
1. Denmark and the European Security and Defence Policy

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I. Introduction

The conspicuous peculiarity about Denmark in relation to the European Security and Defence Policy is the fact that it is not a partner in the project. This fact is particularly peculiar because very few Danes would even try to argue that the Danish opt-out from European Union defence activities—one of four national opt-outs from the EU's 1992 Treaty of Maastricht—serves any identifiable national interest. On the contrary, its detrimental effects are becoming increasingly obvious. So why did Denmark opt out in the first place? Moreover, both government and opposition parties now clearly want Denmark to 'opt back in' and to position itself as a dependable core country in this department of European integration, and opinion polls have for several years indicated that this view is shared by a sizeable majority of respondents.¹ So what is holding Denmark back? This chapter suggests some answers to both the questions posed above.

The Danish defence opt-out (see section II below) is particularly puzzling and problematic in the context of the development of Danish foreign policy after the cold war. As pointed out by Gorm Rye Olsen and Jess Pilegaard,² on the one hand Danish policy has become even more multilateralized than it was before 1990 and is now shaped and conducted in close cooperation with other countries and international organizations. On the other hand, Denmark has become increasingly ready to consider the use of military means and has been reforming its military forces to make them useful tools in the government's foreign and security policy 'toolbox' (a term much favoured by Danish Defence Minister Søren Gade). The background to and emergence of this new policy trend are outlined in sections III and IV. This trend is widely seen as a dramatic departure from the surprisingly long-lived, defeatist 'small-country' psychology that characterized earlier Danish policies—locally and unlovingly referred to as the '1864 syndrome' (see section III).

Section V offers comments on the Atlantic dimension: the special cases of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and Denmark's special relationship with the USA. In conclusion, section VI takes a brief look at the possibilities for Nordic

¹ See chapter 5 in this volume.

² Olsen, G. R. and Pilegaard, J., 'Danmarks og EU's fælles sikkerheds- og forsvarspolitik' [Denmark and the EU's common security and defence policy], *Udenrigs*, no. 2/2005 (June 2005), pp. 39–50.

cooperation outside and inside the framework of the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

II. The history of the opt-out

Denmark joined the European Community (EC) in 1973—along with Ireland and the United Kingdom—after a constitutionally required national referendum in October 1972 had produced a ‘Yes’ vote by a two-to-one margin. When in 1992 the EC proposed to take the significant step (through the Treaty of Maastricht³) of converting itself into the European Union, Denmark again needed a referendum. The outcome in June 1992 was a wafer-thin victory for the ‘No’ side, against the advice of the centre-right government and of the opposition Social Democratic Party. Subsequent analysis showed, remarkably, that, while all other parties had delivered a majority of their voters in support of the party platform, less than 40 per cent of Social Democrat voters had backed the party position. This was odd enough in the light of the party tradition to call for some special explanation. It is tempting to postulate, if difficult to prove, that the meandering foreign and security policy course followed by the party’s tacticians over the previous decade (the infamous ‘footnote’ years) had left many Social Democrat voters thoroughly confused.

Nonetheless, the result was ‘No’, to the consternation even of many nay-sayers who got more than they had bargained for, including a potential constitutional crisis for the EU project as a whole. It was clear that the voters had to be asked in a second referendum whether they had really meant it. A package of four opt-outs from the Treaty of Maastricht was grudgingly agreed,⁴ grandly dubbed ‘The National Compromise’, but in reality constituting the kind of deal that leaves all parties unhappy. The other EU member states accepted the Danish opt-outs on the premise that they would hurt only Denmark and not hamper the progress of the rest of the Union in any way. In May 1993 the Danes voted ‘Yes’ to the Treaty of Maastricht minus the opt-outs.

One of the opt-outs, of course, was on European defence cooperation. At the time this was of so little immediate consequence that the anti-alliance Socialist People’s Party felt that their agreement to the ‘compromise’ had been bought with false coin. It meant that Denmark could not become a full member of the Western European Union (WEU), a European defence organization that was being revived after many years in *de facto* hibernation but which still had little or no operational role.⁵ The argument offered by many Danish spokesmen that

³ The Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Maastricht) was signed on 29 July 1992 and entered into force on 1 Nov. 1993; URL <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html>.

