prevent far right demonstrations, with more extensive violent clashes avoided after police action was taken to keep the parties far enough apart. ■

Closer counter-terrorism co-operation with police departments

Supo and the Oulu Police Department have already been refining new operating approaches for a couple of years.

A buzz of chatter emanates from the conference room. Senior Detective Superintendent **Konsta Korhonen** of Oulu Police Department and Supo Head of Northern Regional Office **Ilkka Entchev** have plenty to talk about. They are keen to find optimal solutions to the common problems that they have faced with their teams in Oulu.

Supo has eight regional offices outside of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Besides Oulu, these offices are located in Turku, Tampere, Lappeenranta, Kuopio, Vaasa, Joensuu and Rovaniemi. They discharge a wide spectrum of Supo functions, such as counter-terrorism and counter-espionage, and collaborate closely with other operators in the region. Police departments are naturally among their most important partners.

The technology and intelligence unit of the Oulu Police Department led by Senior Detective Superintendent Konsta Korhonen is responsible for preventative operations in the region, and for monitoring persons of interest. The principal current concern of counter-terrorism in the Oulu Region focuses on radicalised individuals. Co-operation is particularly important in the light of observations in recent years suggesting that radicalisation can occur very rapidly, so it is important to recognise and act on the weak signals that provide early warnings of threats. The number of individuals targeted by counter-terrorism work (CT targets) in the Oulu region has also increased in recent years.

Supo and the Oulu Police Department have been working closely together to improve the processing of tip-offs and in preventative operations since 2016. Tip-offs were previously handled by Supo alone, but as the police department is responsible for regional security, public order and public safety, it was natural to collaborate more closely. In practical terms, this has meant system development and information transfers in Oulu over the last two years, together with training to share the expertise of Supo with the police department.

It is important to recognise and act on the weak signals that provide early warnings of threats.



Ilkka Entchev (left)
and Konsta Korhonen.

PHOTO: Kai Tirkkonen

A new approach has been adopted throughout Finland, allocating the responsibility to monitor some of the CT targets to police departments and some to the NBI, while part of the targets still remain under Supo's responsibility.

- The motivation for closer co-operation in preventative work was the ambition of developing a common situation awareness that would avoid both reduplication of effort and blind spots, Korhonen explains.

Entchev adds that co-operation is also a way of ensuring that no tip-off goes uninvestigated and that someone is clearly responsible for following up every lead.

- The smooth co-operation of old has already evolved into a partnership, Korhonen says. ■

Terrorist threat assessment

The most significant terrorist threat in Finland is still posed by individual actors or small groups motivated by radical Islamist propaganda or by the encouragement of terrorist organisations. These persons are likely to have either direct or indirect links to radical Islamist networks or organisations. The Finnish Security Intelligence Service (Supo) has learned of more serious terrorism-related plans and projects in Finland. Foreign terrorist fighters departing from Finland have gained significant positions within ISIL in particular, and have an extensive network of relations in the organisation.

Supo has some 370 counter-terrorism (CT) targets. The number of CT targets almost doubled in a few years but now the increase in their number has stabilized. In addition to rising numbers, the links of CT targets to terrorist activity are also increasingly direct and serious. An increasing proportion have taken part in armed conflict, expressed willingness to participate in armed activity, or received terrorist training.

Finland is viewed as a Western country and part of the anti-ISIL coalition, and propaganda is produced in the Finnish language and directed against Finland. This propaganda incites attacks in Finland. Efforts have been made to direct attacks against all states and groups that are considered hostile. This increases the threat of attacks in Finland.

Active members of radical Islamist networks take part in the operations of terrorist organisations, especially in the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq. Factions operating in Finland have so far focused on support activities and spreading the ideology. The networks seek growth both by radicalisation and by finding new members in other ways. Radical networks operating in Finland may also be affected by changes and strategic choices taking place in the conflict zone and in the leadership of terrorist organisations. Tensions between various ethnic groups are also likely to be reflected in the diasporas in Finland. This may facilitate radicalisation.

Finland also has sites representing other countries and various religious interests, and international events that face a heightened threat both from terrorist organisations and individual radical actors.

The threat of terrorist attacks against Western interests and tourist attractions has increased, and Finns may also become victims of attacks targeting western countries.

TERRORIST THREAT IN FINLAND

4. Severe

3. High

2. ELEVATED

1. Low

THREAT LEVELS

Threat levels are used to describe the terrorist threat against Finland and Finnish interests. The factors considered when assessing the threat level are available intelligence, the operational capacity and motivation of terrorist organisations or individuals and groups linked to them, and the time frame of possible attack plans. The aim of the classification is to provide a clear picture of the nature of the threat against Finland, and to determine whether the threat level has changed since the previous assessment. ■

Foreign Intelligence Services seek to influence policymaking in Finland

Foreign intelligence services focused last year on such topics as the NATO debate, the position of Finland concerning the sanctions policy of the European Union, and international military collaboration.

A disproportionately large number of foreign intelligence personnel are stationed in Finland relative to the size of the country, and the intelligence operations of foreign powers are characteristically both continuous and sustained. Finland is of particular interest to the intelligence services of Russia and China. Despite varying intelligence enquiries concerning current affairs, a long-term background interest in Finland remains.

