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Futures Review of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

FINLAND ACTS IN A CHANGING WORLD



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Finland acts in a changing world

Futures Review of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>This review looks at disruptive developments in international relations and the opportunities and tensions related to them. The review examines the impact of these transformations on the international position of Finland and Europe, and suggests how Finland should address the changes and their repercussions in its foreign policy in the next five years. The key drivers of change shaping international relations include major geopolitical shifts, technological development, the strengthening role of non-state actors, diversification of tools of influence, and continuing growth of global interdependence.</p> <p>Finland combines exercise of influence on and adaptation to changes in its foreign policy. In the rapidly changing world, the promotion of our values – human rights, democracy, rule of law – is increasingly important. Finland's contribution to the strengthening of the international rules-based system, prevention of conflicts and mediation calls for a long-term strategy, initiatives and sufficient resources. Changes in the operating environment underline the importance of the EU for Finland's security and well-being. Finland works to enhance the consistency and global impact of the EU's external action. Finland strengthens trade and political relations with Africa, whose development is one of the most crucial issues shaping the global future.</p>			
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Tiivistelmä	<p>Tässä katsauksessa tarkastellaan kansainvälisen politiikan vakiintuneiden toimintamallien murtumista ja niihin liittyviä mahdollisuuksia ja jännitteitä. Katsaus valottaa sitä, miten murrokset vaikuttavat Suomen ja Euroopan kansainväliseen asemaan, ja miten Suomen tulisi huomioida nämä muutokset ja niiden seuraukset omassa ulkopoliitikassaan seuraavien viiden vuoden aikana. Keskeisiä kansainvälisiä suhteita muokkaavia muutostekijöitä ovat valtasuhteiden murrokset, teknologinen kehitys, ei-valtiollisten toimijoiden vahvistuminen, vaikutuskeinojen monimuotoistuminen sekä globaalin keskinäisriippuvuuden jatkuva kasvu.</p> <p>Suomi yhdistää ulkopoliitikassaan muutoksiin vaikuttamisen ja sopeutumisen. Nopeasti muuttuvassa maailmassa omien arvojen – ihmisoikeudet, demokratia, oikeusvaltioperiaate – edistäminen on entistä tärkeämpää. Suomen tuloksellinen toiminta kansainvälisen sääntöpohjaisen järjestelmän, konfliktien ehkäisyn ja rauhanvälityksen tukemiseksi edellyttää pitkän aikavälin strategiaa, aloitteellisuutta ja riittäviä resursseja. Toimintaympäristön muutokset korostavat EU:n keskeistä merkitystä Suomen turvallisuudelle ja hyvinvoinnille. Suomi toimii EU:n ulkoisen toiminnan johdonmukaisuuden ja globaalin vaikuttavuuden lisäämiseksi. Suomi vahvistaa kauppa- ja poliittisia suhteita Afrikkaan, jonka kehitys on yksi tulevaisuuden kohtalonkysymyksistä.</p>		
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Referat	<p>I denna översikt granskas hur den internationella politikens etablerade strukturer löses upp och vilka möjligheter och spänningar detta medför. Översikten belyser hur omvälvningarna påverkar Finlands och Europas internationella ställning och hur Finland bör beakta dessa förändringar i sin egen utrikespolitik under de närmaste fem åren. De faktorer som allra mest påverkar de internationella relationerna är omvälvningar i maktförhållandena, den tekniska utvecklingen, icke-statliga aktörer som blir allt mer inflytelserika, att påverkansmetoderna blir allt mångsidigare och att världens länder blir allt mer beroende av varandra.</p> <p>Finland både påverkar och anpassar sig till förändringarna. Vikten av att försvara våra värderingar – mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati, rättsstatsprincipen – accentueras i en värld som är i ständig och snabb förändring. Finlands verksamhet för att stärka det internationella regelbaserade systemet, för att förebygga konflikter och främja fredsmedling förutsätter långsiktiga strategier, initiativrikedom och tillräckliga resurser. Förändringarna i omvärlden framhäver EU:s betydelse för Finlands säkerhet och välfärd. Finland bemödar sig om att öka samstämmigheten i EU:s yttre åtgärder och stärka EU:s globala inflytande. Finland stärker sina handelsrelationer och politiska relationer till Afrika, vars utveckling är en av framtidens ödesfrågor.</p>		
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TO THE READER

This review looks at the transformations in international relations and the opportunities and tensions related to them. The review examines the impact of these changes on the international role of Finland and Europe, and suggests how Finland should address the changes and their repercussions in its foreign policy in the next five years.

