

Denmark's Choices between the US and the EU after 2001*

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Resumo

Entre os EUA e a UE depois de 2001: as Escolhas da Dinamarca

Este artigo responde a uma pergunta central: tem a Dinamarca favorecido as suas relações com os EUA em detrimento da UE, desde 2001, como é geralmente referido? A ser verdade, porquê? Primeiro, olharemos para o nível político, tentando delinear como e se as políticas dinamarquesas se aproximam mais das europeias ou das americanas. O artigo apresenta diferentes explicações para as escolhas de um Estado no equilíbrio entre UE e EUA. De seguida, é aplicada uma abordagem teórica específica (construtivismo/pós-estruturalismo) na justificação deste mesmo equilíbrio na política externa dinamarquesa. Concluímos que a política externa dinamarquesa não é conduzida internamente determinada pela relação com os EUA, nem estes representam o principal parceiro em algumas áreas de política externa. Os EUA e a NATO são ainda o principal parceiro em termos de segurança, associado a formas de cooperação *ad hoc* em determinadas questões de política externa. Num enquadramento de *soft security* e, em termos gerais, a UE é o parceiro mais frequente da Dinamarca, apesar das reservas muitas vezes invocadas aquando da ratificação dos Tratados.

Abstract

The article asks whether it is generally correct that Denmark has followed the US more than the EU in foreign and security policy after 2001 and if this is so why? The article first looks at the policy level and attempts to map out how and whether Danish policies are conducted with the EU and the US respectively. It then presents different ways of explaining why a country chooses the balance that it does between the EU and the US. Following on from this, one particular approach (constructivism/poststructuralism) is applied in order to attempt to provide an understanding of the balance struck between the EU and the US in Danish foreign policy. It is concluded that Danish foreign policy is not only conducted with the US let alone with the US as the most important partner across areas of Danish foreign policy. The US/ NATO is the most important partner on hard security issues. And there is ad hoc foreign policy cooperation with the US on selected foreign policy issues. But in soft security and in foreign policy generally, the EU is the most common partner for Denmark – in spite of the Danish exemptions.

* Unless the reference cited is in English, quotes are translated by the author.

In the political debate it is often argued that Denmark in its major foreign policy priorities has sided with the USA after the Cold War rather than with the EU or its European partners. Observers have often pointed to the Danish support for the strikes against Iraq in 1998, the active military role in Afghanistan from the outset in 2002 and, most spectacularly, the military participation in the war in Iraq and the subsequent attempts to stabilise Iraq after the war 2003-2007. In the latter case, Denmark, together with the UK, has positioned itself closer to the US than most of the EU countries not only supporting the invasion but also providing military support right up to the present point in time. Spain and Italy also participated in the military operations but withdrew after changes of government. The Netherlands expressed a degree of solidarity with the US but did not provide military support. The same was the case with the non-EU member Norway. Although many of the new member states also supported the US position, none went as far in their military support as Denmark.

Is it generally correct that Denmark follows the US more than the EU in foreign and security policy and if this is so why? After all, it is often argued that small states, when they can, engage in multilateral international contexts as the furthering of norms of cooperation is particularly helpful for the weaker members of international society. Denmark has generally been supportive of well-functioning, if intergovernmental, foreign policy structures in the EU (Haagerup and Thune, 1983; Heurlin, 1996; Larsen, 2000). So if Denmark sides more with the US in its foreign and security policy than most of the EU members, including the smaller ones, this would be puzzling and something that calls for attempts to understand it.

In the following, this issue will be addressed in the following way: first we will look at the policy level and attempt to map out how and whether Danish policies are conducted with the EU and the US respectively. Then the paper will present different ways of explaining why a country chooses the balance that it does between the EU and the US. Following on from this, one particular approach will be applied in order to attempt to provide an understanding of the balance struck between the EU and the US in Danish foreign policy.

In the next section we will look at the policy level, that is the concrete patterns in the Danish foreign policy activities and the more general picture that this produces. It is important to stress that when comparisons are made, these are made between areas in Danish foreign policy and not with other EU countries.