The goals of the intelligence operations of foreign powers are to anticipate various aspects of policy in Finland and to influence the policymaking process. Intelligence services employ a wide array of information gathering instruments and methods in pursuit of these goals, from monitoring of open sources to unauthorised intrusion into data networks. One of the most important approaches used in Finland is still nevertheless endeavouring to identify and acquire covert human intelligence sources to provide information that would not otherwise be available. Foreign intelligence organisations also seek to acquire the assistance of individuals who may facilitate efforts to exert direct or indirect influence on policymaking and public opinion.

In 2018, as in previous years, the key topics of interest to foreign intelligence services in Finland included the NATO debate, foreign and security policy guidelines, the position of Finland with respect to EU sanctions policy, and the security situation in the Baltic Sea region. Supo also noted the interest of foreign intelligence services in the activities of Finland as Chair of the Arctic Council, in the preparations for new intelligence legislation, and in Finland's involvement in international military collaboration.

The findings of Supo suggest that the security and intelligence services of certain countries have continued campaigns of surveillance and harassment targeting individuals residing in Finland. These individuals are typically classified as political opponents in their countries of origin or belong to a particular ethnic minority. Already some years ago Supo also proposed the criminalisation of spying on refugees in Finland. Espionage of this kind not only jeopardises national security, but also infringes the fundamental rights of citizens and other permanent residents in Finland.

Counter-intelligence functions also include proliferation control, meaning the detection and prevention of illegal exports of dual-use items. Supo continued investigating cases last year in which civilian technology that can also be used for military purposes was exported via Finland. The seller in such cases has been deceived as to the identity of the end user. The principal problems of proliferation control relate to the complex international arrangements and the secrecy measures that are taken in these operations to conceal the true end users. Proliferation control requires close collaboration between Supo and other public authorities. ■

Speaking of hybrid influencing

Hybrid influencing is an activity of superpowers, in particular seeking to apply a wide range of measures to promote their own interests and damage target States, for example by curbing national self-determination. This activity exploits the vulnerabilities of the target State, often attempting to conceal the real agent working in the background.

Finland is a target of active influencing operations. Although hybrid influencing is not a new phenomenon, its intensity and diversification have made it a greater threat to security. State actors are increasingly willing to apply far-reaching methods of exerting influence, and in the case of Finland these have included or could encompass information campaigns, political pressure, destabilisation of borders, increased economic influence and exploitation of negative phenomena in the economy, exerting influence through infrastructure projects, cyber operations and displays of military power. ■

This activity exploits the vulnerabilities of the target State, often attempting to conceal the real agent working in the background.

New intelligence legislation will help significantly in combating cyber espionage

Cyber espionage may gain support using insiders and through human and signal intelligence.

Supo learned of several cyber espionage cases considered to involve foreign government sponsorship in 2018. This espionage targeted the Finnish government and also businesses and private individuals. Though cyber espionage operations by foreign governments are not a new phenomenon, they have assumed new forms as the security practices of their target organisations have improved. Cyber espionage no longer necessarily targets the organisation of interest directly, but focuses on closely associated, less security-conscious organisations and individuals, who may be used either directly in information gathering or as a channel of access to the systems that are the target proper.

Cyber espionage offers a cost-effective and almost risk-free way for intelligence services to obtain information concerning the government of a target country and the intellectual capital of enterprises. It can also be used to map information systems and data networks in order to find ways of disrupting them, for example at times of conflict.

Cyber espionage may also be supported using insiders and through human and signal intelligence. A security anomaly disclosing successful or attempted cyber espionage may form part of a broader continuum, whereby a foreign power systematically seeks to acquire information on a target organisation in the long term.

This risk is exacerbated by the fact that the IT services of many organisations are increasingly outsourced to service providers and cloud services. It is important for outsourcing agreements to consider technical security and its costs in order to ensure that the ability to identify anomalies and manage information is not impaired. Collaboration must be seamless between the organisation and its external service provider. For example, the service provider must know its client well enough to ensure that it is able to identify security anomalies.

Centralising information on a cloud service in an uncontrolled way can also lead to new kinds of security hazard, with a security anomaly that affects one organisation potentially jeopardising the archives of many organisations.

In combating cyber espionage by foreign governments, collaboration is particularly important between the security authorities, the Traficom national cyber security centre, the security industry, and telecom companies. New intelligence legislation will help significantly in combating cyber espionage.



TURLA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Turla is the public name used for a certain class of cyber espionage tools and network infrastructure that has been openly associated with Russian security authorities.

Turla is considered one of the most secretive but capable cyber espionage operations. Unlike many other cases, information stolen by Turla has not been used in information operations or to bring down information networks or systems.

Turla is one of the most innovative cyber operators targeting Finland, continually developing new intrusion and mapping methods and tools for cyber espionage. The break-in attempts and mapping operations of Turla are detected from time to time in government agencies such as diplomatic missions operating in Russia. Lately they have also been targeting organisations and individuals closely linked to these agencies with increasing frequency.

Turla can be expected to continue operating against its customary targets. These activities will incorporate signal and human intelligence methods with a view to enhancing intelligence and facilitating the targeting of operations and intrusion into terminals. ■



The world of cyber espionage has become more aggressive

Targets of cyber espionage do not necessarily notice that they are being spied on.

- Supo has a broad overview of the entire diverse field of cyber espionage. The world of cyber espionage has become more aggressive, now even including forcible intrusion in systems,” explains **Jyrki Kaipanen**, the head of cyber functions at Supo.

