Translation of the proposals of a Committee for the development of a National Security Policy for Iceland. Based on these proposals, the Minister for Foreign Affairs is expected to put forth a parliamentary resolution for a National Security Policy for Iceland. [http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/frettir/nr/7985](http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/frettir/nr/7985)

Committee for the development of a National Security Policy for Iceland

Proposals

Introduction

One of the basic duties of any state government is to ensure the security and defence of the nation and its people - to ensure its national security. On the 16th of September 2011 Parliament passed a resolution concerning the forming of a National Security Policy for Iceland, and will this be the first time since the founding of the republic that such policy making is undertaken.

Iceland declared lasting neutrality in the Act of Union with Denmark in 1918. However, the military occupation of Iceland in 1940, the Military Protection Agreement with the USA a year later, Iceland’s membership of the United Nations in 1946, its founding membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949, and the Defence Agreement with the United States in 1951, all resulted in the discontinuation of the neutrality-policy and marked the beginning of Iceland’s participation in the security and defence community.

In truth, there was no unity concerning these first steps of the young republic. Opinions were divided regarding Iceland’s membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the presence of United States defence forces in Iceland, which had a great impact on the nation’s political history, especially during the Cold War.

By the end of the Cold War, security affairs around the world changed dramatically. War broke out in the Balkans in the 1990s, and terrorist attacks at the beginning of the 21st century in the United States and in Europe brought about a shift in focus towards new threats and more distant regions of the world. Iceland began taking an active role in peace-keeping operations abroad, whilst at the same time the United States defence force presence in Iceland diminished considerably. The military base of the United States Army was finally closed in the autumn of 2006 and once again Iceland faced new circumstances concerning security and defence matters.

It could be said that the Icelandic authorities have each time been reacting to external circumstances, rather than working according to any pre-formulated policy. The new parliamentary resolution, for the formulation of a National Security Policy, must therefore be viewed with this in mind. In light of the changes that have occurred in international security affairs, as well as in Iceland’s neighboring regions, it can be argued that there is more basis now for reaching a consensus regarding the main pillars of the Icelandic Security Policy than was previously possible. This includes the following:

First, the importance of the Arctic region has increased in the last few years due to climate change and the resulting risks and opportunities that could present themselves through the opening of new shipping routes and the utilization of natural resources. A parliamentary resolution concerning Iceland’s Arctic Policy, which was approved unanimously in 2011, depicts the overwhelming consensus in Iceland regarding the decision to focus increasingly on the Arctic.

Second, most are in agreement that threats from cyber crime, pollution, international terrorism, and criminal organizations have increased, and as such these threats must be taken seriously.

Third, the defence cooperation with the United States has changed considerably since the departure of the defence forces from Miðnesheiði. The Defence Agreement continues to be in full effect and plans for the defence of Iceland are in place, in the case of a military threat to the country. Naturally, the cooperation has developed and also includes other factors such as search and rescue operations, which are, amongst other things, based on the agreement reached with the United States in 2006.
Fourth, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation continues to evolve rapidly. Currently it has 28 member states, up from only 16 at the end of the Cold War, and dozens of other states have made collaborative agreements with the coalition. Russia is today an active cooperative state, but was once designated an enemy when it was known as the Soviet Union. The coalition focuses increasingly on threats and risk factors stemming from the Internet, the environment, terrorism, energy security, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Fifth, Nordic cooperation regarding security and defence matters has increased greatly in the past few years, and agreements with close neighboring countries have strengthened the base for cooperation and political collaboration.

Finally, there already exists a security collaboration between Iceland and the European Union, including the Schengen Agreement and Europol, and despite differing opinions concerning possible EU membership, it is clear that the work being done by the European Union in the fields of security and defence aligns well with Iceland’s emphases and core values.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned factors, the opportunity now presents itself to formulate jointly the first National Security Policy for Iceland. The parliamentary resolution concerning the creation of a National Security Policy takes these viewpoints into consideration. The resolution stipulates that the Minister for Foreign Affairs is entrusted to commission a cross-party committee consisting of ten members of parliament in order to formulate a policy proposal. All political parties, with representatives in parliament, therefore had a representative in the committee.

As is stipulated in the parliamentary resolution, the committee has worked on a proposal regarding a policy to ensure the national security of Iceland based on Iceland’s lack of military forces and weaponry. Numerous different factors have been taken into consideration; a risk assessment report for Iceland from 2009, The United Nations Charter and other obligations held by Iceland, including a ban on nuclear weapons, parliamentary resolutions concerning Iceland’s policy on disarmament, and a parliamentary bill on making Iceland a nuclear weapon free-zone and banning nuclear powered transportation (case no. 18 in Althingi’s 139th session).