⁴ As well as the defence opt-out, the opt-outs are from aspects of Economic and Monetary Union, Union citizenship, and Justice and Home Affairs. For the official Danish version of the opt-outs and their consequences see Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘The Danish opt-outs’, 21 May 2004, URL <<http://www.um.dk/en/menu/EU/TheDanishOptouts/>>.

⁵ Only countries belonging at the same time to NATO and the EU could become full members of the WEU. Denmark was the only such country not to take up this option, selecting instead the weaker status of an ‘observer’ (which was otherwise held by states that belonged to the EU but not to NATO).

European defence cooperation might hurt NATO, and that it was therefore better for Denmark not to join, looked decidedly odd when all the other NATO members that also belonged to the EU had taken up full WEU membership without a qualm. In any event, the argument lost all foundation in 1994 when NATO decided to nominate the WEU as its European pillar.⁶ The Danish centre-left government that had taken over in 1993 might have grasped this early opportunity to go back to the people and argue that circumstances had now changed so much that the defence opt-out made no sense and should be dropped. The government dared not risk it, and the opportunity went.

The government's fear of a negative referendum outcome, had the issue been re-opened in 1994, was perhaps not unfounded with the 1992 referendum in mind. It was borne out when, in 2000, Denmark voted against adopting the euro, thumbing their noses at the 77 per cent of their elected parliamentarians who had advocated a 'Yes' and who had been supported by the leaders of labour, industry, agriculture, finance and the press. Since 2001, government has again been in the hands of a centre-right coalition, but the defence opt-out is still in force. The Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has not yet announced a decision about when to ask the voters to scrap the opt-outs, nor indeed on whether to hold four separate referendums or just one covering all the opt-outs. The defence opt-out has come to look so ridiculously pointless and is becoming so unpopular that a motion to scrap it would probably sail comfortably through the unavoidable referendum. That it has not already happened may be due to a tactical consideration that by bundling the four opt-outs together there might be a chance of abolishing the other, less unpopular ones together with the defence opt-out.

It is of course correct to say that the defence opt-out is an important element of Danish policy, but it is at least equally important to bear in mind that the opt-out is not a true expression of Danish thinking, intentions and ambitions today and that it may not have been even in the first place. In 1992 it was included in the opt-out package in order to permit the leadership of the Socialist People's Party to advocate a 'Yes' in the 1993 referendum. It cannot be known which, if any, of the four opt-outs were really important to the voters. Some analysts suggested at the time that, for many who voted 'No' in the 1992 referendum, any excuse to get a second vote and say 'Yes' would have been acceptable.

⁶ 'We support strengthening the European pillar of the Alliance through the Western European Union, which is being developed as the defence component of the European Union.' NATO, 'Declaration of the heads of state and government', Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council, Brussels, 10–11 Jan. 1994, URL <<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm>>, paragraph 5.

III. The evolution of Danish security policy

The '1864 syndrome'

After losing its eastern provinces of Blekinge, Halland and Skåne to Sweden in the 17th century, its navy to the UK in 1807 and its union with Norway in 1814, Denmark managed to quell an uprising by the German majority in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein in 1848–50, only to be attacked and defeated by Prussia and Austria in the brief but bloody war of 1864. This defeat, leading to the loss not only of the overwhelmingly German Holstein but also and traumatically of the mainly Danish Schleswig,⁷ was to influence Danish thinking about security and defence for more than a century. After defeating Denmark, Prussia beat Austria and France in quick succession and in 1871 established the German Empire; a severely diminished Denmark found itself isolated on the doorstep of a new superpower.

The Danes rolled up their sleeves and compensated for the loss of territory and population by a remarkably fast and wide-ranging development of the country's economy and foreign trade. Defence was another matter and remained hotly debated, many Danes asking whether it was any use at all, given the circumstances. The defence sceptics did not win this first round of policy argument, but neither did those who advocated a strong navy and small, mobile land forces as the most relevant configuration of the defence of a primarily island country. Instead, Denmark opted for the most immobile sort of defence and for two decades sank half of its military budget into the fortification of Copenhagen. The work was completed just before World War I, creating a very modern, very strong and strategically quite useless edifice: in effect, a Maginot line on an island. Denmark managed to maintain a heavily armed neutrality during that war, obliging Germany by mining the approaches to the Baltic Sea and closing them to the British Royal Navy. After the war, the defence sceptics won the second round of the debate, and Denmark gradually disarmed itself in the belief that, with no outside help to be expected, no amount of Danish military effort would stop a German invasion.