I. Danish policies towards the EU and the US

As for the EU, Denmark is deeply engaged in EU foreign policy and also a relatively active member (Larsen, 2000). This is the case in spite of the Danish defence opt-out. The Danish defence opt-out is sometimes said to prevent full Danish participation in the CFSP. This is correct in so far as the defence exemption is interpreted by Denmark as meaning that Denmark cannot take part in the concrete implementation of EU military actions and the planning and political discussion about these. So far Denmark has opted out of all of these (Macedonia, Congo, Bosnia), in spite of generally supporting the aims of these operations¹. Denmark therefore usually has a very low profile in the EU Military Committee and the same is the case for the Danish defence minister at the EU Defence Ministers' meeting. Thus the opt-out prevents Denmark from participating in an ESDP that is becoming more operational and based on firmer administrative and political structures. At the same time Denmark has clearly supported the inclusion of security issues on the agenda of the EU and the EU as an actor in the field of security - including the desirability of the development of the ESDP. Thus, there is a tension between the Danish governments' approach to a development that Denmark supports and takes part in at a general political level in the EU and Denmark's exclusion from concrete military operations in the EU (Larsen, 2007).

But although the ESDP has become more operational and based on firmer administrative and political structures since St. Malo, the military part of the ESDP (the ESDP also contains civilian parts) is still a relatively limited part of the CFSP. Therefore the consequences of the Danish opt-out are also limited to particular areas that have to do with the military aspects of security, in particular concrete operations. The great majority of issues discussed within the CFSP are not linked to the military aspects of the ESDP. Denmark takes part in policy-making on these EU issues in the same way as other member states, that is in making the approximated 100 EU Declarations a year, common positions, joint actions and common strategies. Denmark has joined the EU against the US on issues such as the Kyoto Protocol and the setting-up of an international criminal court (ICC). According to the Danish foreign minister Per Stig Møller "... In by far the most cases we conduct our foreign policy together with our partners in the EU" (Møller, 2007a). Across foreign policy areas, cooperation with the EU is clearly the most important

1 In the 1990s Denmark opted out of all EU 9 operations based on articles J.4.2 in TEU and its successor articles in the Amsterdam Treaty.

multilateral framework for Danish foreign policy in quantitative terms. There is an EU dimension in most areas, although there is also foreign policy action with other partners and other organisations, and unilateral action in some areas. Whether policy is conducted within or outside the EU depends on whether the EU has a policy in the area and the extent to which Denmark conceives of itself as an actor (Larsen, 2005). If the EU does not have a position in a particular area, like over Iraq in 2003, it does not make sense to ask why Denmark does not side with the EU. Most member states, including Denmark, were not against an EU stance as such. But they disagreed on what the stance should be.

The cooperation with the US does not cover the same broad range of political and economic issues that is dealt with by the EU (Larsen, 2005:ch.10); the cooperation with the US is particularly strong on those hard aspects of security which have tended to dominate the international agenda after the Cold War and, in particular, after 11 Sept. 2001. The active Danish military role in Afghanistan from early 2002, and most spectacularly the military participation in the war in Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent attempts to stabilise Iraq after the war 2003-2007 are the key examples of this. But bilateral relations were also strong in the 1990s with regard to the Baltic states. The Danish support for the build-up of Baltic military capacities after the Cold War has been encouraged by the US. Denmark also supported the US on the airstrikes against Iraq in 1998 without a new UN mandate. Considering Denmark's size, the bilateral relationship is intense and the Danish access to US decision-makers is above average. This access is linked to the Danish government's strong support for the US in the 'war against terrorism', most significantly (and most appreciated in Washington) in relation to Iraq (Larsen, 2005a). The Danish government has been critical towards the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay. But the public criticism aired has generally been low-key compared with other countries.

This close relationship was also displayed during the Cartoon Crisis in January-March 2006. Initially, the US did not support Denmark on this issue, but after intensive Danish lobbying, the US President came out with a strong statement in support of Denmark followed by political support of Denmark in many areas. The US references to Denmark during the crisis made clear that Denmark was considered a good ally, something that may have played a role for the degree of US support. Denmark also received support from the EU, although it was initially only aimed at the immediate effects of the crisis (Larsen, 2007a).