The committee has worked according to the definition of the security concept provided by the risk assessment report; taking into consideration global, social and military risk-factors. A rather comprehensive understanding of the security-definition is, therefore, being used to define national security, as the topics which fall under foreign and domestic spheres continue to become more intertwined and the traditional line between civilian and military security becomes ever more blurred. This does not mean, however, that civilian law-enforcement agencies will increasingly be called upon to participate in military operations. That is not the case. On the other hand, it is essential that they be capable to engage in collaboration with foreign military forces, which increasingly play an important role when dealing with threats of a non-military nature, such as search and rescue operations. The committee also reviewed foreign examples in its definition of the security concept and national security.

It is in this spirit that the committee presents its proposals in three chapters, and proposes that the National Security Policy for Iceland be based on this structure. These three chapters are the following:

1) Active Foreign Policy of Iceland
2) Iceland’s Defence Policy
3) Civil Protection

The third chapter, Civil Protection, mostly falls under the governmental policy regarding civil defence and security issues of the state, which was formulated by the Civil Defence and Security Affairs Council on the basis of a legislation concerning civil defence from 2008. This policy formulation is now in its final stages and the committee for the formulation of a National Security Policy received some insight as to its contents.

Besides the three chapter proposals, the committee makes further recommendations at the
end of the report, which concern prioritization, institutional arrangements and the legislative environment. The report also includes proposals which concern the previously mentioned parliamentary bill regarding making Iceland a nuclear weapon free-zone and banning nuclear powered vehicles, as well as a parliamentary resolution from 2009 concerning the establishment of a Center of Expertise in the fields of foreign affairs and security, which the government referred to the committee in later stages.

It must be emphasised that perfect security cannot be a realistic goal, and it is not necessarily preferable to build up a society with that as its guiding light. We must always strive to find a balance between prevention on the one hand, and reactions on the other.

The basic premise for formulating a National Security Policy is Iceland’s position as a sparsely populated island nation, with neither the capability nor the will to maintain armed forces and, therefore, it must always ensure its security and defences through active cooperation with other states and international organisations. A National Security Policy for Iceland must at the same time always adhere to certain core values; democracy and respect for the rule of law, international laws, being humanitarian and protection of human rights, equality for all and sustainable development, peaceful resolutions of conflicts and disarmament.

The goals of a National Security Policy for Iceland are to ensure its independence and sovereignty, to ensure the inviolability of its borders and the security of its citizens as well as to ensure the protection of the system of governance and the societal infrastructure.

**The International Security Environment**

As was previously mentioned, the international security environment has changed considerably since the end of the Cold War, and is continuously evolving. Besides the major events mentioned here above, there has also been a revolution in telecommunications technology over the past few years, which has played a pivotal role in recent events in Northern Africa and in the Middle-East, events which have been dubbed the Arab Spring. Furthermore, increase in cross-border trade and migration continue to change relations and interactions between various nations and regions of the world.

New cross-border threats and dangers demand a wider definition of security – for example cyber threats, environmental dangers, international terrorism, organised crime and threats to financial and economic stability. In times of increased globalisation, no state can completely depend upon factors such as geographical position, sparse population, or peaceful policies for safety.

Natural disasters and major accidents are increasingly being classified as security threats. Attention has been brought to the lack of security present at nuclear power stations and responses to offshore oil disasters as well as the effects of climate change, as the past few years have seen an increase in extreme weather conditions. There has also been a focus on security with regards to energy, transportation, and telecommunications systems, as well as other crucial infrastructures. Numerous other factors have also become more prevalent within the security debate, in particular economic and financial recessions and epidemics, as well as food and water security.

These new threats and risk factors are just additions to those that came before them, and have not replaced any of the older threats. Traditional means of national defence are still important as old and new superpowers try to claim a more dominant place through military might. The United States still overawe others, but states in distant parts of the world, especially China, are quickly catching up. The balance of power between regions is, therefore, changing. In times of financial difficulty, many of the Western states have had to reduce their defence budgets, but have instead put an emphasis on practical cooperation within organisations such as the NATO and the European Union.