Various authorities work to ensure cyber security in Finland, with Supo responsible for investigating and combating the cyber espionage operations of foreign powers. The National Bureau of Investigation and local police departments investigate cybercrimes such as denial of service attacks, extortion by malware and CEO scams. The Defence Forces combat military cyber threats, and the Traficom national cyber security centre oversees and maintains cyber security situation awareness.

Even though there are several operators in the field of cyber security, they work smoothly together. There is also close collaboration with the business community, telecom operators, Internet service providers and universities. Supo seeks to increase awareness of threats, and accordingly endeavours to prevent cyber espionage by such means as arranging training for the people who maintain critical infrastructure, enterprises involved in ensuring emergency supplies, and key personnel in central government.

State actors may also focus their cyber espionage campaigns on private individuals and public servants.

“Cyber espionage is often so subtle that its target may not even be personally aware that it is happening.”

- We have already achieved a good international standard in malware investigations, Kaipanen explains, stressing that in the run-up to implementing new legislation on network traffic intelligence, the capacity of Supo to combat cyber espionage relies on information concerning suspected cyber espionage received from international partners. The new legislation will streamline the disclosure and prevention of online espionage, with network traffic intelligence also enabling direct detection of the cyber espionage operations of foreign powers over information networks.

Cyber espionage may have significant financial implications for its victim. Losing valuable information may not be the only cost incurred through espionage targeting the R&D work of an enterprise, for example. It may also be necessary to modernise the entire IT system of the business.

Kaipanen notes that while ordinary citizens have no cause for concern, everyone working in a significant position and handling important information should appreciate that they may become a target of the intelligence operations of a foreign power.

- Security awareness has sadly still not improved as much as we would like. We should not be lulled into a false sense of security, and should remember that anyone can become an intelligence target, whatever the circumstances. Cyber espionage often also involves human intelligence and open source intelligence, Kaipanen explains.

- Even health centre physicians or financial specialists working for export businesses may become espionage targets, as they may hold important information or enjoy access to significant confidential details. Cyber espionage is often so subtle that its target may not even be personally aware that it is happening. ■

Ten questions on civilian intelligence legislation

1.

What does Finland need intelligence legislation for?

The intelligence laws were enacted because new intelligence methods provide more effective ways of ensuring the security of Finland. The aim is to enable earlier intervention in various schemes that threaten national security, such as espionage and terrorism. The background is a profound shift in international politics, with public revelations of radical measures taken by foreign intelligence services in some European countries already serving as one indication of the elevated level of tension.

Foreign and security policy in general evolves more quickly nowadays, and national leaders genuinely need more rapid and extensive access to policymaking information. The geographical location of Finland also naturally affects this.

Many other countries seek benefits from engaging in intelligence gathering, for example by spying on businesses or on the governments of other States. The intelligence operations of Finland seek solely to protect the country and its residents.

2.

What is the practical impact of the new laws?

Ordinary citizens will not really notice the intelligence legislation in any immediate way. The aim is to ensure that Finland remains the world's safest country and to forestall potential threats as effectively as possible. New powers will help to tackle such problems as espionage more effectively, and very significantly improve the prospects for combating and disclosing cyber-espionage. Successful intelligence operations can nevertheless rarely be reported in public.

It is also important to note that there will be no magic change when the new law takes effect. Supo will still be only a minor public agency with a wide range of responsibilities, and a pressing need to prioritise its functions. It also takes time to set up new operations.

The longer-term aim of the new legislation is also to ensure that foreign and security policymaking is based on a larger volume of higher standard information, which will also help to improve security.

6.

What is network traffic intelligence?

Network traffic intelligence operations are conducted when this can provide further details of a known and serious threat. The threat must be serious enough to jeopardise national security, and the intelligence must be required in order to safeguard democratic institutions such as policymaking or freedom of expression. Use of network traffic intelligence is decided by a court of law.

Technical screening of messages does not search by message content, but by communication metadata. The exceptions to this are malware and the communications of foreign powers that do not enjoy the protection of confidential messages.

7.

Can any ordinary person's messages be intercepted?

Network traffic intelligence is neither intended nor able to monitor cross-border communications in Finland on a large scale. Such intelligence operations target the small part of communications traffic that is known to convey information of importance to national security.

Traffic screened by metadata will nevertheless necessarily also include messages that are not relevant to national security, so content searches are applied to reveal the relevant messages while the rest are discarded unopened. In the rare case that a message is opened and then proves to be unrelated to the subject of the investigation, that message is deleted. Messages subject to an intelligence prohibition, such as correspondence between medical practitioners and their patients, are also deleted.

3.

What is foreign intelligence and what is it needed for?

Foreign intelligence means gathering information abroad. The aim is to procure information on threats to Finland at the earliest possible stage and beyond the borders of Finland. Foreign intelligence can obtain information from a target covertly over data networks and using human intelligence sources.

Finland's information gathering from abroad relied solely on international information exchanges before the new legislation took effect. The problem with this is that other countries do not prioritise protecting the security of Finland, so foreign partners may not be able to provide information on everything that is relevant to Finland.

4.

Why did the new legislation also require an amendment to the Finnish constitution?