The broader transformation of Finland's operating environment is outlined in the 15 cards describing the most important drivers of change. The cards highlight key changes and uncertainties in the operating environment of the future and they were produced in cooperation by all Finnish ministries. The phenomena and changes permeate all of society, which means that the solutions require close cooperation between various parties.

Finland's future is increasingly defined by growing global interdependence, the emerging challenges facing nation states, democracy and the international rule-based system, the changes in operating methods brought about by technological progress and the digital transformation as well as geopolitical shifts.

Finland must have the capacity to analyse and prepare for international developments as well as to act on them. In a changing world, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs plays a central role in promoting the security and well-being in Finland. The changes in the international operating environment require that we expand our network of diplomatic missions. The Foreign Service continuously develops its operating methods, structures and the expertise of its personnel. Well prepared and with enhanced resources, we will meet the changes to come with success.

June 2018

Matti Anttonen
Permanent State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

1 International practices and operating methods are changing

1.1 Shared norms are questioned as competition intensifies

The global role of Europe and the United States is diminishing in relative terms. Having become prosperous in economic terms, China is striving to increase its importance on the international stage. Other countries, such as Russia, are also aiming to establish a more significant position. China and Russia are challenging the Western unity and ability to act.

The commitment to universal human rights, democracy and the rule of law has diminished. International mobility, digital communication and social media have changed the world permanently. In many countries, this is seen as a threat to the internal order and the changes are rebuffed with nationalistic rhetoric or increasing control of citizens. In the coming years, a major challenge will be to convince international actors of the significance of human rights commitments as sources of well-being, stability and sustainable development.

From Finland's perspective, it is important that the United States and the EU are able to set common objectives and cooperate to prevent the erosion of transatlantic unity and influence. The United States is challenging global trade norms. The growing use of economic power politics — such as increased barriers to trade or exploitation of economic dependencies — have a negative impact on countries like Finland.

Economic growth has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty, and living conditions have improved across the world. At the same time, social inequality and the unequal distribution of wealth, both between countries and within countries, continue to grow and create instability. The benefits of technology are also unevenly distributed.

Population growth is increasingly concentrated in the poorest countries in Africa and South Asia. Climate change may exacerbate living conditions in many regions and, when combined with other factors, it can accelerate migration even within a short period of time.

Conflicts have increasingly become protracted and more difficult to resolve, particularly in the Middle East. During the past few years the need for humanitarian aid has risen to a record level due to conflicts, the growing number of refugees and climate change. Conflicts often create a breeding ground for extremism and accelerate migration. Europe, the Middle East and Africa have a significant impact on each other's future.

The geopolitical and economic significance of the High North will increase. The escalation of climate change may lead to growth in maritime transport and the exploitation of Arctic hydrocarbon reserves. In addition to Russia and other traditional northern actors, China and other Asian countries are interested in the region.

1.2 Multilateral cooperation is indispensable

Climate change and environmental degradation, extreme poverty, growing inequality, problems related to uneven population growth and uncontrolled migration as well as increasing violent radicalisation and terrorism are challenges that are best tackled through multilateral cooperation.

Multilateral cooperation has produced significant negotiation results, such as Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it includes as well as the Paris climate agreement. These accomplishments were achieved with the help of cooperation between states, non-governmental organisations, businesses and individual opinion leaders. The implementation of the climate agreement and the SDGs requires commitment and action from states, societal actors and businesses.

However, the activities of multilateral organisations involve significant challenges and conflicts of interest. Commitment to the principles and values of the UN Charter has diminished. Without reform, the UN is not able to respond to global challenges.

Individuals, organisations, cities, communities and businesses will take on a larger and more independent role in shaping the international agenda and defining and implementing international norms than before. At the same time, the increased number and diversity of actors make processes, such as agreeing on the rules of trade, more complex. The authority of states as main negotiators on international norms cannot be taken for granted in all fields in the future.