Intra-state conflicts have now become more common, and trouble in one nation can quickly spill over and have an influence outside of its region of the world, as can be seen with the current situation in the Middle East. Poverty and destitution undermine stability, and increased competition over limited natural resources is likely to cause tension. Within international developmental cooperation, there is believed to be a clear connection between peace, security, and development,
and a great emphasis is placed on the importance of a comprehensive approach.

The boundaries between internal and external security are, therefore, often blurred. Cooperation between military forces and civilian institutions is continually increasing, for example in complex conflict zones like Afghanistan, or when extensive natural disasters occur. It is clear that, in order to meet these modern day security threats, active and close international cooperation is becoming increasingly important.

**Security Issues in Iceland’s close vicinity**

Iceland’s security environment is shaped by its position in the North-Atlantic Ocean, as well as its harsh environment and the natural resources of the Arctic region. Due to the globalization of security issues, environmental issues and the economy, Iceland also faces similar kinds of threats and risk factors as were described earlier.

The Arctic and its development is very important to Iceland. Our prosperity and livelihood is closely related to the resources located around the island, and increased use of natural resources and shipping within the region have a direct effect on Iceland’s security concerns. Numerous economic opportunities may present themselves to Iceland due to these developments, but at the same time no state in the Arctic region is as vulnerable as Iceland when it comes to threats such as environmental disasters and pollution at sea.

In 2011, Althingi parliament approved Iceland’s Arctic policy. Its purpose is to ensure Iceland’s interests, including the effects of climate change, environmental issues and natural resources, shipping routes and societal development, whilst also strengthening ties and collaboration with other states and stakeholders within the region.

The policy contains twelve main points, a few of which touch upon issues of security either directly or indirectly. This includes provisions to promote and strengthen the Arctic Council, to ensure Iceland’s status as a coastal state, and using the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to settle problems that may arise. Within the policy there is an emphasis on building upon agreements, promoting cooperation between states and stakeholders and to use all means to counter the effects of climate change. The policy also stipulates that security concerns be addressed in a wider context from a civilian angle, whilst working against militarization of any kind. Furthermore, it acknowledges the importance of collaboration when it comes preparedness for surveillance, search and rescue, and pollution control services in the Arctic.

The area for search and rescue that Iceland is responsible for is vast, and collaboration with other states in this regard is vital. It is therefore a reason for joy that that Arctic states have come to an agreement concerning search and rescue and response to oil disasters. With the newly established permanent office in Tromso, the Arctic Council is changing from a forum for discussing Arctic affairs, to one of collaboration and decision making. The Arctic Council now enjoys more attention, evidenced by the number of applications for observer status which were approved during the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May of 2013. Among the new observer states is China, which has shown an increased interest in Arctic affairs over the past few years.

Iceland has also had its share of natural disasters. The volcanic forces that reside within the earth made themselves known through eruptions in Eyjafjallajökull and Grímsvötn, and winter came early in the north in the autumn of 2012. We live in harsh conditions and climate change does not diminish the dangers that exist due to the forces of nature.

Cyber threats are probably the ones that are least encumbered by distance or geographical obstacles. Computer crime and cyber threats have increased exponentially and pray on institutions and societal infrastructure on a daily basis. Technology has been evolving rapidly these past few years and cyber attacks can now cause untold damage.

Fortunately, there is considered to be very little danger of military conflict between states in our region of the world in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, one can never discount completely the possibility of military threats in the region in the long term and it is, therefore, very important that measures to counter military threats are in place.
The defence obligations of the United States towards Iceland, based upon the Defence Agreement from 1951, remain in place, despite the withdrawal of US defence forces from Iceland in 2006. The defence programme for Iceland also includes that the country’s defences be ensured through mobile preparedness and forces. The collaboration with the United States is continually evolving, and the two nations have regular consultations on matters of security, based on an agreement that was made in the fall of 2006, and which encompasses more factors than just military cooperation.

The security and defence relationship of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has also evolved rapidly, as NATO’s new strategic concept from 2010 shows, which emphasises new threats and risk factors. NATO has, in recent decades, sent forces to distant regions of the world, but is now scaling back its operations in Afghanistan and is focusing on regions closer to home and new threats such as cyber attacks. NATO became responsible for airspace surveillance and regular airspace defence in Iceland in times of peace after the United States defence forces withdrew from Iceland. Through the years, Iceland has sent civilian experts to work on behalf of NATO.

Agreements with Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Canada, concerning security operations during peace time, have broadened the scope of Icelandic security, and has strengthened the political consultation and practical cooperation with the aforementioned states. The agreements were established to react to changes in the security environment after the withdrawal of United States forces from Iceland. There also exists an informal consultation with Germany, France and Russia.