It was necessary to change the Constitution, because the protection of confidential communications could previously be set aside only on the basis of laws prescribed for a specific purpose such as in order to prevent, detect or investigate a criminal offence. Intelligence legislation relates to intervention in the case of threats that are not criminal offences, but nevertheless seriously endanger national security. It was therefore necessary to include a reference to national security in the Constitution.

8.

May members of the public know that they have been targeted by an intelligence operation?

The key principle is to advise individuals of the use of an intelligence method if this advice does not jeopardise national security or endanger anyone's life or health. Any decision to withhold such advice will be made by a court of law. A corresponding procedure already governs the covert use of coercive measures by the police.

An Intelligence Ombudsman will also monitor the use of measures under intelligence legislation in real time, and members of the public may petition the Intelligence Ombudsman to investigate the legality of any intelligence operations that may have targeted them.

10.

How are intelligence powers controlled?

Finland has the most comprehensive regulatory control of intelligence legislation in Europe.

Supervisor oversight of operations is the basis of all regulatory control of Supo activities. Supo conducts its own separate internal legality control, reinforced by intelligence legislation requirements. Supo is also supervised by the Ministry of the Interior.

The application of intelligence legislation also falls within the supervisory purview of the Intelligence Ombudsman, who may attend when a court of law decides on the use of an intelligence gathering method. The Intelligence Ombudsman is entitled to address the court and may lodge a petition for review of the decision on considering it unfounded. The Intelligence Ombudsman is empowered to oversee the use of intelligence gathering methods in real time, and may also suspend such use. The Ombudsman is required to report any unlawful conduct, and also enjoys unfettered access to documents and information, and to premises and information systems for the purpose of on-site inspections.

The Intelligence Committee of Parliament is also responsible for parliamentary supervision. While not engaging in legality control of individual intelligence operations, this Committee conducts general oversight of the types of information produced by the intelligence service and the approach of intelligence gathering operations. ■

5.

What constitutes a serious threat to national security?

This expression refers to threats that do not target individuals, but society as a whole. They may endanger basic functions of society and the security of all citizens. Examples of such threats include espionage, terrorism, and even influencing elections.

9.

How is the information disclosed by an intelligence operation archived?

Only information that is necessary for combating threats may be recorded in the Supo information system. Information is deleted from the system when 25 years have elapsed from the date of the last entry. Both the Data Protection Ombudsman and the Intelligence Ombudsman oversee processing of personal data at Supo.

Citizens' confidence in Supo high

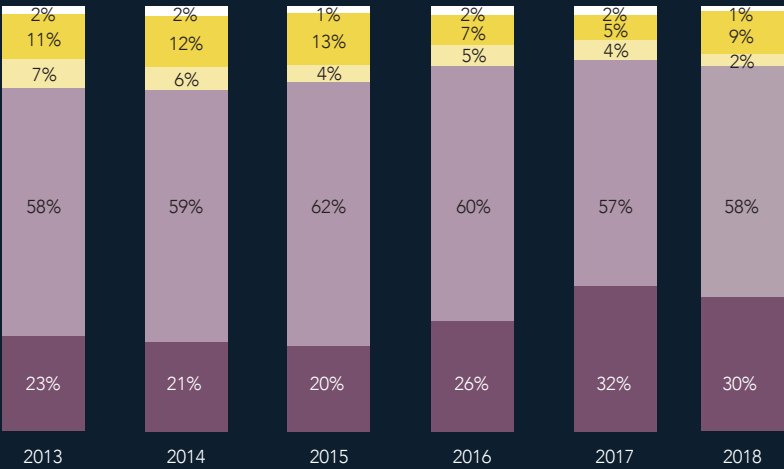
A survey concerning the views of the citizens on Supo's activity is carried out yearly at Supo's request. The latest survey was conducted on 27 November – 8 December 2018. The sample was drawn from people aged over 18 years living in continental Finland.

A clear majority (88%) of the public in Finland indicate either a very high or at least fairly high degree of trust in Supo, with nearly one third (30%) reporting a very high degree of trust, and more than half (58%) reporting a fairly high degree of trust.

Public confidence remains at broadly the level of the preceding year. The latest findings are the third highest since surveys began, with the proportion of respondents expressing a very high degree of trust in Supo currently somewhat larger than just under five years ago.

CONFIDENCE IN SUPO:

- HIGH
- RATHER HIGH
- NOT VERY HIGH
- CANNOT SAY
- NON-EXISTENT



A total of 1002 interviews were carried out.
The margin of error of the results is +/- 3 percentage points.





Snapshots from the history of Supo

TEXT: Kimmo Rentola

Establishment. Supo began operating as a new agency at the start of January 1949 based on a special Act of Parliament. While the headquarters building remained the same and the archives were largely inherited, the staff of 75 people – though admittedly only a fraction of the manpower of the predecessor agency – was almost entirely new. There was no place for the erstwhile Ohrana, with new staff chiefly recruited from the ranks of the ordinary police service. Links to the police administration were strengthened along Swedish lines, even though the new Suopo – as it was then termed – remained subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior in the same way as the police in Finland generally.

The Lapland Police Inspector **Armas Alhava** was appointed to serve as Director, accompanied by **Henry Stenlund** of the Tampere criminal police in the role of Assistant Director and Head of Operations. Like several other top appointees, these two remained in place until the end of their careers.

