



The annual threat assessment compiled by the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) is an analysis of anticipated developments within the service's main areas of responsibility. The assessment focuses on matters that can affect Norwegian security and harm national interests in 2010. Although the timescale for the assessment is therefore one year, during the year ahead, unforeseen incidents may occur that change the platform for the assessment. Such incidents can have considerable significance for the threat situation.

ANNUAL THREAT ASSESSMENT 2010

PST's assessment of threats against national security and independence

Summary

International terrorism will continue to affect the overall threat situation in Norway in 2010. The terrorism threat level can quickly change, and terrorist attacks can be carried out without prior information or warning. Some individuals in Norway provide active support to extreme¹ Islamist players² abroad who have a local or regional agenda. As long as such foreign players maintain their local focus, it is highly improbable that their Norwegian support networks will pose a direct threat against Norway. However, the threat from extreme Islamists in Norway may increase if their contacts abroad change their strategy to incorporate targets in Europe.

It is unlikely that the far-right and far-left extremist groups will pose a serious threat to Norwegian interests in 2010, although some groups and individuals may well commit violent crimes and disturb the peace.

Norway will continue to be a target for players who operate covert procurement activities to benefit possible weapon programmes. In addition, Norwegian specialist environments will still represent attractive goals for the acquisition of know-how and expertise that can be utilised in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

Foreign states' intelligence activity in Norway and against Norwegian interests will remain at a high level in 2010. PST anticipates that political decision-making processes related to the High North will be particularly susceptible to foreign intelligence activities. Furthermore, advanced technological environments in the Norwegian petroleum and energy sphere will be vulnerable targets.

It must be expected that Norwegian dignitaries will continue to be the object of threats in 2010. However, experience has shown that very few attempts are made to put such threats into effect. Any physical attacks on dignitaries, or harassment of them, will most likely occur without prior threats and most often spontaneously.

¹ In this context *extreme* refers to a person's attitude to the use of violence. An extremist is thus a person who accepts the use of violence to achieve political objectives. Extremism therefore denotes solely the choice of means rather than the political objectives.

² In this assessment the term "player" is used for individuals, groups, organisations, networks or states, depending on the context.

Politically motivated violence – terrorism

The terrorism threat level in Norway in 2009 was generally low. However, in certain environments activities are taking place that may be instrumental in changing the threat situation during 2010. This mainly concerns groups inspired by extreme Islamist ideologies. Although extreme Islamists did not succeed in carrying out acts of terrorism in Europe in 2009, during the past year several concrete terror plans have been detected in Western countries and a number of arrests have been made in connection with terrorist activities.

Status – terrorist threats against Norway

There are a few individuals in Norway who support extreme Islamist organisations abroad. The environments to which these persons belong are small and to a large extent ethnically homogenous. In recent years, however, environments have emerged that are composed of different ethnic groups. The main task of the persons involved in these environments is to collect money and transfer it to extreme Islamist organisations abroad. Other common support activities include propaganda, identity fraud and the provision of materials. Political unrest and conflict in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Somalia is of particular significance for the establishment of support activities in Norway.

Radicalisation continues to occur in some of the extreme Islamist environments in Norway.³ A few charismatic leaders legitimate and glorify the use of violence as a political tool, and encourage others to support extreme Islamist organisations abroad. By virtue of their status as guides they can play a key role in the radicalisation of others. Young people who are seeking an identity and who have difficulty finding religious guidance elsewhere are often susceptible to these leaders.

Assessment of future developments

International terrorism will continue to affect the overall threat picture in Norway in 2010. The picture can change quickly, and terrorist attacks can be carried out without prior indication or warning. The threat from extreme Islamist terrorism in some European countries is still higher than that in Norway. The negative focus of extreme Islamists on European countries also affects the threat against Norwegian interests. Major symbols – for example the conflict concerning the caricature drawings – still motivate extreme Islamist groups to plan acts of terrorism against European interests. Such extreme Islamists also deliberately utilise symbolic cases in their propaganda in order to mobilise support.