There is bilateral foreign policy cooperation with the US on many issues. But it does have more of an ad hoc character than the cooperation with the EU which has a much

more institutionalised character. For example, Denmark has recently during its time as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council cooperated with the US on an informal conference on Darfur under the auspices of the UN (Møller, 2007a) and on another occasion on preventing small arms in Africa (Larsen, 2005). Denmark has also participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative launched by the US. In a recent speech the Danish foreign minister describes cooperation with the US as part of ad hoc cooperation for furthering Danish foreign policy aims (Møller, 2007a).

It should not be forgotten that Denmark has traditionally been engaged in peacekeeping under the auspices of the UN. So military cooperation is not limited to cooperation with the US, although this has been the most prominent since 2001 when a new Conservative-Liberal government came into power. However, more importantly, looking at Danish foreign policy across the board, the realm of military security where the Danish-American relationship is most intense is only one out of the many areas dealt with in Danish foreign policy and should not detract from the role of the EU in most of these areas. There is an EU dimension in most policy fields and much less of a US dimension. In quantitative terms the connections to the US and NATO across policy areas are much less significant than to the EU (Larsen, 2005:206). There are distinct areas and ad hoc areas where Denmark and the US cooperate in foreign policy. But across the board of foreign policy the US is not a partner in day-to-day foreign policy cooperation in the same systematic way as the EU. This may have something to do with Danish foreign policy understandings (see below). But it also has to do with conditions of size. The US will not have an interest in listening to small power Denmark on most policy areas whereas the EU has more possibilities for a voice also for small states. One might, of course, take the military security questions to be the most important ones for the general foreign policy line and thus defining for what counts as the key elements in Danish foreign policy. From that point of view, NATO and the US are the most important partners in Danish foreign policy. But this is not the general picture across Danish foreign policy areas. Significantly, Denmark has in the EU supported policies concerning closer cooperation with the US. During the Danish EU Presidency in 2002 Denmark put forward a list of 39 areas where cooperation between the US and the EU could be improved, such as the establishment of a Transatlantic Free-Trade zone (North Atlantic Trade Association) as a supplement to NATO (Møller, 2006a)

In conclusion, Denmark mostly cooperates with the EU in the dimensions of foreign policy where the Union is the most important multilateral forum/partner. The EU relationship has a different level of intensity from the relationship to the US across policy

areas. Denmark also supports EU security policy, but does not take part in concrete military operations. Denmark acts with the US on central military-defined security issues (where the EU is often split or does not have a stance). The close bilateral relationship with US is used ad hoc in foreign policy. The relationship to the US, particularly on military issues, is closer to the US than most other EU countries except from the UK.

II. Explanations for the State of Affairs

How can we, then, understand the particular balance between policies towards the US and the EU? Firstly, a neo-realist explanation would emphasise Denmark's position within the polarity of international politics. From this perspective, the unipolar system provides pressures towards close (security) cooperation with the US. All states, also EU member states, have to have a close relationship to the US to gain influence and a voice (Hansen, 2000). A neo-realist approach to analysing foreign policy (in its neoclassical version) does not exclude an analysis of domestic factors, but structural forces will provide pressures towards certain outcomes which are likely to prevail in the long-term (see, for example, Rose, 1998). From the point of view of this approach, the different EU countries' approach to the US is a reflection of the way the domestic factors place the countries with regard to the general unipolar pressures towards a close relationship to the US.

One type of neo-realist approach would focus on the impact of an assumed Euro-Atlantic combined polarity. The decentralised nature of this polarity (Washington *and* Brussels) allows a certain variation in the attraction of the different parts of the pole to different states which explains differences in EU countries' choices between the US and the EU. For example, it explains why Denmark can be closer to Washington regarding some aspects of security than to the EU. This is due to Denmark's status as a near-core member (as opposed to a core member) by virtue of its four exemptions, one of which is the defence exemption of the EU (See Mouritzen and Wivel, 2005).

Secondly, an alternative to the neorealist approach is a neoliberal-institutionalist explanation (partly drawing on the explanation above), which would also emphasise the role of the Danish exemptions, including the defence exemption, in forcing a particular balance between EU and the US in Danish foreign policy. As international institutions are about increasing states' absolute gains, it is a problem if these gains cannot be pursued through institutional measures due to domestic constraints: as Danish foreign policy

seeks influence in the post Cold War world (Holm, 1997), the Danish constraints within the EU force Denmark to seek influence elsewhere – with the US as the clear alternative.