Mindful of the excesses of its predecessors and of the need for immediate caution, the powers of the agency were minimised. Supo was empowered to apprehend, but not to arrest or detain anyone. It had no preliminary investigatory powers of its own, and was prohibited from wiretapping or intercepting correspondence. Responsibility for monitoring the security and trustworthiness of military personnel was returned to the Defence Command. This created an agency that was tamer, smaller in terms of powers and staffing, and generally more subdued than its predecessors.

PHOTO: Ari Ojala/Lehtikuva



Armas Alhava acted as Director of Supo in 1949–1972.



PHOTO: The Crime Museum

The headquarters of the security police have been located in Ratakatu 12, Helsinki since the year 1921.

Under an oral order of the Minister of the Interior, the principal mission of Supo was to disclose Soviet intelligence and to monitor political and industrial action by Communists. Steps in the first of these areas were cautious, and even monitoring of Communists was limited to surveillance, as the activities of the party remained lawful. SDP intelligence was more effective in that direction. After its power was recognised through general strikes at critical times for Finland in 1905 and 1917, industrial action remained an important surveillance target for a long time (e.g. at the Arabia and Kemi industrial plants). Supo sought to establish a register of every communist, meaning a member of the party or of its associated organisations. While the people on this register no longer lived in fear of incarceration, they would often find it hard to secure appointments to any position related to national security.

With the Iron Curtain coming down Supo moved towards the West, though cautiously. The Nordic countries were exceptional cases, with Norway providing the clearest link to the West. British and US intelligence maintained a presence in Helsinki, with the British remaining the principal partner for many years. While initially turning a blind eye when the Norwegians arranged a US-financed intelligence-gathering expedition to the USSR by Finnish commandos, Supo began to rein in the operation when the men failed to return. There was no enthusiasm for international conflict.

By the time of Stalin's death, Supo had already learned the basics of its field and was ready for a more active phase. This began with the major Jyväskylä spying scandal in the autumn of 1953. Originally recruited as a prisoner of war, **Reino Kettunen** had obtained information from a captain at the air force aerial reconnaissance centre and from armaments manufacturers. Over the next couple of years Supo cleared up cases of international border espionage and the intelligence network of the former Red Valpo military office, with 62 people convicted of treason between 1954 and 1956. These cases attracted considerable attention, and for various reasons Supo then shifted its priorities to focus on preventative work.

Kekkonen. The election of **Urho Kekkonen** as President of the Republic in 1956 represented a new alignment of operating conditions for Supo.

For one thing, Kekkonen was the only Finnish Head of State besides Mannerheim to have had any work experience in the intelligence field. He was a knowledgeable and engaged Head of State who was eager to take a sneak peek at the Communist poker hand. Evidently in partnership with Social Democratic Party (and employers') intelligence, Supo secured a top-level information source at the headquarters of the Finnish Communist Party early in 1956 in the form of trade union secretary **Veikko Hauhia**, who was not only thoroughly familiar with issues of industrial action, but also privy to other insider information. This now enabled Supo to report essential and realistic details to the President of Finland as its principal client. It was especially important to hear what the Soviets were saying to their comrades when the President's back was turned. The political influence of this covert information flow was profound and prolonged, with the officials at Supo HQ who handled this source occasionally receiving a bottle of cognac as a New Year's gift from the President. Kekkonen also rebuffed tentative suggestions from Supo in the early 1970s that surveillance of Communists might be relaxed. »



PHOTO: Finnish Security Intelligence Service

In the 1970s, the official car of Supo Director was Plymouth Fury.

On the other hand, he had built his success on managing Finland’s relations with the USSR, using KGB political intelligence as a channel. It was precisely the activities of that agency that Supo was striving to control and constrain. Throughout the post-war period, the KGB ran by far the largest and most active foreign intelligence operation in Helsinki, and the second such service was Soviet military intelligence, the GRU.

Shortly after his election the KGB proposed to the Soviet leadership that measures be taken “through Finnish President U. Kekkonen” to dismiss Supo officials who were working with the US and British services and damaging relations between Finland and the USSR. It is not known whether any such proposal was put to Kekkonen, at least in so many words.

Overcome by the pace of change, the KGB overestimated the price that could be charged for support in the presidential election. Kekkonen could not take such a step without raising a huge outcry, and would hardly wish to, as this was a path that led straight back to the memory of Red Valpo. The KGB nevertheless kept this idea on the agenda, complaining about the western contacts of Supo and even deploring how evasive the Finnish President was on this subject.

Despite not pursuing the most ambitious demands of the KGB, Kekkonen could not afford to break off relations. His predecessor JK Paasikivi had preferred a more passive form of counter-espionage, and such an approach was even more clearly in Kekkonen’s interests. There would be no expulsions of intelligence officers or other provocative measures, not even ?open monitoring of KGB political meetings. It was not considered sensible in Finland to indulge in direct action against western intelligence services, perhaps with the exception of West Germany, but Supo strengthened its grip on émigré Russians and defectors who made it across the border. The fate of scapegoats has often been suffered in this field.

Actions in the world of politics, warfare and intelligence often have unintended consequences, and this occasion was no exception. The idea that the Kekkonen administration intended to



PHOTO: Finnish Security Intelligence Service

Yuri Gagarin in Helsinki in 1961. The man behind Gagarin is Anatoliy Golitsyn.

rein in the work of Supo and the fear of Finland being tethered even more closely to Moscow prompted the American CIA to invest resources in Finland’s security authorities. The December 1961 defection of KGB major **Anatoliy Golitsyn** to the CIA in Helsinki gave Supo a more detailed idea of the organisation, staff and practices of Soviet intelligence. Kekkonen’s stock took a tumble in the West until the British advised their cousins across the Pond that the Finnish President had been more their man than a friend to the Soviets.