There are indications that some extreme Islamist networks that have traditionally been oriented towards local or regional matters have now developed a more global approach. This is a trend that can increase the threat against European interests.

Some individuals in Norway provide active support to extreme Islamist players abroad who have a local or regional agenda. As long as the foreign players maintain their local focus, it is highly improbable that their Norwegian support networks will pose a direct threat to Norway. However, the threat from extreme Islamists in Norway may increase if their contacts abroad change their strategy to incorporate targets in Europe.

Players who pose a threat can travel freely between countries in the Schengen area. This makes it enormously difficult to detect suspicious activities carried out by individuals who travel frequently between European countries. The use of false travel documents and identification papers is also extensive among players who pose a potential threat and who wish to carry out terrorist attacks in Europe.

Some individuals who are resident in European countries travel to conflict-ridden areas to spend periods at training camps and to acquire experience of warfare. A considerable number of people also travel from Norway – for example to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia. Although most of those who travel to these countries do so on legitimate grounds, some of the travelling activity may be associated with extreme Islamism. It is difficult to distinguish between players who pose a potential threat and those who form part of the normal flow of travellers. Individuals who return from periods in a training camp can pose a direct threat since they have acquired experience of warfare and have been ideologically influenced to

³ *Radicalisation* is used by PST to refer to the process by which a person increasingly accepts the use of violence as a means of achieving political objectives.

carry out acts of terrorism. They will most probably also pose an indirect threat through acting as ideological forces to promote the radicalisation of others.

PST still expects individuals with a background from conflict-ridden areas and with an affiliation to extreme Islamist organisations to immigrate to Norway. The growing number of people in this country with a connection to these organisations may lead to greater support being provided from Norway to those involved in terrorism abroad. It may also intensify the challenges associated with radicalisation and recruitment. Individuals who have experience of warfare may choose to use this competence for operational activities: being involved in hostilities may result in a lower threshold for the use of violence in other situations. Some of those who have participated in such hostilities may also be predisposed to traumas that can lead to violent behaviour.

Certain political issues and Norway's international engagement may attract negative attention from extreme Islamists, which in turn may in various ways influence radicalisation in certain groups in this country. However, first and foremost it is Norwegian interests abroad that are the most exposed targets. Norway's military participation in Afghanistan has been used as motivation in several of the cases in which Norwegian diplomatic representatives in other countries have been the recipients of threats. This also generates a more serious threat situation for Norwegian delegations travelling to areas of high risk.

Politically motivated violence – national extremism

National extremist activities are carried out in Norway by individuals who use or encourage the use of violence as a tool to achieve political objectives. In 2009 the level of activity in this country was low among these far-right extremist players. There has also been less use of violence among Norwegian far-left extremists.

Individuals and groups connected to national extremism can roughly be divided into two main orientations: on the one hand the far-right extremist groups, i.e. violent individuals and groups that uphold viewpoints which appear to be inspired by various forms of racism, nationalism and/or Nazism, and on the other hand the far-left extremists, i.e. violent individuals and groups that uphold viewpoints inspired by anarchical, anti-racist and/or anti-capitalist ideologies.

The use of violent methods is instrumental in creating fear and insecurity and in obstructing the free exchange of opinions, and can thus as an ultimate consequence constitute a threat to democracy. Both the far-right and the far-left extremist groups attract young people who have little ideological motivation but who are primarily resorting to these groups in order to achieve a sense of belonging or to find an outlet for their violent conduct.

The far-right extremist groups in Norway appear disorganised and have been weakened due to poor recruitment and a low level of activity. To the extent that the far-right extremists represent a threat, this primarily takes the form of the violent conduct of some individuals. Far-right extremist ideology is spread via the Internet, and some of the websites come across as racist and threatening. PST anticipates no particular change in far-right extremist activity in 2010.

The threat from the Norwegian far-left extremist groups is primarily connected to demonstrations and protests against diplomatic missions in Norway. American and Israeli interests have traditionally been most susceptible to far-left extremist activity. Other diplomatic representations can also be vulnerable targets, particularly when individual controversial cases receive considerable attention in the media. However, there appears to be an increasing resistance to the use of violence in some of these environments, and PST anticipates that the tendency towards less violence in demonstrations and protests will continue in 2010.