While the first and second ways of explaining certainly provide understandings of the Danish balance between the EU and the US/NATO, they also have some shortcomings. As for the first way of explaining, one would expect that the focus were almost exclusively on the US, which is clearly not the case for Denmark or any other EU member state. As for the approach which assumes a joint Euro-Atlantic polarity, the reasons for the national choices between the two sides of the pole is underplayed or possibly attributed to ‘lessons of the past’. Also the status of ‘core member’ or ‘near-core member’ seems to describe a relationship to the pole as a whole and not the central question of which of the two parts is more important (Mouritzen and Wivel, 2005: ch.2). However, as outlined in relation to the second set of understandings, it might be the status as ‘near-core’ member which predisposes a country towards closer links to the US.

As for the second neo-liberal institutionalist understanding, it is possible that constraints within the EU may lead to attempts to gain influence in Washington particularly in the field of security. But that this should be the only explanation – or even the main form of explanation is less clear. After all also the UK, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, the Baltic states and, in relation to the Iraq War, Italy and Spain have closer links to Washington than other EU states – without the same exemptions as Denmark². There must, therefore, be a more fundamental issue about the national relationship to the US at play which is of a more profound character than the Danish exemptions *per se*.

It is in other words important to focus on the dimension of meaning-making which is not the focus in explanations 1 and 2 above; in other words how the relationship between the EU and the US is understood or articulated. The article therefore adopts a third approach which is constructivist/post-structuralist. The interest is in the language used, as language is not seen as a transparent medium but as a source of social practice with its own dynamics. Language constructs the social world in meaning. We therefore study discourse to provide an understanding of the framework for national foreign policy³. Along the lines of Foucault (1989[1972]) discourse is here understood as a limited range of possible statements promoting a limited range of meanings. The rest of the article therefore focuses on the kind of identity that is articulated for Denmark – an Atlantic or a European identity?

2 Although the UK does have exemptions with regard to the Euro and to parts of justice and home affairs.

3 For more about this general theoretical approach to discourse analysis and foreign policy see Larsen (2005a, 2004, 1997).

III. Danish Foreign Policy Identity: Atlantic or European?

The dominant understanding of the EC/EU and Denmark after 1945 has been an instrumental one which presented the EC/EU in terms of the concrete interests it could fulfil for the country (Østergård, 1993:168). The development of Europe was primarily legitimised by the utility for Denmark. Europe has been presented in non-mythical terms - the development of "Europe" was not seen as something natural and organic, and certainly not something that Denmark was naturally part of. Some analysts have seen this understanding as based on a feeling of indifference towards Europe (Hedetoft, 1995:254) whereas others identify a Danish hostility to Europe linked to fear of Germans and Germany (Hansen, 2002:54-55). Only few Danish political actors have since 1945 argued for 'Europe' in cultural terms. Even political actors who may be inclined to draw on arguments of a cultural kind, have found themselves constrained to arguing along instrumental lines. The main question in the traditional Danish debate on Europe has not been what Denmark should do in the EU as a culturally based member state, but whether alleged instrumental advantages have significantly affected national sovereignty (Larsen 1999:456). Political differences have been played out *within* this understanding.

At a deeper level it can be argued that the reticence towards Europe and fear of abrogating sovereignty lies in the particular Danish construction of the relationship between the state, the nation and the people. The core of the nation is the 'people'. The dominant Danish discourse links the state and the nation strongly politically so that the state is seen as acting on behalf of the nation. At the same time the nation is also attributed strong cultural and ethnic features which go together with a high degree of overlap between state, nation and society (Hansen, 2002; Østergård, 1993:176). The Danish state has since 1945 been seen as inherently a welfare state. A central reason why European integration has been seen and understood as a threat by many is that it challenges the presumed organic discursive relationship between people and (welfare) state (Hansen, 2002; Larsen, 1999:460-461).