Furthermore, defence and security issues have increasingly become a part of Nordic cooperation, as can be seen from a declaration of solidarity issued in 2011. In addition, the Nordic states have taken up a closer cooperation in the fields of cyber defence and airspace surveillance, and both Finnish and Swedish air forces intend to take part, along with the Norwegian air force, in airspace surveillance in Iceland in 2014. The collaboration based on NORDEFCO, which began in 2009, is also thriving.

Cooperation between the EU member states on issues of foreign affairs and security matters has become closer in the past few years after the EU adopted a common policy in this area. Iceland has, as a partner state, taken part in peace keeping under the aegis of the European Union, and civilian experts have been sent to work on specific projects in recent years. Iceland is also a member of the Schengen agreement for border surveillance and law enforcement, and this Agreement has proved its worth over the years.

On the platform of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OESCE), Iceland has been an active contributor through participation in discussions, financial contributions, and by sending envoys on specific peace keeping missions.

Financial and economic threats can also not be ignored when discussing security issues in Iceland’s close environment. In 2008 vulnerabilities in the international financial system and the threats that these can pose to societies and individuals when banks fail and markets crash became very clear.

Threefold National Security Policy

As was mentioned previously, the committee tasked with creating the National Security Policy for Iceland proposes that it be threefold and these include; an Active Foreign Policy, Defence Policy, and Civil Protection. The committee proposes that the following key points be kept in mind.

Active Foreign Policy for Iceland

- Iceland has a vested interest in promoting ties and cooperation with other nations, bilaterally and multilaterally.
- Continuing participation in international and regional organizations to promote Iceland’s interests and priorities
- Particular focus will be placed on Icelandic interests in the Arctic, in accordance with the twelve main points in Iceland’s policy concerning Arctic affairs.
• Icelanders contribute to the response and rescue capacity in the Arctic and continue to examine the benefits of establishing an international search and rescue center at Keflavík airport.

• Cooperation with neighboring Arctic states, including Russia, the United States and other Arctic Council states will be given special attention in this regard.

• Conditions in Iceland (good harbours, an international airport, structures, hospitals, knowledge/expertise, and equipment) and experience in rescue operations at sea show the importance of Iceland in this regard.

• Protection against sea pollution and cooperation in the field of search and rescue will, therefore, continue to be of special interest to Iceland.

• Bilateral cooperation with the United States, Nordic cooperation and other cooperation with neighboring states should be continued and strengthened.

• Development cooperation, peace and human rights are all inseparable.

• Iceland must focus on the root of instability and conflict, which can often be traced to poverty and injustice.

• Icelanders must strive to do their part to support economic and social development through development cooperation, civilian contributions to peacekeeping missions, as well as humanitarian and emergency support.

• Regarding development cooperation and peacekeeping, Iceland must place special emphasis on equal rights and opportunities for both genders.

• Iceland must strive to limit the proliferation of weapons and promote disarmament, including nuclear weapons, both within international organizations and in bilateral agreements with other states.

**Iceland’s Defence Policy**

• It is not possible to exclude the possibility of increased tension, instability, and military threats on a long-term basis, even though there are few indicators of this in the short or medium term.

• Due to the geographical location of the country in the Arctic region, Iceland will always play an important role in times of tension or conflict in this region of the world.

• It is therefore vital to maintain the peace and prepare in such a way as to ensure the traditional means of defence in cooperation with other states and organizations.

• The main pillars of defence for Iceland will continue to be the Defence Agreement with the United States and Iceland’s NATO membership.

• Iceland will continue to actively participate in NATO operations and contribute to its common defences, whilst also promoting Iceland’s specific interests.

• Airspace surveillance and defence under the supervision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation will continue, as this arrangement concerns peace time operations, and it is important that foreign air forces are familiar with Icelandic and Arctic conditions. The necessity and frequency of such airspace surveillance will be regularly re-evaluated.

• The collaboration with the United States will continue to be developed, and will focus not only on traditional military threats, but also on new threats and circumstances.

• Consultation with neighboring states and cooperation with other states in the Arctic Council will continue to be developed with a focus on the Arctic region which includes amongst other things; cooperation in the field of search and rescue and pollution prevention.

• Cooperation with the Nordic states and the European Union in the field of security will also be strengthened.