When Hitler's forces invaded in April 1940, the ill-equipped Danish forces offered only sporadic resistance before they were ordered to surrender. The Danish Government embarked on a policy of cooperation with the German occupiers that lasted for more than three years. However, thanks to the increasingly active resistance movement and its close cooperation with the UK, Denmark managed to have itself counted on the side of the Allies by the time of the German surrender in May 1945. The euphoria of liberation was not shared by the people of the island of Bornholm, which was occupied by Soviet forces for 11 months before they decided that Bornholm was so liberated that they might

⁷ North Schleswig was overwhelmingly Danish while there was a fairly equal distribution of Danes and Germans in South Schleswig around 1850. Schultz Hansen, H., *Danskheden i Sydslesvig 1840–1914 som folkelig og national bevægelse* [Danishness in South Schleswig 1840–1914 as popular and national movement] (Studieafdelingen ved Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig: Flensborg, 1990), pp. 59, 91.

safely leave it. The shadow of a new threat had touched Denmark from the East.⁸

The post-World War II search for security

After World War II, Denmark explored with the other Nordic countries the feasibility of a Nordic defence union. A suspicious Soviet Union, however, opposed the idea and vetoed Finnish participation, while Denmark, Iceland and Norway were invited to join NATO as founding members in 1949.⁹

For the first time in its long history Denmark was firmly anchored in a defence alliance with the world's strongest military power. However, as a front-line state with a strategic position at the entrance to the Baltic Sea, Denmark still felt quite uneasy, small and exposed. The '1864 syndrome' was to linger on as a factor in Danish thinking about security and defence policy for the duration of the cold war. The resulting attitudes tended to be reactive and defensive and, in the never-ending debate about the right combination of deterrence and reassurance in Western policy, the Danish focus tended to be on reassurance. In exercises and war games, wars were fought defensively on Danish soil and (mostly) in Danish waters and airspace, and Danish crisis management was not seen as a matter of securing advantage but invariably as a matter of minimizing damage. Denmark's willingness to spend on defence was limited, and its military expenditure as a share of gross domestic product never exceeded 2.5 per cent, a relatively low figure by NATO standards but one that did not, however, reflect the input of up to 60 000 unpaid home guard volunteers nor the fairly elaborate civil defence system.¹⁰

At the same time, Danish defence gradually became more efficient, with better training and better armaments. Following Germany's entry into NATO in 1955 and the establishment of NATO's Baltic Approaches (BALTAP) Command, a Danish and a German division formed a corps that had English as the language of command and was tasked with defending the line between Lübeck and Hamburg and holding the Jutland peninsula.¹¹ Although the term was not

⁸ On Danish history see Carsten Pedersen, K., 'Danmark', Lande i Lommeformat, Danish Foreign Policy Society, Copenhagen, 2005; and, for a brief summary of their recent *History of Danish Foreign Policy*, Petersen, N., Feldbæk, O. and Due-Nielsen, C., 'Fra Dannevirke til Camp Eden, 700–2003' [From Dannevirke to Camp Eden, 700–2003], *Udenrigs*, no. 4/2005 (Dec. 2005).

⁹ The discussions on a possible foreign and defence policy union between Denmark, Norway and Sweden were conducted in a joint committee during the winter of 1948–49 but fell apart in face of the problems of assuring adequate defence capability as well as the imminent formation of NATO. Norway was the first to pull out and effectively scuppered the scheme.

¹⁰ Danish military expenditure in the late 1980s was consistently around 2.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) for some 29 000 active personnel and around 1.5% of GDP for some 21 000 personnel in 2003–2004. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1989–90* (Brassey's: London, 1989); and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2005–2006* (Routledge: Oxford, 2005).

¹¹ The BALTAP Command was originally based at Karup in Denmark and formed part of NATO's Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH). Multiple revisions of the NATO command structure led to BALTAP's first being transferred under the supervision of the Central Command at Heidelberg in 1994 and then being replaced in 2000 by Joint Command North East (JCNorthEast) at Karup and Joint Com-

used at the time, this was in fact the first ever ‘Eurocorps’, and it was not for show but for real.¹² Despite much criticism of Denmark’s relatively modest spending on defence, the quality of its forces was regarded as high and they did the job they were supposed to do on the basis of multi-year (policy and budget) defence agreements reached among the major parties in parliament, both left and right of centre.¹³ Public support for Denmark’s NATO membership, meanwhile, was high and increasing.