Two cases of espionage came to light in the aftermath of the defection that provided an approach for managing expulsions. One of these cases concerned a military librarian recruited by the GRU, and in the other case the KGB acquired a Russian-born senior postman to work in international émigré organisations. Expulsion of the handler was managed in the former case through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, whereas informal procedures were applied in the latter case when Deputy Director Stenlund arrived unannounced at the appointed meeting place telling **Boris Perelyotov** that the postman would not be attending this time, or ever again. The KGB officer then boarded the train home. These two cases were the first post-war persona non grata expulsions from Finland.

They established the Finnish approach that was frequently applied after the departure of **Albert Akulov** in 1973. No other agencies were involved, there was no publicity, and there were no prestige issues at stake. The last of these factors was relevant, as even these trivial cases from 1963 were handled at the highest level in Moscow under the direction of Central Committee Secretary **Brezhnev**, with the outcome decided very rapidly. Such outcomes generally emerge from the highest level of government in cases of espionage and sensitive foreign intelligence operations.

Any comparison between the 1956 aspirations and goals of the KGB with respect to Supo and the circumstances that it had to work with by 1963 indicates that the achievement had fallen far short of expectations. It was customary in the USSR to view security relations as a criterion and benchmark for real relationships. The readings at this point do not seem entirely gloomy from a Finnish perspective. »

Legitimacy. From the very outset, Supo could have been confident that non-Communist citizens at least grudgingly approved of its operations, but a rapid deterioration took hold in the second half of the 1960s. Young adults concerned about global affairs were tending towards pacifism, a focus on the developing world and social mobilisation, drawing their inspiration from the US popular movement against the Vietnam War. As a stiff and introverted agency engaged in largely secretive operations, Supo was an easy target for this discontent. The ageing leadership of the agency was not in the best shape to show flexibility or responsiveness. Radical young people drew the agency into an uncomfortable position by collecting hundreds of signatures on petitions inciting conscientious objection to military service with a view to overthrowing the statute that criminalised such incitement.

The critical mood also spread to more conservative adults and, in the course of investigating demonstrations against a visit by the Shah of Iran, the Social Democratic parliamentary caucus delivered a written submission to the government dated 30 June 1970 calling for the disbandment of Supo and an end to the practice of keeping secret files on citizens. President Kekkonen also sharply criticised the actions of Supo in connection with one case of serious espionage (“again at election time”).



PHOTO: Finnish Security Intelligence Service

Two young Soviet men hijacked a plane to Helsinki in July 1977.

It would appear that two factors saved Supo from a more major upheaval. The old management of the agency was approaching retirement, giving President Kekkonen an opportunity to appoint replacements that he had awaited for more than 20 years. As Director he appointed the loyal **Arvo Pentti** who, as a Knight of the Mannerheim Cross, was also of credible background in a patriotic sense. The other saving factor was the 1973 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which promised a lot of new assignments for Supo.

Mauri. In the early 1990s the British obtained the substantial summaries of KGB archivist **Vasili Mitrokhin**, which included an embarrassing note relating to Supo. The note suggested that on a visit to Moscow in August 1972 Arvo Pentti had agreed to highly confidential collaboration with the KGB against US and British intelligence services when they operated against the USSR from bases in Finland. He was subsequently designated agent Mauri and given the sum of FIM 150,000. On a visit in 1974 Pentti had confirmed the collaboration to KGB Director **Yuri Andropov**. The case was reported to Brezhnev at the highest level.

One conclusion is that on hearing promises to limit western intelligence operations based on the longstanding Paasikivi-Kekkonen policy position, the KGB classified Pentti as an asset and also tried to stay in contact covertly. Pentti did not feel that he had promised as much as the KGB was assuming, nor could he even bring Supo to deliver on everything that felt he had promised. Kekkonen refused to release the US intelligence requested by the KGB. While recognising the risks, counter-espionage director Arvi Koli both guided and bypassed his supervisor, partly with the tacit consent of Pentti in person. You cannot reveal what you do not know. An Agrarian League foundation is thought to have channelled the cash to political purposes. Even as Director, Pentti was involved in this. Pentti’s KGB relations were soured in October 1976 when (without waiting for the Director’s permission) Supo arrested **Olavi Pihlman**, a senior actuary at the National Board of Customs, who had been on the KGB payroll for over 20 years.

The incident illustrates the risks of placing neighbourly relations in unskilled hands. Even Supo was not immune. Its next Director, **Seppo Tiitinen**, was better able to handle such pressures, make more circumscribed promises to the KGB, and issue a negative response with the air of giving consent: naturally certain conduct by the West had to be opposed, but it’s better to do it yourself. A trace of this arrangement leaked through to the West, as a rumour had already begun spreading among the leaders of Nordic services that Supo had collapsed and confidential collaboration was no longer wise. A high-level British representative made the rounds to assure everyone that there was no truth in this.