• Icelanders will continue to shoulder the added responsibilities of its own defences and security based on civilian terms, and will have the means and knowledge necessary to collaborate with its partner states and allies.
• Foreign militaries have important support functions when it comes to cooperation with civilian institutions; this includes areas such as search and rescue and law enforcement. It is important that the Icelandic administration and its institutions are qualified to participate in such collaboration, even if it is only in a civilian capacity.

• Good collaboration between ministries and institutions must be promoted, and work completed concerning the arrangement of long term security related projects.

Civil Protection

• The policy of the Icelandic authorities concerning civil defence and security issues of the state will be completed as soon as possible, and will be made part of the National Security Policy for Iceland, as the policy includes domestic security issues and Iceland’s crisis resilience.

• Civil defence is discussed in some detail in the policy, as well as the protection of important infrastructure, law enforcement, and security issues. For each of these categories there will be a three year action plan.

• The enforcement of the action plans put forth in the civil defence and security policy should be a priority. These include the strengthening of the civil defence system and the creation of contingency plans, the protection of telecommunications, cyber and information systems, the protection of electrical and transport systems, medical services, food, provisions, and drinking water security, the security of the highest levels of government, the financial system, the creation of law-enforcement plans, operations to counter organized crime, reactions to terrorist threats, operations to counter human trafficking, and effective border controls.

• Furthermore, the committee puts special emphasis on the importance of the civil defence system due to the ever-present threat of natural disasters in Iceland.

• The committee also wants to draw attention to the fact that cyber-security is now considered to be one of the most important aspects of national security. It is necessary to strengthen the legal basis for operations to promote cyber security and reaction capabilities in case of possible cyber threats.

• The committee urges the completion of work concerning a cyber security policy for Iceland, and calls for increased international participation to react to cyber threats.

• The committee points out the connection between civil defence and climate change and the importance for the contingency plans to take this into consideration for both the short and the long-term.

Further Proposals

Besides the proposed threefold National Security Policy, the committee for the development of a National Security Policy for Iceland took a stance concerning a few fundamental points that relate to, amongst other things, institution developments, the legal environment, prioritization of threats, and other matters which were referred specifically to the committee.

The committee considered whether or not there is a need for a special national security council and reached the conclusion that if the proposed measures are implemented, and national security is defined in a comprehensive manner - so that it includes an active foreign policy, defence policy and public safety - then serious consideration must be given to the creation of a national security council which would encompass all aspects of national security.

The committee does not provide any further proposals regarding this issue. However, the issues being addressed by a national security council and the current Civil Defence and Security Council would be so interwoven that the most practical solution would be for a single governmental body to oversee this role.

A National Security Council, or an altered Civil Defence and Security Council, would in any
case have to be very active and hold regular meetings; it would have to have clear authority and effective means of communication. Therefore, the relevant ministers and officials responsible for key areas would have to have seats on the council. Furthermore, a clearly defined means of communication between the council and Althingi’s Foreign Affairs Committee would have to be ensured.

The committee specifically examined the benefits of prioritizing those threats or risk-factors which Iceland faces. Examples exist wherein states take such an approach, Britain is one example. However, numerous countries do not prioritize directly as a degree of uncertainty will always exist.

The committee does not propose that threats or risk-factors be prioritized in a direct or linear fashion. On the other hand, the committee finds that it would be better to identify from where the principal threats will come, and use an appropriate and flexible approach. In category 1 you will find those threats that the committee feels should have priority status in terms of anticipatory measures and financing. In category 2 you will find threats that the committee places a little lower on the list in terms of priority, but that still require full attention. In the last category you will find dangers that are least likely to occur here in Iceland, but that can still undermine the sovereignty and independence of the nation in such a manner as to require anticipatory measures to counter them.

It must be mentioned that the following approach reflects the first and foremost discussions within the committee which were based on, amongst other things, interviews with key experts and data that the committee evaluated. These are not scientific conclusions, but rather an attempt or first steps towards categorizing the principal threats and risk factors.

*Category 1:*
- Environmental threats or accidents due to increased activity in the Arctic region
- Cyber threats and sabotage on critical infrastructure
- Natural disasters

*Category 2:*
- Organized crime
- Financial and economic security
- Food security and food safety
- Health security and epidemics

*Category 3:*
- Military threats
- Terrorism

The committee examined preparedness and contingency plans whilst taking into account the government’s policy concerning civil defence and state security. The committee refers to this work, now in its final stages, and proposes the reforms that are specified there be put into action. It is urgent that awareness and anticipatory measures to counter cyber threats be increased, and cooperation concerning these matters be strengthened. The committee sees reason to put special focus on this issue.