The ‘footnote’ period

A peculiar interlude in Danish foreign and security policy became a notorious part of NATO’s recent history and deserves a comment here.¹⁴ In August 1982, with the Danish economy on the edge of an ‘abyss’,¹⁵ the Social Democrat government lost the support of the Social-Liberal Party and thereby its parliamentary majority. It handed over to a coalition of centre-right parties and started thinking about how to conduct itself in opposition. After a few months it became clear that an ‘alternative’ majority might be established in one field: foreign and security policy. All that was needed was for the Social Democrats to make a U-turn on the alliance policies for which they had taken or shared responsibility since 1949. They could then count on enthusiastic support by the Socialist People’s Party to their left and unenthusiastic support by the traditionally anti-defence Social-Liberal Party to their right, which in most other fields supported the new government.

During the following five years this cross-party majority succeeded in getting more than 20 motions passed in the Danish Parliament, most of which were sympathetic to Soviet positions and critical of NATO policies. Given the relatively strong formal rights of the Danish Parliament in the external policy field, government ministers, civil servants and military officers had to convey these

mand North (JCNorth) at Stavanger in Norway. The Danish–German corps is now the Danish–German–Polish Multinational Corps Northeast, with headquarters at Szczecin in Poland.

¹² The first multinational unit to be called ‘Eurocorps’, symbolizing a new organic type of European defence cooperation not entirely dependent on NATO, was formed by France and Germany in 1992 and subsequently joined by Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain. See the Eurocorps website at URL <<http://www.eurocorps.org/>>. During the 1990s other European countries taking part in closely integrated units without US or Canadian participation began declaring them as ‘Euro-forces’ available for possible use by both NATO and the WEU (or today, also in the ESDP context).

¹³ Danish Ministry of Defence, *Aftale om forsvarrets ordning 1995–1999* [Agreement on the defence arrangement 1995–1999], 8 Dec. 1995; Danish Ministry of Defence, *Aftale om forsvarrets ordning 2000–2004* [Agreement on the defence arrangement 2000–2004], 25 May 1999—both at URL <<http://forsvaret.dk/FMN/Forsvars-og-sikkerhedspolitik/Forsvarsforlig/>>—and Danish Defence Command, *The Danish Defence Agreement 2005–2009*, 10 June 2004, URL <<http://forsvaret.dk/FKO/eng/Defence+Agreement/>>.

¹⁴ For more on Denmark’s dissenting ‘footnotes’ to sundry collective NATO decisions, notably on nuclear-related matters, see chapter 14 in this volume.

¹⁵ ‘Abyss’ is the now proverbial phrase of Knud Heinesen, the Social Democrat Finance Minister, describing the massive fiscal and current account deficits. See, e.g., Sørensen, N. E., ‘Statens udenlandske låntagning og gæld fra 1959 til 1991: en personlig beretning’ [Government foreign loans and debt from 1959 until 1991: a personal account], Working Papers 19/2004, Danish National Bank, Copenhagen, July 2004, URL <<http://www.nationalbanken.dk/DNDK/Publikationer.nsf/Publikationer.html>>, p. 90.

motions to their colleagues at NATO meetings and on a few occasions were forced to express dissent in the form of footnotes to otherwise agreed NATO policy papers. When the government finally called an election in May 1988 over one of these motions and won, the Social-Liberal Party joined the ruling coalition. The ‘alternative’ majority was dead, but the Social Democrats remained on the sidelines until they finally made another U-turn in January 1990 and rejoined the mainstream, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war.

What had been especially galling to the government and to the Danish Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, during the ‘footnote’ period was the fact that, when the cold war intensified and the two sides confronted each other face to face, Denmark had not stood by its allies and helped win the contest. The actors of the ‘alternative’ majority, on the other hand, argue that they contributed greatly to ending the cold war peacefully by showing the Soviet Union the gentle face of the West. This view seems to have the backing of the authors of the recent Danish Institute of International Studies report on Denmark and the cold war,¹⁶ but not of the present author.¹⁷

It can plausibly be argued that the ‘alternative’ majority of the 1980s was the last significant expression of the ‘1864 syndrome’. It can also be argued that it was nothing of the sort, but simply an example of tactical use of foreign and security policy in a domestic political power play.