In the dominant understanding of Danish foreign policy during the Cold War Danish foreign policy was seen as being based on four functionally separate cornerstones: the EC, NATO, the UN and Nordic Cooperation. The EC was about 'market' policy, NATO about security, the UN about promoting universal values and development. Nordic cooperation was a strong identity base for Denmark where values and general foreign policy was discussed. The point was that each cornerstone fulfilled particular functions and that they could not be merged (Larsen, 2000; Hækkerup 1965).

Since the end of the Cold War, the importance of the EU in Danish foreign policy has grown. In the Post-Cold War period the functions of these cornerstones have increasingly been understood as coming together in the EU (Heurlin, 1996; Larsen, 2005). The instrumental language can still be found. But the dominant discourse also articulates the EU as a 'project of peace' and comes closer to a cultural and mythical description of Europe (Larsen, 2000). The present Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has called the EU 'the greatest peace-keeping project in world history' (Rasmussen, 2007).

The transatlantic link with the US and NATO, however, also remained important (Larsen, 2005, 2000a, 2000b, 1999). In the 1990s, high value was placed on the bilateral relationship with the US, which was upgraded by the successive Danish governments and further strengthened towards the end of the 1990s (Jakobsen, 2000). It was repeatedly stressed by most political forces that the defence guarantee in NATO was crucial and not to be replaced by the EU. The stress on the importance of the relationship with the US and NATO in the Post Cold War period was at first glance puzzling since a considerable part of the Danish political elite had in the 1980s been very sceptical towards US policies within the field of security. Now there was a large degree of consensus about the value of the strong bilateral relationship with the US and of NATO policies (Petersen, 1999:19). The dominant discourse stressed the value of the close links to the US and NATO for security reasons but just as much for reasons that had to do with the historical links to the US and many common societal values and aims. The very strong expressions of Danish sympathy towards the US after the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington can also be seen as expressing the common identity with the US (Larsen, 2005: ch.4).

The way in which the dominant discourse reads the stronger Post-Cold War role for the EU *and* the continued importance of the US is an inter-linked part of an all-embracing European-Atlantic structure (Heurlin 2001: 48). However, the dominant discourse does not give equal weight to the Atlantic and the European components of this structure: while the crucial role of the Atlantic structures is stressed in relation to hard security in order to protect common values, the EU is described as "the cornerstone of Danish foreign policy" (Petersen, F.A. 2001:13). In spite of the strong Atlantic emphasis, the role of the EU is thus, within the dominant discourse, presented in terms which suggest that the EU is the primary framework for, and the cornerstone of, Danish foreign policy identity.

Since the coming to power of the Liberal-Conservative government in November 2001, the role of the US in Danish foreign and security policy has been articulated as more

important (Petersen, 2006, 2004; Rynning, 2006; Mouritzen, 2006). This has been stated explicitly by the government (Møller, 2006a). In a significant article in the daily newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* published in 2003, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen expressed doubts as to the ability of the EU to serve as a foundation for Danish security at the present moment in time (Rasmussen, 2003). At the same time, though, the dominant discourse in official documents has continued to attribute a central role to the EU in Danish foreign policy in formulations such as "...[t]he EU is the key to Denmark's ability to influence the world around us..." in a 2003 government paper on priorities in Danish foreign policy (Regeringen, 2003). In an article on 'Danish Foreign Policy between the EU and the US' on 14 August 2007, the Danish foreign minister Møller stressed that the "EU is our most important alliance and in most cases we conduct our policies with our partners in the EU" (Møller, 2007). Thus although the importance of the US in Danish foreign policy has clearly grown since 2001, the EU continues to be understood as "the key to influenc[ing] the world around us" in official documents.

The EU is constructed as a community of values which Denmark also adheres to. According to Foreign Minister Møller "what makes the EU special is the continuous commitment to some fundamental values.... These are values we have inherited: from Christianity the respect of the individual, from Greece democracy, freedom of thought and expression and the right to doubt, from Rome a state of rights and tolerance, and from the Enlightenment limits to the powers of the state, and the free market" (Møller, 2004b). The EU is thus constructed as a part of the Danish we and not just an instrumental choice for Denmark and the need for the EU to act more efficiently on the global scene is articulated (Møller, 2004a, 2004b).