Tiitinen. There is no question that **Esko Riekki** and Seppo Tiitinen qualify as the most important national security service directors in the history of independent Finland. Both were barely 30 years old at the time of their appointment. Relying on the support of President Kekkonen and on his own administrative and legal expertise (together with a certain ruthlessness), Tiitinen modernised the organisation and especially the mentality of Supo, improving salaries in the branch and increasing its staffing levels. Relations with the Social Democratic Party were also repaired through appointments and in other ways. A gradual increase in the agency’s powers also began under Tiitinen’s tenure. »



PHOTO: Pentti Koskinen/HS/Lehtikuva

Seppo Tiitinen acted as Director of Supo in 1978–1990. This photo of him was taken in 1985.

Though meeting the director of the Helsinki KGB on a regular basis, Tiitinen was better able to maintain clear boundaries than his predecessor. Naturally many people feared that he would go too far in cherishing relations with Finland’s eastern neighbour. On the other hand, he allowed a substantial boost in the efficiency of the agency’s counter-espionage operations in the field of science and technology, and in identifying illegals, meaning intelligence agents sent abroad with forged identities. The achievements of Supo in this latter field were noticed internationally, as the Soviets were happy to use Finnish identities in undercover work. This was a passport that could get you everywhere without fear of getting caught out due to failings of “native language”.

Tiitinen expanded the network of contacts with the West. This was only possible in the context of a Kekkonen-style administration that covered the flanks, much as US-China relations could only open up under a Republican administration that had little to fear from the political right wing.

A twist in January 1992. During the run-up to the end of the USSR, and in the wake of the abortive August coup attempt by the old guard in Moscow, President **Mauno Koivisto** initiated a rapid series of moves designed to change the mechanism of relations with Finland’s eastern neighbour and to limit the role of the security and intelligence services. Events then unfolded rapidly until the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union on Boxing Day 1991, with the 1948 Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance formally voided when Finland and Russia concluded a new treaty in January.

Felix Karasev, the Head of the KGB in Helsinki, also retired at this time, having lost not only the State that originally appointed him, but also the entire agency when the KGB was broken up and replaced with the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation (SVR). Supo nevertheless turned down his proposed successor, who had previously been expelled from the West following a case of espionage. This was the first time that Supo had opposed the issuing of diplomatic credentials to a director of intelligence for Finland’s eastern neighbour stationed in Helsinki. The President of Finland also supported this stricter policy line.

As Tiitinen put it, the previous approach had been that surveillance was easier when we immediately knew who was doing what. Now President Koivisto had decided that expellees from other countries would no longer be accommodated, and that efforts would be made to oust any that had already been approved. He also decided to terminate the long-standing special relationship between the President of Finland and the head of Soviet intelligence in Helsinki, and to handle all further business through normal diplomatic channels. It was still necessary to break off direct relations between Supo and the President of the Republic and introduce an official route from one to the other, though this was not wholly realised in formal terms.

The President may have felt that such distancing was already on the horizon when selecting the Director of Supo. The most obvious candidates were bypassed in favour of a lawyer from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs who was unencumbered by ties to any three-letter acronyms, should the need arise to break off relations with the East. **Eero Kekomäki** had proved himself a dogged negotiator, and if anything went wrong, then he was not far from retirement anyway. Immediately on taking office, the new Director limited meetings with the local KGB Resident on the grounds that the KGB had only notified Supo of two of its officials: the Resident and the Security Officer. Advising the host country of staff appointments is considered an important sign of amicable intentions.

This was the subject of an unprecedentedly full and frank exchange of views before Moscow finally acquiesced in the decision and an officer who had chiefly served in KGB administration was dispatched to direct the agency’s Helsinki branch for a shorter than usual term.



PHOTO:
Jarmo Matilainen/
HS/Lehtikuva

Presidents Mauno Koivisto and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989.

The status of Soviet intelligence changed when its local director in Helsinki could no longer informally converse with the President of Finland. The change of mood also reflected the disclosures of the Mitrokhin papers. For the first time Supo exercised pre-trial investigation powers that it had secured in 1989, handling a record number of 17 investigations in 1993 and 1994.

Described in these terms, the series of events stresses January 1992 as its point of culmination. President Koivisto swiftly managed to demolish an established structure that had endured for decades, aided by the fact that even the Russians had no clear desire to perpetuate the old order as the Cold War drew to a close. The tacit change was fundamental.

The burden of history. Is Supo still the same agency that began operating 70 years ago? The question is apposite, as Supo has come through so many stages and so much has changed. The name of the agency remains the same in both Finnish and Swedish, the headquarters are still in the same building, the mission is still defined in the same general terms, but things are different within these constraints.

Though they say that the only thing you can learn from history is that it teaches us nothing, we might nevertheless conclude from the many stages of Supo and its predecessors that evolution will continue as the future unfolds. The fields of security and intelligence are sensitive to trends, with the impact of changes in public policy, society and international circumstances often felt more rapidly and brutally than in other walks of life. ■

Predecessors: National Investigative Police and State Police I and II

TEXT: Kimmo Rentola

The National Investigative Police began operating on 13 August 1919 as one of the institutions established in the newly independent Republic of Finland. Approved by a new Parliament elected in the spring, the Form of Government Act had just been confirmed, with **K.J. Ståhlberg**, a leading advocate of law and order, appointed as the first President of the Republic.