IV. The 1990s: Denmark as producer rather than consumer of security

The material in the previous section shows that several significant aspects of present-day Danish government policies may be traced back to origins in the 1980s. First, it is argued above that the Danish opt-outs from a number of EU policies were emergency tools to salvage the Treaty of Maastricht. The treaty might not have needed salvaging if the Social Democrats had stuck with their policy stance of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, instead of abandoning it and criticizing defence, NATO and European integration. Second, it may be argued that Denmark’s new assertive foreign, security and defence policy has become so assertive today partly in order to compensate for the sins of the 1980s and, more particularly, to compensate for the consequences of the defence opt-out of 1993.

The new policy was championed by Ellemann-Jensen, Minister for Foreign Affairs between September 1982 and January 1993, during his last years in the post. His primary focus was on the Baltic Sea region and the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. In the Baltic Sea region, Denmark was the sole country that was at

¹⁶ Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS), *Danmark under den kolde krig: den sikkerhedspolitiske situation 1945–1991* [Denmark during the cold war: the security policy situation 1945–1991], 4 vols (DIIS: Copenhagen, 2005), URL <<http://www.diis.dk/sw13004.asp>>.

¹⁷ Carsten Pedersen, K., ‘Kold krig’ [Cold war], *Udenrigs*, no. 3/2005 (Sep. 2005), pp. 65–78

the same time Nordic (shorthand for being neither Germany nor the USA), in NATO and in the EU. Besides these assets Denmark also brought to the table a measure of small-country empathy for the predicament of other small countries, an aspect not covered by realist schools of international relations. Ellemann-Jensen accordingly offered Baltic representatives the use of facilities in Copenhagen almost a year before their formal independence; he was among the first to recognize their independence, and the first to open diplomatic missions in all three Baltic capitals. Together with the German Foreign Minister, Hans Dietrich Genscher, he also launched the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in which the newly independent Balts were full members from the outset.¹⁸ When a Social Democrat-led government took power in 1993, the new Minister of Defence, Hans Haekkerup, set up an international department in his ministry and entered into bilateral defence agreements with Poland, the three Baltic states and even Russia.¹⁹ The agreements with Poland and the Baltic states led to intensive military cooperation on planning, training, equipment and eventually even to cooperation in the field on peacekeeping missions. In the case of Poland it may be argued that its cooperation with Denmark facilitated its subsequent cooperation with Germany and the transformation of the Danish–German corps headquartered in Schleswig-Holstein into a Danish–German–Polish corps headquartered in Poland.

Denmark was also one of the first countries to recognize the declared independence of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), for much the same reasons as it had recognized Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, including a deeply rooted belief in the right of self-determination. When the United Nations called for troops to keep the non-peace in Croatia, Denmark was among the very first to respond and for extended periods had up to 1500 soldiers engaged in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina under UN and subsequently NATO auspices,²⁰ proportionally more than any other country. They were also the most robustly armed UN forces on the ground and demonstrated that the main battle tank can be a very

¹⁸ The Council of the Baltic Sea States was inaugurated at a meeting on 5–6 Mar. 1992 in Copenhagen. It is a regional forum for intergovernmental cooperation in any field of government other than military defence with 12 members: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission.

¹⁹ E.g., the 1994 Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Denmark on the Development of Relations in the Field of Military Cooperation and Contacts. One important purpose of this cooperation with Poland and the Baltic states was to facilitate their eventual integration into NATO. On the history of the cooperation and details of current cooperation see Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Danish–Lithuanian defence co-operation', Embassy of Denmark, Vilnius, 14 June 2005, URL <<http://www.ambvilnius.um.dk/en/menu/DefenceAttaché/>>.

²⁰ Denmark contributed to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), which operated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the FYROM, Feb. 1992–Mar. 1995; the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dec. 1995–Dec. 1996; and the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dec. 1996–Dec. 2004.

effective ‘peacekeeping platform’.²¹ Danish troops have also been deployed in the FYROM and are still in Kosovo with NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR).