But the EU is also presented as a way of furthering Danish values and thus an instrumental Danish choice in order to fulfil Danish foreign policy aims. Sometimes the EU is articulated as an 'alliance', which suggests that it has connotations of more traditional forms of cooperation rather than being in a category of its own (see for example Møller, 2007a). The Union is not able to take care of hard security (where the US/NATO is the important 'alliance' (partner) whereas the EU is the most capable partner in soft security (Rasmussen, 2003; Møller, 2007a).

The US is also seen as furthering values, values that the EU also stands for: "Even if there is a lot that one can criticise the US for, and we do it when it is relevant, we share past and future and we have got common goals for society consisting in freedom, democracy, equal rights and human rights. If we shortcircuit the Transatlantic Alliance, we weaken our possibilities to protect and further precisely our joint ideas in a world

where too many threaten these” (Møller, 2007a). These values are also articulated as a part of Danish identity. In an article in the Washington Times in 2002, the Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen wrote that:

“Denmark is among the smallest allies of the US. But it is also true that Denmark is among the biggest allies of the US. No other country has maintained unbroken relations with the US for longer than the Kingdom of Denmark. ...After my meeting with the President of the US earlier this year, I was therefore particularly pleased to be able to state that the relationship between Denmark and the US has never been better. Our common values, shared destiny and visions have been further fortified by the horrors of 11 September...one year later our solidarity with America is undiminished. ...September 11 was a defining moment calling for determined action in defence of humanity and fundamental freedoms... Denmark’s close ties with the US and the Trans-Atlantic relationship....are of paramount importance for Denmark. These relations are at the very core of Danish foreign policy. Denmark will never forget the essential contribution of the US in defence of European democracies in the two World Wars and the Cold War....America and Denmark see eye-to-eye on the real challenges facing us today. In the fight against terrorism, Denmark was, is and will be behind the US....The danger is far from over and the international community must not waiver now.... Clearly, far more unites us than separates us. It is therefore not surprising that there is no bigger celebration of the 4th of July outside the United States than in Denmark. It has taken place every year since 1912Many Danish immigrants to America have over the years become loyal and enthusiastic U.S. citizens while still maintaining ties to their old country. Thus, Denmark and the United States share deep-rooted cultural and historic bonds.” (Rasmussen, 2002)

Long historical links, Danish gratitude for US help to Europe in the 20th century, strong Danish loyalty towards and solidarity with the US, common values and destiny, deep-rooted cultural and historical bonds, common understanding of the challenges of the world today, in particular the fight against terrorism. Those are the elements in the Danish construction of the relationship with the US which articulate a strong Atlantic identity⁴.

⁴ The article is, of course, written for an American audience. This context possibly means that positive elements are emphasised more than they would be in other contexts.

But apart from the common values on which Denmark's links to the US are based, the question of influence is also invoked in foreign policy discourse about the role of the relationship: "...the US is the dominant player on the world stage. You may like it or not, but that is a fact. Therefore a good relationship with the US increases the possibilities of Danish influence" (Møller, 2007a). In the game for influence, 'alliances' must be adapted in the light of the situation and the US is naturally a key player in this respect, but Denmark is ready to seek influence where it can to further an "offensive Danish foreign policy" (Møller, 2007a).

The articulation of 'an offensive Danish foreign policy' is central in understanding the weight placed on the US in Danish foreign policy after the coming into power of the Liberal-Conservative Government in 2001. All Danish governments have after the end of the Cold War declared that they conducted an 'active' foreign policy. In the first decade after the Cold War this was articulated as 'active internationalism' (Petersen, 2004). The way in which the understanding of activism of the 2001 government was different from the previous governments after the Cold War was that Denmark should take a stance on, and be directly engaged in the big defining issues in international politics and security. The government articulated a difference between its own understanding and that of previous governments which were seen as having taken lukewarm stances in this regard and often avoided hard choices (Rynning, 2003). To take directly part in the central issues in international politics was understood as giving unequivocal support to the leading power in the struggles, the one whose views Denmark sided with fundamentally. Military support was a clear expression of commitment and of taking responsibility in international affairs (Rynning, 2003). There was therefore a link between the understanding of 'an offensive Danish foreign policy' and the political support of the US including on issues where the need for military force was invoked by the US. But the 'offensive foreign policy' was also invoked with regard to the EU where Denmark should be active in spite of its size.