The far-right and the far-left extremist groups will not constitute a serious threat against the Norwegian system of government and democracy in 2010. Nonetheless it is probable that certain groups and individuals will commit violent crimes and disturb the peace and public order. This violence may contribute to causing fear and insecurity and may inflict financial losses on individuals or businesses.

Intelligence activity against Norway and Norwegian interests

Intelligence activity both within and against Norway remains at a high level. The intelligence services of a number of states gather information on various circumstances in this country, and several have intelligence staff stationed here. The activity against Norway is at the same level as that in many other European countries.

Intelligence activity can be defined as the deliberate gathering and processing of information in order to provide a better basis for political and military decision makers. States conduct intelligence activities against each other for the purpose of advancing and protecting their own strategic interests, often at the expense of the interests of others. This harmful intelligence activity in Norway is one of PST's areas of responsibility. Many states expend considerable resources on their intelligence services and attach great importance to the information generated by such services.

Status – intelligence activity oriented towards Norwegian interests

Norway's resources, technology and geographical location are of strategic interest to several states. As a NATO member and participant in NATO's international operations, Norway forms part of a security and defence cooperation that makes the country interesting to certain intelligence services.

Foreign intelligence services' interest in NATO was demonstrated in spring 2009 through the conviction of Herman Simm, the former leader of Estonia's national security authority (2001-2006). He is said to have collected classified NATO information and communicated it to a foreign intelligence service over

several years. Simm also had contact with individuals in Norway through his official post. The case shows that the work of intelligence services is long-term, creative and thorough.

Intelligence services show a great interest in energy-related issues and advanced technology. Norway has substantial energy resources, and the northern part of the country represents a major area of priority for the Norwegian government's foreign policy. Currently the greatest intelligence activity registered by PST has been within the management of the oil and gas resources in the High North.

Several states conduct refugee-related espionage in Norway. The primary aim of this activity is to undermine, neutralise or eliminate political opposition. Some states use the pretext of attempting to combat terrorism in order to carry out intelligence activity against immigrant groups in this country. Such espionage can cause fear and insecurity among those resident in Norway, as well as having negative consequences for people in the home country. There is much to indicate that the refugee-related espionage that is carried out in Norway is not reported to the police or the Norwegian authorities, and our knowledge of this threat may be quite deficient. Some individuals may refrain from reporting any activity they are subject to out of fear of retaliation from their home country's regime and an inherent mistrust of the police and security services.

Assessment of future developments

The level of foreign intelligence activity in Norway and against Norwegian interests will remain high in 2010. Political decision-making processes have traditionally been a predominant target, and PST anticipates that aspects related to the High North as an area of priority for foreign policy will be particularly vulnerable. For example, intelligence activity will be directed at unresolved legal issues in the area such as the Norwegian enforcement of the protected zone and interpretations of the Svalbard Treaty.

The High North is also the base and the test area for extensive research and development activity related to polar, space and petroleum technologies. The extraction of oil and gas resources in the north constantly requires technological innovation. Several intelligence services focus on such technological environments to enable them to gain a competitive edge. Norwegian specialist communities are technologically far ahead in this field and must therefore expect undesired intelligence activities to be directed at their work.

Several countries assign priority to intelligence activity against financial targets, and PST anticipates a continuation of such activity against the Norwegian business sector. In some countries there are close links between intelligence services and trade and industry. Industrial espionage is therefore also carried out under government auspices. One possible strategy for this is for foreign companies, that have an affiliation to their respective country's intelligence services, to initiate fictitious negotiations with the aim of gaining access to valuable information on prototypes and technical specifications.

Foreign states' intelligence activity will continue to be geared towards political decision makers, employees in bureaucracy, players in the business sector, journalists and individuals working in research and development. Intelligence officers who operate under diplomatic cover will conceal their intelligence affiliation from their contacts for as long as possible. They attempt to establish social relationships in order to gain confidence, and through such contacts they try to influence or undermine Norwegian decision-making processes to the benefit of a foreign state.