Though admittedly still bearing the fresh scars of civil war, that Republic thereby became a representative democracy and a State governed by the rule of law. Many of its institutions – especially those responsible for hard security concerns – were strongly identified with the white forces of Finland. This was particularly true of the National Investigative Police, whose leaders were mainly recruited from the ranks of activists. One fundamental security problem was that although the white forces had won the Finnish civil war, the opposing red Bolshevik forces had retained power in Russia, and were ready to offer sanctuary to thousands of their comrades fleeing from Finland. The prospect of a red revenge supported by the powerful eastern neighbour was still taken seriously.

Unlike Scandinavia and Western Europe in general, the activities of the Communist Party had been banned in Finland, with any participation punishable by imprisonment. About two hundred people were sentenced annually on average for treason and high treason. Support for the radical left was clearly higher in Finland than in the Scandinavian countries. From the very outset, the National Investigative Police was stronger than corresponding agencies elsewhere in the Nordic countries in terms of staffing and powers.

The Russian heritage in public administration inevitably added a flavour of its own, regardless of attitudes towards Russia as a paradigm. The Special Corps of Gendarmes had monitored political movements and activists in Tsarist times, and youthful experiences as subjects of such surveillance clearly tended to affect the way in which officers now wielded their policing powers. The influence of the Russian heritage is also evident from the slang term Ohrana (alluding to Okhrana, the secret police force of Tsarist Russia) that was used for the agency and its staff, and from its chosen permanent address at Ratakatu 12, the former residence of the old Special Corps officers.



PHOTO:
Photo album of Martti Riekkö

Commander of National
Investigative Police Esko
Riekkö (left), Hugo Penttilä
and Ville Pankko in 1924
in Ratakatu.

The most prominent commander of the National Investigative Police was the Oulu activist **Esko Riekkö**, who was appointed in 1923 and held the post for fifteen years. Despite his right wing views, the commander did not take the agency into the radical nationalist Lapua Movement, even if not into strong countermeasures. Riekkö was a precise, hands-on leader. His most notable blow against communism was a case in 1928 based on the confessions of general organiser Jalmari Rasi, who was subsequently pardoned and allowed to emigrate to Australia under an assumed identity. This major coup against Soviet espionage in 1933 attracted international attention, with subsequent FBI Director **J. Edgar Hoover** making a personal visit to Finland in order to hear the details. At that time the National Investigative Police had even cultivated an active intelligence source within the Soviet embassy for years.

One notable subordinate who spent his formative years in Riekkö's agency was Finland's longest-serving President, **Urho Kekkonen**. This was also where he met the future First Lady. Kekkonen completed his laudatur thesis on undercover policing, with the intention of further exploring this subject in a doctoral dissertation. On his first visit to Moscow in October 1926, he reviewed security at the Finnish embassy, finding the standard most unsatisfactory. Kekkonen's general enthusiasm for the job nevertheless eventually earned the displeasure of his commander and saw him leave the agency.

The National Investigative Police got into trouble in 1936 over memoranda in which some non-communist politicians were characterised as naïve in relation to the national movement driven by the communists. These memoranda were leaked and distributed widely. Support for the National Investigative Police was lukewarm in the red-ochre government coalition of the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian League that took office in spring 1937, and from the beginning of 1938 the agency was reorganised, its name was changed to the State Police (Valpo), and Riekkö was forced to resign.

The war years imposed a major challenge, especially the troubled interim peace period and continuation war when collaboration with Germany intensified. The Gestapo was taken as a paradigm, meaning that interviewees did not always survive the experience and Valpo played an active role in surrendering individuals to the Germans under the leadership of »



PHOTO:
Photo album of
Martti Riekkö

Supo personnel
with their cars
in 1931.

its director **Arno Anthoni**. The people involved in these activities slipped away to Sweden and even as far as Venezuela after the war.

When peace came it was already clear that Valpo would be reformed, with plans initially drawn up to establish a new national security police department before a decision was eventually taken to rebuild within the confines of the existing agency. The Big Three Government that came to power after the 1945 general election then appointed the communist **Yrjö Leino** as Minister of the Interior. Leino immediately set about changing the leadership of Valpo, installing **Aimo Aaltonen**, chairman of the Communist Party of Finland as deputy director. Aaltonen was to oversee an almost complete turnover of staff at the agency, although this was a fairly easy process, as no permanent officials had remained in office. The outcome was Valpo II, otherwise known as Red Valpo, and a shift in its adversaries from the left to the right.

Working with an inexperienced staff and with little support from other branches of government, Red Valpo enjoyed only limited success. The largest investigation of the day into arms caches was assigned to a specially established investigatory body of the Ministry of the Interior (SMTE). Support for Valpo in non-communist governmental circles had waned by 1947, and a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Vaasa Provincial Governor **Kaarlo Ahlbäck** to investigate the conduct of the agency.

Red Valpo had a close relationship with the Soviet intelligence services, particularly during the volatile spring of 1948. Some agents of the Valpo military office continued in espionage assignments for Soviet military intelligence, with some Valpo wartime intelligence documents appearing to wind up in the archives of the Petrozavodsk KGB.

The communists were ousted from the government after the elections of summer 1948, whereupon the incoming Social Democrat minority government of **Karl-August Fagerholm** disbanded the State Police and established Supo as an entirely new agency. This represented a clean break with the past, even though the new agency's headquarters remained the same and its staff members were still often called Ohrana. ■



FINNISH SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

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