1.3 Technological development reshapes foreign policy

Reconciling the goals of economic growth and climate policy is one of the key global issues of the future. The digital transformation and advances in artificial intelligence enable the more efficient use of resources. Humankind needs rapid development and adoption of the circular economy and cleaner technology.

On the one hand, technology can be used to promote well-being, security and transparency. On the other hand, technology is also used for oppression, terrorism and the spread of disinformation. The cyber environment and artificial intelligence make the attribution of hybrid activities more difficult. Advanced weapons technology and weapons of mass destruction may end up in the hands of non-state actors more easily than before. The impacts of the wider adoption of artificial intelligence are not yet fully understood. Technology has a significant impact on future threats and the content of foreign and security policy. It also requires changes in practices.

Technological development is progressing rapidly, driven by private enterprises. Technology companies and communities are the primary partners of international organisations and states in the establishment of commonly accepted practices and shared norms. The increasing role of states that challenge universal values makes it more difficult to reach agreement on new global norms. Striking a balance between economic interests, the prevention of security threats and the values of democratic and open society is the main challenge when drafting the new sets of international norms.

1.4 Strengthening the EU's external action while unity is eroding

The European Union must take on greater responsibility for international development as U.S. foreign policy has become more selective. At the same time, the EU's eroding unity, the questioning of its core values as well as the direction of the development of the rule of law in certain Member States are diminishing its international standing. In practice, improving the EU's external capabilities in the next few years means the strengthening of differentiated integration within the EU. The enlargement of the Union must not compromise the EU's value base and external capabilities. Brexit will change the EU's internal dynamics and influence the content and impact of its policies.

The sense of security among EU citizens has been diminished by violent radicalisation, terrorism and intense migration as well as major economic disruptions and the uncertainty caused by them. Populistic movements have grown in strength and mutual solidarity between the Member States has declined. The EU and its Member States must respond to the security concerns of citizens on the basis of European values.

To the east of the EU, Russia shows no signs of changing its confrontational and revisionist approach. Tensions between Russia and the West may remain high for a long time to come.

To the south of the EU, engaging in coherent development, trade and investment policy is the best way for the Union to reduce poverty, prevent conflicts and influence the underlying reasons behind migration.

FACTORS THAT ARE CHANGING THE OPERATING METHODS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

- **Changing geopolitical power dynamics:** The dynamics of the relationships between the world's major powers are changing and the relative position and influence of the Western countries in the international system is diminishing.
- **Consequences of technological progress:** Technological progress in areas such as artificial intelligence, information technology and space technology is rapid and unpredictable and its impacts are broad. The development of energy technology will influence power relations.
- **Strengthening of non-state actors:** Individuals, businesses, cities, new international communities and networks are having a growing and more independent impact on international affairs and norms.
- **Diversification of methods of influence:** The line between external and internal, commercial and political as well as private and state-coordinated activities are becoming blurred, making attribution of action more difficult.
- **Continuous growth of international interdependence:** Resolving our most significant shared challenges, such as climate change and its impacts, is beyond the capacity of any individual state.

2 Finland takes initiative in international issues

2.1 Foreign policy is based on values, consistency and setting an example

- Promoting universal human rights, democracy and the rule of law is increasingly important in Finland's foreign policy. The example set by Finland adds to the credibility of these activities.
- Non-discrimination and gender equality are important foreign policy objectives for Finland. Promoting the position of women and girls has intrinsic value and is an important instrument in the promotion of peace and well-being.
- Having consistent objectives for security policy, trade policy and development policy improves the effectiveness of our activities. Promoting the goals of sustainable development is a key aspect of Finland's foreign policy. Finland is a country that bears its responsibility globally. Increasing the budget for development cooperation is essential: a credible plan must be created for achieving the level of 0.7% of gross national income.
- The Nordic countries are an important reference group for Finland in the promotion of openness, equality, sustainable development and civic engagement. Being part of the Nordic region will be more effectively utilised in foreign policy.