The 'offensive foreign policy' was also linked to the domestic project of the post 2001 Danish government. (Petersen, 2006). The Conservative-Liberal government criticised the 'policy of cooperation' during the German occupation of 1940-1945 for not taking a clear stance for the Allies, the Centre/Left-wing footnote policy in the 1980s for not taking a clear stance for the 'West' and the Centre/Left for not having taken a sufficiently critical attitude towards the USSR during the Cold War. Although the Conservative-Liberal government stated that it defended the Danish welfare state, it criticised the historical record of the Centre/Left political forces that were prominent in shaping the welfare

state. For many of these political forces during the Cold War the idea had been to create a political/economic 'third way' (Larsen, 2005:ch. 6) between the West and the East. By stressing the need for clear political choices in foreign policy and by criticising the lack of clear choices in the past, the strong support for the US and its values as part of this discourse could also be seen as an indirect attack on the legitimacy of the Centre/Left as the defenders of the welfare state. The articulation of a change in foreign policy was therefore also an articulation of an attempt to change Danish society.

The offensive foreign policy could therefore be seen as a central basis for cooperating closely with the US on general political and security issues given the elements in the Danish construction of the relationship with the US which articulate a strong Atlantic identity. The articulation of a strong European identity also meant that the offensive foreign policy should be directed towards the EU. But the EU's focus on soft security rather than hard security meant that the offensive foreign policy would not only be applied with regard to the EU. So although the EU is articulated as the key framework for Danish foreign policy, a close relationship to the US is indispensable. The difference from the governments of the 1990s is therefore not so much in the focus on the EU, but in the stronger emphasis on the US. This means that an alternative is built into Danish foreign policy in cases where the EU cannot take a stance. This means that the EU is not articulated as framing the context of Danish foreign in the same way as before. The EU is co-articulated with the importance of good links to the US. Nevertheless, Danish links with the US are frequently presented as going through the EU, although there is also an important bilateral component (Larsen, 2003. See also Møller 2003).

In the dominant discourse the links between the EU and US are central. The EU and the US should therefore naturally cooperate. When the EU and the US do not agree on the general security issues this is 'dangerous' (Møller, 2003). According to Foreign Minister Møller ".... we live in an unpredictable world [...] but ... we obtain the most when the EU and the US pull together. The EU can do something with 'soft' power which the US cannot do as well as us. And the US can do something with 'hard' power which the EU cannot. Together we can do a lot" (Møller, 2007). The values of Europe and the US are fundamentally the same (Møller, 2003; Rasmussen et al. 2003).

The general discursive structures with regard to the role of the US and the EU in Denmark's foreign policy identity has now been outlined. An interesting question can be said to be whether these structures have come under pressure in the aftermath of the cartoon crisis of January-March 2006. The crisis was presented by the government

as the most significant crisis for Danish foreign policy since 1945. So is therefore an interesting question whether the discourse on the role of the EU and the US in Danish foreign policy has changed as a consequence of the interpretations of these roles in the period since the crisis by the government and in the political debate⁵.

The government's general evaluation of the role of its partners in the cartoon crisis was that the EU and the US were both important and that no special emphasis was placed on any one of them in general accounts of their roles during the episode. According to the Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller, Denmark had received impressive support from both the EU and the US (Nielsen, 2006b). In the annual account of Danish foreign policy 2006, the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ulrik Federspiel stated that 'International support for Denmark, in particular by the US and the EU, was essential in stabilising the situation' (Federspiel, 2007: 2).

With respect to the specific evaluation of the role of the EU for Denmark during the crisis, the evaluation was very positive but not jubilant. In a reply to a question posed by the author of this article, Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller said that Denmark "got what it wanted from the EU. No more and no less. It would have been wrong if we had got more... Denmark has nothing to blame Solana or the EU for" (Debate following speech by Per Stig Møller at the University of Copenhagen, 7 November 2006). In a speech on 7 April 2006, Per Stig Møller stated:

"..in what was probably the most serious foreign policy crisis for Denmark since the Second World War, the entire toolbox of the EU was put to use....The crucial show of support from the 24 other Member States constituted a lot more than just... 'A little help from my friends'. It demonstrated to the Muslim world that freedom of expression weighed up against religious beliefs was not just a Danish issue, but a common European concern." (Møller, 2006)