Intelligence services also utilise other players and methods than those used by intelligence officers under diplomatic cover. Intelligence personnel can pose as journalists or players in the business sector, or can be part of delegations entering the country – including at a high political level. It is far easier for these individuals to avoid undesired attention, and this type of intelligence activity is therefore more difficult to detect. The intelligence services will employ far more aggressive methods against Norwegian citizens in these services' home country than those they use in Norway.

It is anticipated that infiltration will continue to be an intelligence method employed against targets in Norway. If infiltrators succeed in being appointed to key posts within the public and private sectors, this can cause considerable harm. In addition, employees can be pressurised by an intelligence service to provide information. Individuals from environments with authoritarian regimes are particularly

susceptible to such activities. In such situations threats against family members who are still in the home country can be used as pressure to obtain information from the person concerned.

As well as recruiting sources and contacts, several states will also have a significant capacity for monitoring information in 2010. Much sensitive information is communicated via the telephone and the Internet, and several foreign intelligence services have methods for listening in on and monitoring such communications. Furthermore, a number of states will continue to develop their capacity within computer network operations.

The covert and long-term nature of intelligence activity can make it difficult to connect its harmful impact directly to the preceding intelligence activity. Sensitive information is not necessarily classified. Although an intelligence officer's enquiry to a source can in itself be perceived as insignificant, together with other gathered information this may still harm Norwegian interests. The harmful impact will reduce the freedom of opportunity to formulate and implement Norwegian policy, impair the country's negotiating position, and cause the loss of business secrets and contracts.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

No material changes have taken place during the past year in procurement directed at Norwegian activities. Norway continues to be a target for players who seek to procure goods and technology that can be used to develop and produce weapons of mass destruction.⁴

Several countries need to import technology and know-how in order to develop programmes related to weapons of mass destruction. In addition, a number of states have recently shown an interest in nuclear technology. This is partly due to the fact that nuclear power is currently receiving more attention in the debate on the environment and climate. The development of nuclear power represents a risk of greater proliferation since it can provide countries with the necessary infrastructure and technological expertise that can potentially form the basis for the development of nuclear weapons.

Status – challenges related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Norway remains an attractive target for players who conduct covert procurement activity that may benefit possible weapon programmes. These players are persistent and constantly put new methods to use to evade national and international export control measures. They deliberately attempt to conceal the purchase of products that need a licence – for example by exporting products to transit countries and by using false end-user declarations and companies that act as fronts.

Developing and running a programme for weapons of mass destruction requires expertise and technology within a broad range of specialist areas. The export of what is called intangible products represents a particular challenge: intangible products include technology and skills that can be directly utilised to develop a country's military capacity. There are some students and researchers in Norway who may belong to the target group of the UN's non-proliferation resolutions and who must therefore be prevented from transferring specialist know-how to the authorities of their respective countries.

Assessment of future developments

PST expects procurement attempts directed at Norwegian players to continue to represent a challenge in 2010. The current export control system is to a large extent based on the confidence that those working in this field have the knowledge and motivation required to comply with the prevailing rules. One considerable problem related to export control is the unknown end users and the companies that act as fronts. A lack of knowledge of the actual end user can facilitate the export of critical products and technology from Norway to players who intend to misuse the products for developing weapons of mass destruction.

In 2010 Norway will continue to be attractive to those who are seeking to acquire technology and expertise that can be misused in connection with the development of such weapons. The high technological level in Norway means that certain products and expertise that are critical for the development of weapon programmes can be acquired through Norwegian enterprises and through research and educational institutions.

The principle of academic freedom and knowledge sharing within research is of considerable importance and holds a strong position in Norway. At the same time, Norway is responsible for preventing knowledge from within the Norwegian business sector and Norwegian academic and research environments from being misused to develop weapons of mass destruction. Work is currently being carried out to examine control mechanisms that will make it easier to assess foreign students and researchers who seek to enter sensitive subject areas. However, the work on these control mechanisms is at an early stage. Unless satisfactory procedures and control systems are put in place, it is likely that specialist know-how and expertise from Norway will be exploited for the development of weapons of mass destruction.