In the late 1990s, Denmark took the initiative in the UN framework to establish the Multi-National Stand-by High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG), with its planning staff based in Denmark, which first saw action in connection with a UN-supervised truce between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000. In 2001–2002 Danish special forces fought in Afghanistan as part of the US-led coalition, as did Danish F-16 ground attack aircraft, and Denmark now provides troops and C-130 Hercules transport aircraft for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Since 2003 Denmark has contributed to the operations in Iraq as part of the US-led coalition and now also in support of the NATO-led training mission. As of August 2005, there were some 500 Danish troops in Iraq.²²

These examples may suffice to demonstrate the point frequently made by Bertel Heurlin and others that since 1990 Denmark has become a producer of security rather than just a consumer.²³ Sten Rynning argues that Denmark has changed its international role from that of a ‘civilian actor’ in the 1990s to that of a ‘strategic actor’ today.²⁴ There is no doubt at all—indeed there is general agreement in parliamentary circles—that Denmark must try to maximize its international influence. It is not the purpose of this chapter to go into the various forms of ‘soft power’ that a country like Denmark may wield by such means as trade, aid, culture and cooperation in many fields. The novelty in the Danish context is the readiness to apply hard power as well.

The military tools in the toolbox

A third, indirect consequence of the ‘footnote’ period was the Defence Commission that was established in August 1988 as a condition for the Social-Liberal Party to join the government.²⁵ The commission was aiming at a fast-moving target; it reported in January 1990 just as the whole strategic and political context had changed. It did, however, correctly conclude that the main

²¹ For one of the episodes where Danish tanks under UNPROFOR command were forced to fight and did so successfully see Findlay, T., SIPRI, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), pp. 230–31.

²² Danish Army Operational Command, ‘Om DANCON/IRAK, det danske kontingent i Irak’ [On DANCON/IRAK, the Danish contingent in Iraq], Danish Army, 6 Aug. 2005, URL <<http://forsvaret.dk/HOK/Internationalt+Info/Irak/>>. Details of all Danish overseas operations are available on the Danish Ministry of Defence’s website at URL <<http://forsvaret.dk/FMN/Operationer+og+beredskab/>> (in Danish).

²³ Heurlin, B., *Riget, magten og militæret: dansk forsvars- og sikkerhedspolitik under Forvarskommissionerne af 1988 og 1997* [The kingdom, the power and the military: Danish defence and security policy and the defence commissions of 1988 and 1997] (Aarhus Universitetsforlag: Århus, 2004).

²⁴ As quoted by Olsen and Pilegaard (note 2), p. 39.

²⁵ On the defence commissions of 1988 and 1997 see Heurlin (note 23). On the 1988 commission see Sørensen, H. (ed.), *Forsvar i forandring: debat om Forsvarskommissionens beretning, Forsvaret i 90-erne* [Changing defence: debating the report of the defence commission, Defence in the 1990s] (Samfundslitteratur: Frederiksberg, 1991).

tasks of Denmark's military forces would be very different in the coming years and that great flexibility would be essential. It also concluded that Denmark should not stand first in line to cash in the 'peace dividend', having drawn upon some of it in advance. All in all, the commission gave Danish military planners a head start compared to most other countries in adapting to the new conditions; and the first major step was to establish the Danish International Brigade, designed and trained for deployment abroad.

Since then, another defence commission has been established and has reported,²⁶ and more radical changes have been and are being implemented on the basis of cross-party defence agreements covering the years 2000–2004 and 2005–2009.²⁷ The air force is being reduced by one-third. The army will be much more mobile and get the very best modern equipment. The navy no longer has submarines but is getting very capable, flexible and seaworthy surface ships designed for a number of military and civilian tasks. Territorial defence will be largely left to a reduced but better armed and trained home guard. Conscripts will receive only a four-month 'total defence' training course and will then provide a recruiting pool for the armed forces, which will be entirely composed of volunteers. The ambition is to be able to maintain a total of some 2000 troops (1500 army and 500 navy and air force) on duty abroad for long periods of time.

As long as the defence opt-out stands, however, this part of Denmark's foreign policy toolbox can only be used under UN or NATO auspices or in a coalition of the willing. As soon as the EU becomes involved, Denmark must end its involvement, even if it fully sympathizes with the policy purpose. An extreme but not unlikely case would be if the UN Security Council with Denmark as a member asked the EU to undertake a peacekeeping mission.²⁸ Under present circumstances, Denmark could not then contribute to the very mission it asked for.