2.2 Effective international rule-based order is in Finland's interest

- Finland is committed to the UN's universal values and promotes the strengthening of international justice and human rights and putting an end to impunity. We call for commitment by all states to shared norms and putting them to practice.
- Finland takes initiative in the renewal and strengthening of the UN system.
- In order to find solutions, connections and dialogue will be developed not only with other states, but also with individuals, organisations, businesses and communities.

2.3 Aiming for a union with a global impact

- The EU is Finland's most important reference group. Finland promotes the strengthening of the EU's external operating capacity and unity. To enhance its consistent foreign policy and security policy, the EU should, for example, make more frequent use of the qualified majority voting.
- Finland participates in the EU's defence cooperation and the EU–Nato cooperation as well their development.
- Finland emphasises the EU development policy objectives of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and promoting sustainable development. The EU's development cooperation and policy will be developed as a more integral part of the Union's external relations.
- Finland acts to strengthen the EU's operating capacity related to commercial policy and supports the signing of union agreements with other countries and regions.
- Finland prepares for the possibility of differentiated integration. To defend its values and interests, Finland must be involved in all groups that make decisions that influence our country.

2.4 Finland is a stronger producer of security

- Finland's close cooperation with Sweden and the United States and the development of regional arrangements and Nato cooperation, including the 29+2 model, strengthen the security of the Baltic Sea region and Europe.
- Finland acts to prevent conflicts and resolve them through peace mediation and comprehensive crisis management. To ensure that peace mediation and peace building efforts are sufficiently long-term, funding must be secured for these activities. Models for securing financing for peace mediation projects from sources other than development cooperation funds will be explored.
- Finland participates in the development of shared cyber and hybrid defence capacity in the EU and in cooperation with Nato. The adequate information security of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other authorities will be ensured. More resources are needed for this.

- Finland takes initiative in preventing threats related to the spread of weapons of mass destruction as well as issues related to the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

2.5 Finland takes initiative in the northern region and in our neighbourhood

- Finland takes initiative in promoting security and sustainable economic cooperation in the Arctic region and the Baltic Sea region. Finland takes broad-based measures to prepare for various risks concerning the neighbouring areas.
- Finland's EU membership and the fact that Finland and Russia are neighbouring states are defining factors in Finland's Russia policy. In order to take part in shaping the EU's Russia policy and to manage the relationship with Russia, dialogue with Russia is essential.
- The scope of the tools of influence utilised by Russia and the comprehensive nature of these activities are recognised. For its part, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs ensures that the government and society have a realistic picture of Russia's policies.

2.6 Stronger partnerships with Africa

- Finland will invest in closer political and commercial relationships as well as more comprehensive and effective presence in Africa.
- Finland supports sustainable development and economic growth in Africa. Partnerships will be diversified by focusing on commercial and economic cooperation as well as innovation cooperation.
- In the most fragile countries, there is a need for stronger development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Finland's activities are particularly geared towards strengthening the position of women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as education, employment and good governance.
- Finland will strengthen security and development by increasing its involvement in conflict prevention, peace mediation, peace building and crisis management in Africa.

2.7 The rise of Asia calls for a stronger presence in the region

- Asia's economic and political significance to Finland will continue to grow, which is why it is important to strengthen and diversify relationships with Asia. China's influence and goals will be evaluated not only from an economic standpoint, but also from the security policy perspective.
- Finland will focus resources and expand cooperation not only in East Asia, but also in the growing markets of South and Southeast Asia.
- Finland will promote the development of the EU's agreement network with China, India and other key countries in Asia.

HOW WAS THE MFA'S FUTURES REVIEW DRAFTED?

The preparation of the Futures Review of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was carried out by the Ministry's Policy Planning and Research Unit. The Senior Management Group supervised the effort.

The Ministry's Directors General, persons on the Training Course for Newly Recruited Diplomats and external stakeholders contributed to the process through workshops. University students were invited to take part in a writing competition. An internal survey was conducted within the Ministry to canvass the views of the entire personnel of the Foreign Service. In addition, heads of missions were requested to report on future threats and opportunities.

The background materials used for the Futures Review included, in particular, the Ministry's own reporting, international foresight and research reports and the scenarios and other outputs of the foresight exercise coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office and implemented by the Ministry in 2017.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the process!



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