Security policy will be of importance for Norwegian non-proliferation endeavours. Several countries in the Middle East have recently shown an interest in acquiring nuclear technology. As well as possibly heightening the potential level of conflict in the region, this could in the long term also result in an increase in the procurement activity directed at Norway.

⁴ In this context weapons of mass destruction include chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

Threats against dignitaries

No physical attacks were carried out on dignitaries⁵ in Norway in 2009, nor was there an increase in the number of threats made.⁶ The number of negative statements made about dignitaries remained high.

A large proportion of threats against dignitaries are made by individuals who are mentally unbalanced. Their mental state varies, depending on treatment programmes and their current circumstances of life. Many of those who make threats abuse drugs or alcohol, and this abuse can contribute to reducing the threshold for issuing threatening statements. The background for making threats against dignitaries is often the experience of having been badly treated by the authorities: threats are made to give vent to frustration, to show dissatisfaction, to attract attention or to exert political pressure and influence. Which specific politicians are the actual targets of threats is often connected to their area of responsibility and media exposure.

In most cases there is no connection between expressed threats and actual attempts to inflict physical harm on dignitaries. International experience shows that physical attacks on dignitaries are largely carried out by individuals who have not given prior warning through threats. However, in most cases such persons have previously shown an interest in the dignitary in question. The challenge facing PST is to acquire information about the potential issuers of threats early enough to prevent possible physical attacks.

Although PST expects dignitaries in Norway to receive threats in 2010, a material increase in the number of these threats is unlikely. The motivation for those who make the threats will probably remain the same, and in most cases it is unlikely that attempts will be made to put such threats into effect. Any physical attacks on dignitaries, or harassment of them, will most likely occur without prior threats and most often spontaneously.

Social network media such as Twitter, Facebook, blogging and various discussion forums on the Internet have become significant areas for social debate. These network media make it easier for the public to express opinions targeted at or about dignitaries. The threshold for making critical comments has probably become lower, although such comments are often made impulsively, in the heat of the moment or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and are seldom characterised by careful consideration. This type of activity can help to give vent to frustration and dissatisfaction, but expressing such opinions on the Internet may also lead to mutual incitement. PST anticipates that in 2010 threats will largely be issued through the various social network media.

The most recent network media provide individuals in Norway with a constant and unfiltered source of information, including sound and images, from international conflicts and on matters that are perceived by some as provocative. Frustration and powerlessness can be directed towards those who are considered to be the responsible Norwegian dignitaries or towards foreign missions in Norway. PST expects international conflicts and controversial issues to lead to aggression and threats against Norwegian and foreign dignitaries also in 2010.

⁵ Dignitaries in this context refer to members of the Royal Family, the *Storting* (Norwegian parliament), the Government and the Supreme Court, as well as representatives of foreign states who are in Norway. In addition PST can, following an administrative decision by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police, be given the duty of protecting other individuals who are potential targets for threats.

⁶ PST regards a threat as existing if a person makes known, or is deemed to have, the intention of and capacity to inflict physical harm on a dignitary.

Conclusion

Norwegian society can largely be described as peaceful and stable with no serious internal conflicts or lines of demarcation. Norway has a stable and good relationship with other countries, characterised by extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation. No development trends indicate material changes to this situation in 2010.

However, this threat assessment shows that there are several factors that may have a negative impact on Norwegian security and that may harm national interests. PST's task, as a preventive service, is to implement the necessary measures. It is of crucial importance that other national players are also aware of how they can be affected by these threats and of how they themselves can best prevent undesired or harmful incidents.

Individuals and groups motivated by extreme Islamist ideologies represent a serious threat to European security. Preventing acts of terrorism, both nationally and in collaboration with other countries' security services, will also in 2010 be given the highest priority by PST. Foreign states' intelligence services still conduct activities that are harmful to Norwegian political and financial interests. A major task for PST will be to prevent these states from acquiring information through their intelligence services that may undermine Norwegian national interests. Furthermore, preventive measures must be taken against covert procurement activity that can contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and thereby damage Norway's reputation.