Getting it together

Denmark's defence opt-out so clearly prevents Danish military means from being matched to Danish policy ends that it should only be a matter of (a fairly short) time before the voters will be asked to get rid of it. Small countries with limited material resources can rely on credibility, negotiating skills and coalition power as additional sources of influence. Nikolaj Petersen points out that, in the EU setting, active and constructive participation in the integration process is in itself an important instrument of influence.²⁹ However, in the words of Olsen and Pilgaard, 'the opt-out in a policy field of such importance as defence makes Danish foreign, security and defence policy seem dis-

²⁶ The Defence Commission of 1997 presented its report in 1998; see Heurlin (note 23).

²⁷ Danish Ministry of Defence (note 13); and Danish Defence Command (note 13).

²⁸ Denmark is a member of the UN Security Council for a 2-year term ending in Dec. 2006.

²⁹ Petersen, N., *Europæisk og globalt engagement 1973–2003* [European and global engagement 1973–2003], Dansk udenrigspolitikshistorie vol. 6 (Gyldendal: Copenhagen, 2004).

connected and incomprehensible and consequently without credibility. The instruments of influence constituted by reputation, negotiating skills and diplomatic mobility cannot but be negatively affected'.³⁰

Even with the defence opt-out still in place, Denmark may be able to pursue a proactive, internationalist foreign policy in the framework of the EU, notably in the 'softer' fields of EU common action. Denmark may possibly enjoy greater autonomy in the defence field as a side benefit, but its long-term influence on international developments will definitely be diminished. No matter how noble its intentions or how firm its political will, there is little that Denmark can accomplish as an independent player. Full participation in the ESDP, by contrast, would offer Denmark a unique opportunity to help shape the development of the EU as an independent provider of both hard and soft security.

V. The Atlantic dimension

Many foreign observers and even some Danes overlook the fact that the Kingdom of Denmark spans the Atlantic Ocean. Denmark still has responsibility for the security and defence of its—in almost all other respects autonomous—dependencies, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Greenland, in particular, is no small matter: keeping one or two large frigates and three coastal patrols in Greenland waters at all times, 2000 nautical miles from their home bases, is a big task for the Danish Navy. Even so, the size and location of Greenland are such that Denmark would not be able to defend it from an enemy attack. Thus, in World War II, when Denmark was unable even to defend itself, the USA took Greenland under its wing—both because Greenland was strategically important to it as a staging post on the way to Europe and as an observation point and because it was important to deny Germany access to those benefits.

Greenland's strategic importance has changed in nature since then but hardly diminished. The USA has two installations at Thule Air Base in northern Greenland: (a) a forward early-warning radar system that is about to be modernized and become part of the USA's ballistic missile defence system;³¹ and (b) a satellite communications centre, which permits the longest continuous communication with surveillance satellites in polar orbit.

The Faroe Islands were occupied and defended by the UK during World War II and have little military significance under present circumstances. The population is a little less than 50 000 while that of Greenland is a little more.³²

³⁰ Olsen and Pilegaard (note 2), p. 41 (author's translation). See also Rasmussen, N. A., 'EU's østvedelse og det danske forsvarsforbehold [EU's eastward expansion and the Danish defence opt-out]', Danish institute for International Studies (DIIS) Brief, DIIS, Copenhagen, Apr. 2005, URL <<http://www.diis.dk/sw10932.asp>>.

³¹ On US ballistic missile defence plans, including the role of Thule, see Kile, S. N., 'Ballistic missile defence', *SIPRI Yearbook 2004: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004), pp. 647–58.

³² The population of the Faroe Islands was 47 700 in Dec. 2002 and of Greenland was 56 124 in Jan. 2000. Turner, B. (ed.), *The Statesman's Yearbook 2005* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 550, 552.