The descriptions and evaluations of the US role were shorter and more general. The general post 2001 picture is, as mentioned, that the EU is still referred to as 'the key to Denmark's ability to influence the world around us'. The report from the Danish Foreign Ministry *Den Grænseløse verden - Udenrigsministeriet og globaliseringen* (Udenrigsministeriet, 2006a) which was published in Autumn 2006 after the Cartoon episode reads:

5 The rest of this section draws heavily on Larsen (2007b).

“The analysis [in the report] shows amongst other things that in the years to come the most important economic, political and cultural links for Denmark will be taken together in Europe. Cooperation in the EU is and will increasingly be the most important international framework for Denmark in the management of the challenges of globalisation. Considering all evidence, the EU will play an even greater role internationally amongst other things through a joint foreign service.....” (Udenrigsministeriet, 2006a:11)

And about the role of the US, he stated:

For Denmark the relationship to the US will in the years to come continue to be central. The US will in most areas be a decisive actor in managing the challenges of globalisation. Through an active engagement, Denmark has good possibilities for maintaining good access to US decision-makers ...Globalisation implies that Denmark’s ability to establish networks in all relevant environments in the US will be of increasing interest for the guarding of Danish interests (Udenrigsministeriet, 2006a:11)

It is therefore the same discourse as before the crisis about the EU being the most important forum for Danish foreign policy together with an emphasis on the central character of the relationship with the US and the importance of good access to US decision-makers.

However the role of the EU is presented as being, if anything, stronger after the cartoon crisis. It is striking that in *Den Grænseløse verden – Udenrigsministeriet og globaliseringen*, the EU is the organisation that is mentioned the most in relation to foreign policy questions and many areas of global cooperation as part of the response to the challenges of globalisation (see Udenrigsministeriet, 2006a: 12,14-16). This is also the case in many of the speeches made by the Foreign Minister after the crisis. The Foreign Ministry’s annual account of Danish foreign policy for 2006 states that ‘The EU increasingly represents the most important international framework for Denmark in handling some of the major challenges presented by globalisation, such as climate change, environment, energy, migration, terrorism and free trade’ (Federspiel, 2007: III, section 2). But the weight is not solely placed on the EU as a pivot. In a feature article in *Politiken* 24 March 2007 where the subject was the celebration of the 50 years anniversary of the EU, the Prime Minister wrote:

"We must of course not forget the major endeavours of the USA for Europe to be free and democratic. But here, on the occasion of the 50 year anniversary of the EU, we can also take pleasure in the fact that we have learned from the mistakes and begun successful cooperation." (Rasmussen, 2007).

The government did thus not suggest major changes in its relationship with the US and the EU. There were, if anything, indications of a stronger emphasis in official material on the EU.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion we can say that Danish foreign policy is not only conducted with the US let alone with the US as the most important partner across areas of Danish foreign policy. The US/ NATO is the most important partner on hard security issues. And there is ad hoc foreign policy cooperation with the US on selected foreign policy issues. But in soft security and in foreign policy generally, the EU is the most common partner for Denmark - in spite of the Danish exemptions. This is based on a discourse according to which the EU is 'our most important alliance', and thus crucial in Danish foreign policy. But it is not a discourse which excludes all other fora than the EU. As the US is the strongest power in the world, a close relationship with Washington is necessary. It gives bigger scope for Danish influence to gain ad hoc influence on many policy issues.

The stronger emphasis on the US post 2001 is based on 'the offensive foreign policy'. Taking clear stances with the US is central just as an active role in the EU is also prescribed. It is not as much a downgrading of the EU post 2001 as an upgrading of the US. An active stance within the EU was also prescribed before 2001.

A general caveat should however be introduced at this stage. The article has focused on the government's discourse as a unitary discourse. However, an alternative interpretation is that we are dealing with two different discourses on the role of the EU and the US in Danish foreign policy, whereby one emphasises the central role of the EU (the Foreign Ministry) and the other a bridge between the EU and the US (the Prime Minister's Office). Rather than analysing changes in a dominant discourse an alternative interpretation would be that we are really looking at two different discourses.

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