The minimum amount of necessary medication, food and water would have to be reviewed as well as the residence and working accommodations for the highest levels of government during times of extreme emergencies. In this regard consideration should be given to the accommodations at the old army base near Keflavik airport and the coast guard vessel Þór.

Airspace surveillance and surveillance at sea will continue to be very important and continued interactions with allies and partner states. To counter a military threat, Iceland would still rely on the Defence Agreement with the United States and its NATO membership. It is important that effective plans and means of communication are always in place and that they adapt to changing circumstances.
Terrorist threats are usually classified as a law enforcement issue and, therefore, it is vital that Icelandic law enforcement agencies are equipped to handle such threats. The office of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police and its special forces play a big role in that respect, as does international cooperation. The committee has discovered that equipment for Iceland’s special forces was lacking, as was civil defence equipment to counter chemical, germ, or radioactive weaponry. The means to dispose of animals was also lacking.

The committee also reviewed whether there were gaps in the legal or contractual environment when it comes to national security and, upon review of individual factors, came to the conclusion that it seemed to withstand scrutiny. If national security is to be defined in broad terms, as the committee proposes, then this creates the possibility of a comprehensive body of legislation in this field. During the committees work, concerns were raised regarding the recent changes to the telecommunications legislation; that they were insufficient for tackling cyber threats. Furthermore, legislation on security measures may be incomplete. The new regulations concerning the protection of confidential information, security clearance and security approval in the area of security and defence matters do, however, improve the latter’s regulatory framework and last June a regulation was introduced that further bolsters defences to counter cyber threats. Agreements and regulatory frameworks concerning Arctic issues are available, most importantly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Arctic Council.

The system by which the institutions responsible for defence-related projects operated, after the decommission of the Defence Agency late in 2010, was also examined. The present arrangement is based upon an agreement between the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights (now the Minister of the Interior) from the 11th of December 2010. Past experience has shown that defence related projects are well maintained by the Icelandic coast guard and the office of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police. For a nation without a military it is only natural that civilian law enforcement agencies implement defence related projects and fulfill necessary cooperation with foreign military forces. On the other hand, it is urgent that work begin on work allocation and assigning responsibility, and to complete the transference of defence related projects in a legal manner, as is stipulated in the aforementioned agreement and which is authorized by defence legislations no. 34/2008.

The government of Iceland referred a parliamentary resolution from 2009, concerning the establishment of a Centre of Expertise in matters of foreign affairs and security issues, to the committee, which gave it special attention. The committee does not consider there to be a basis for such a Centre under the present circumstances, especially due to financial constraints. Therefore, the first step will be to build upon existing knowledge and experience. The most obvious sources would be the universities and academia. When conditions permit, and finances are available, the committee believes that the establishment of such a Centre of expertise should be re-evaluated.

On the other hand, the committee considers there to be an urgent need to promote a more open and informed dialogue concerning foreign affairs and security issues, and the work regarding a National Security Policy could be useful in this context, as comprehensive collaboration regarding national security can only come about through open and democratic discussions concerning the issues.

The committee also discussed a parliamentary bill concerning Iceland becoming a nuclear weapon free-zone with a traffic ban on nuclear powered vehicles (see case nr. 18 of 139th session of parliament). The committee recalls that it has long been the public policy of the Icelandic authorities that nuclear weapons shall not be present in Iceland. To reaffirm this position, one can also mention a parliamentary resolution concerning Iceland’s policy from 1985 regarding disarmament.
For further emphasis of the current policy, and taking into consideration the increased support of disarmament in the international arena in the past years, the committee proposes that work begin on a parliamentary resolution declaring Iceland a nuclear weapon free-zone, with the aim of reducing the risk of nuclear accidents in Iceland and around its shores and to work towards disarmament and peace. This nuclear weapon free-zone would apply to Iceland and its territorial waters with regard to its international obligations, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as Iceland’s obligations within certain institutions and agreements of which Iceland is a cosignatory. Within this work there shall be extensive consultation with those international organizations of which Iceland is a member, and towards those states which Iceland works with on matters of security and defence. Taking these factors into account attempts will be made to gain international recognition of Iceland as a nuclear weapon free-zone.

Finally, it is recommended that a policy regarding national security be re-evaluated as needed, and no less than once every 5 years. During such a re-evaluation an effort will always be made to ensure that discussions are comprehensive and in the spirit of solidarity.

See full text in Icelandic on the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affair's website:

http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/oryggismal/Thjodarorygisstefna-skjal.pdf