Neither has any indigenous military forces, although the Faroe Islands have a fisheries patrol vessel of their own. Both territories are currently debating just how far their autonomy should develop and whether they might at some time in the future want full independence and to be able to manage their economies without the present massive grants from Denmark. It is not totally clear what consequences for these territories, if any, would follow from full Danish participation in the ESDP. Neither dependency is a member of the EU at present.³³

A further aspect of the Atlantic dimension of Danish policy is, of course, the very close security and defence relationship between Denmark and the USA. Part of this rests on the Greenland factor mentioned above: Greenland is strategically important to the USA, and the USA is in Greenland on the strength of the bilateral 1951 Defense Agreement with Denmark that is linked to NATO's Washington Treaty and runs as long as that treaty is in force.³⁴ In 2004 Greenland became a co-signatory of an amendment to this bilateral agreement.³⁵ Another part of the relationship is the deep debt of gratitude owed to the country that helped free Denmark from both Hitler's Germany and the Soviet threat. A third element may lie in the very fact that Denmark—temporarily, as argued above—has isolated itself from the ESDP and is seeking to compensate for this by drawing closer to the USA and being a helpful ally in various other ways. However, what ultimate profit this 'special relationship' holds for Denmark remains an unanswered question. There may be some arms export orders and some military co-production, but probably not a great deal of added influence on world events.

VI. Conclusions: the Nordic dimension

The Nordic countries share most values, many central aspects of political, societal and material culture, and a great deal of history. It could even be said that most of them even share a common language. When it comes to security and defence, however, they have all gone their more or less separate ways. Until the early 19th century, while Denmark (which then included Norway and Iceland)

³³ The Faroe Islands, which have had home rule since 1948, received a specific exemption from EC membership in Denmark's 1973 Treaty of Accession and their citizens are not treated as Danish citizens for EU purposes. Greenland was an integral part of Denmark in 1973 and was thus taken into the EC despite the fact that 70% of the population voted against joining. Following the grant of home rule to Greenland in 1979 and increasing friction over EC fishing rules, a 1982 referendum resulted in Greenland's withdrawal from the EC on 1 Feb. 1985. By way of comparison, it is interesting to note that Åland, which has a high degree of autonomy under Finnish sovereignty, chose to join the EU together with Finland in 1995 after a separate referendum, although it remains outside the EU tax union.

³⁴ Defense of Greenland: Agreement between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark, signed on 27 Apr. 1951, URL <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/denmark/den001.htm>>.

³⁵ Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark, Including the Home Rule Government of Greenland, to Amend and Supplement the Agreement of 27 April 1951 Pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark Concerning the Defense of Greenland (Defense Agreement) Including Relevant Subsequent Agreements Related Thereto, signed on 6 Aug. 2004, URL <<http://www.um.dk/da/menu/Udenrigspolitik/FredSikkerhedOgInternationalRetsorden/Missilforsvar/Thule-radarensRolle/AftalekompleksitilknytningtilopgraderingafThuleradaren.htm>>.

and Sweden (which then included Finland) were the major—although gradually declining—strategic players in northern Europe, they competed with each other and frequently fought for dominance.

After the Napoleonic wars, when the larger European powers began to set the strategic agenda also for northern Europe, ‘Scandinavianism’ became a factor in Nordic culture and politics. Put to the test in Denmark’s war with Prussia in 1864, it generated many Nordic volunteers and much sympathy, but no state-level alliance—much like what happened when Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union 75 years later. The Nordic countries could not risk serious engagement in the wars of their Nordic neighbours since their larger European neighbours had become too strong. When the large European countries fought each other in two world wars, and Europe was divided by an iron curtain during the cold war, the Nordic countries chose different solutions to the different security and defence problems they faced. The so-called Nordic balance of cold war times was not a sophisticated political construct—it was an academic label on an intrinsically undesirable situation which emerged under the pressure of external circumstances.³⁶ The proof of this postulate seems to be that the balance ‘tilted’ in the very moment when the pressure on Finland from the East ceased to exist, and Finland took the first opportunity to leap as far into the core of the EU as possible.³⁷

The Nordic countries already cooperate in many fields of security and defence, and Denmark participates wherever its defence opt-out does not stand in the way. However, it would not be surprising if Nordic defence cooperation were to develop much further in the framework of the ESDP, especially when Denmark drops its opt-out and when Norway eventually joins the EU. This last need not be delayed until after the entry of Albania, as some Norwegians jokingly suggest. The road to much closer Nordic defence integration would, of course, be even smoother if Finland and Sweden were to join NATO. For the first time in Nordic history, there are no external powers pulling the countries and peoples of the region apart. The choice is now theirs entirely.

³⁶ See the introduction in this volume.

³⁷ For more on the comparison of Nordic security and defence policies see chapters 4, 5, 8 and 17 in this volume.