



Entrepreneurial Allies: Denmark's fight against irrelevance

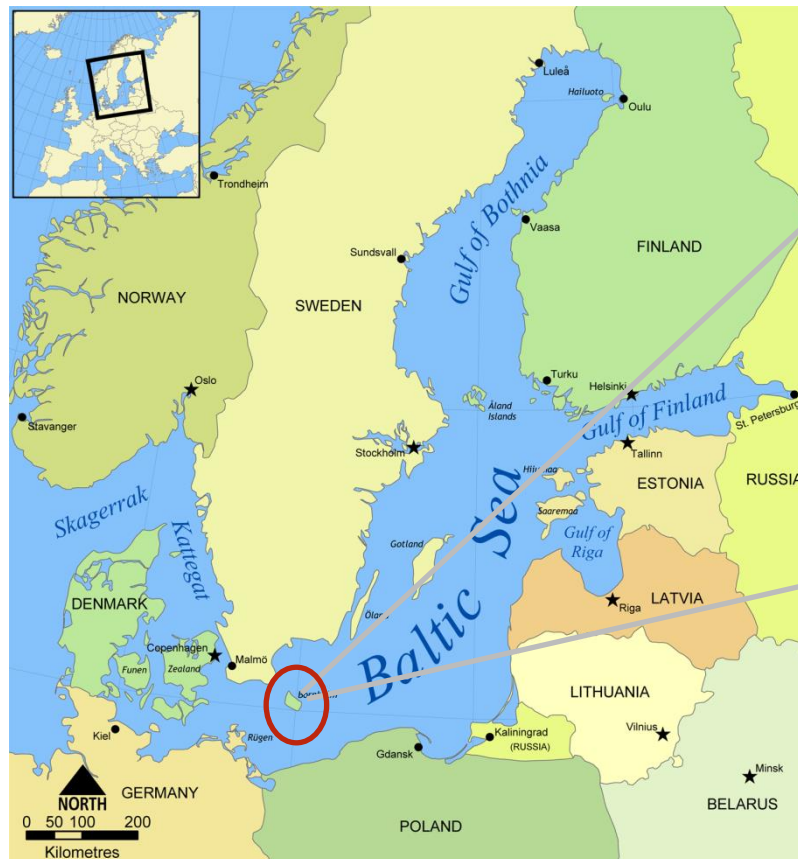
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Selfies showing relevance



Reassurance showing relevance



Fighting for relevance

- Geopolitics: From global frontline to geopolitical backwater
- Small state challenge: From survival to relevance/influence (Løvold, 2004) - Hard work to increase positive attention
- Increasingly global outlook: In foreign policy and defense posture (no territorial defense after 2004)
- NATO: From 'reluctant' (Villaume, 1995) to 'impeccable' ally (Rynning & Ringsmose, 2008)
- Foreign policy doctrine: From active internationalism to military activism (Jakobsen, 2011, Kristensen 2013)



Fighting for relevance

Militarization of Danish foreign policy

- From institutions to operations
- Utility of force is also a matter of alliance politics
- 'Punching above your weight' is a criteria of success
 - Iraq – Denmark definitely 'new Europe'
 - Afghanistan - real combat, highest ISAF casualty/capitia rating
 - Libya – 4. most air-missions (behind US, UK, FR only)
 - Abortive Syria – last European country (with FR) ready to go with Obama, on whatever mission
 - Iraq (again) – trainers and aircrafts, quickly deployed, no caveats

Ready to go, not too many questions asked, irrespective of government party coalition



Fighting for relevance

Why? Three rationales of Danish alliance politics:

1. Strategic rationale: Being closely aligned with US ensures privileged access, influence, and ultimately a reinforced security guarantee
2. Moral rationale: Historical debt is (constantly) due, stemming from WW2 and the Cold War – reinforced by Danish past immoral habitus
3. Cosmopolitan rationale: American/Western use of force is also a universal force for good (genocide in Kosovo, women rights in Afghanistan etc.)



Fighting for relevance

Conjunction of strategic, moral and cosmopolitan rationales makes for a broad political consensus:

- E.g. unified DK parliament behind Libya intervention

Conjunction of strategic, moral and cosmopolitan rationales makes for broad public support:

- E.g. over 80 % support of Danish NATO membership
- E.g. consistently high public support for military operations compared to NATO average



Fighting for relevance

There and back again:
Current challenges to Danish alliance politics



The Shire turned out not to be peaceful:

- Rebalancing of Danish security and defense politics between **global**, **regional**, and **Arctic** demands
- American attention could be needed, but

The treasure turned out to be quickly spent:

- Punching above your weight is increasingly measured in defense budgets (input) not in deployed troops (output)
- Classic burden-sharing more than risk-sharing on NATO agenda
- US commitment to Europe is in question (as is Europe's commitment to itself)

