

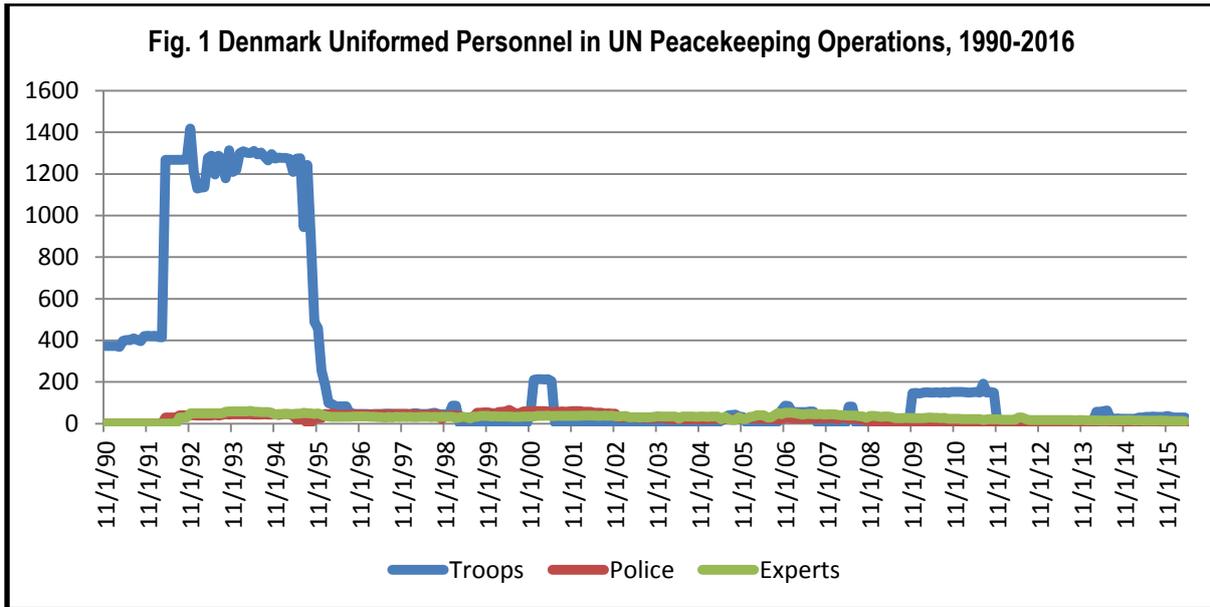
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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN peacekeepers	UN contribution breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
17,200 World ranking (size): 98 Army 7,950 Navy 3,000 Air Force 3,150 Joint 3,100	Anti-submarine warfare: 8 Multirole: 8 (light) Transport: 14 (Medium)	2015: \$3.45bn (1.19% of GDP) 2014: \$4.68bn (1.37% of GDP) 2013: \$4.55bn (1.36% of GDP) World Ranking: 42	41 (1 female) (30 April 2016) Ranking: 82nd (16 th largest contributor from EU, 16 th from NATO)	MINUSMA: 18 troops UNMISS: 13 (2 experts, 11 troops) UNTSO: 10 experts	NATO: Resolute Support: 160 troops KFOR: 35 troops Ocean Shield: 1 Combat / Flexible Support Ship; 1 Surveillance Plane US-led Coalition: Inherent Resolve: 4 F-16s + 3 in reserve 1 Medium Transport Plane Mobile Radar 60 Special Ops forces Total 400 personnel
Defense Spending / troop: ² US\$200,581 (compared to global average of approx. \$79,396 and European average of \$115,767).					

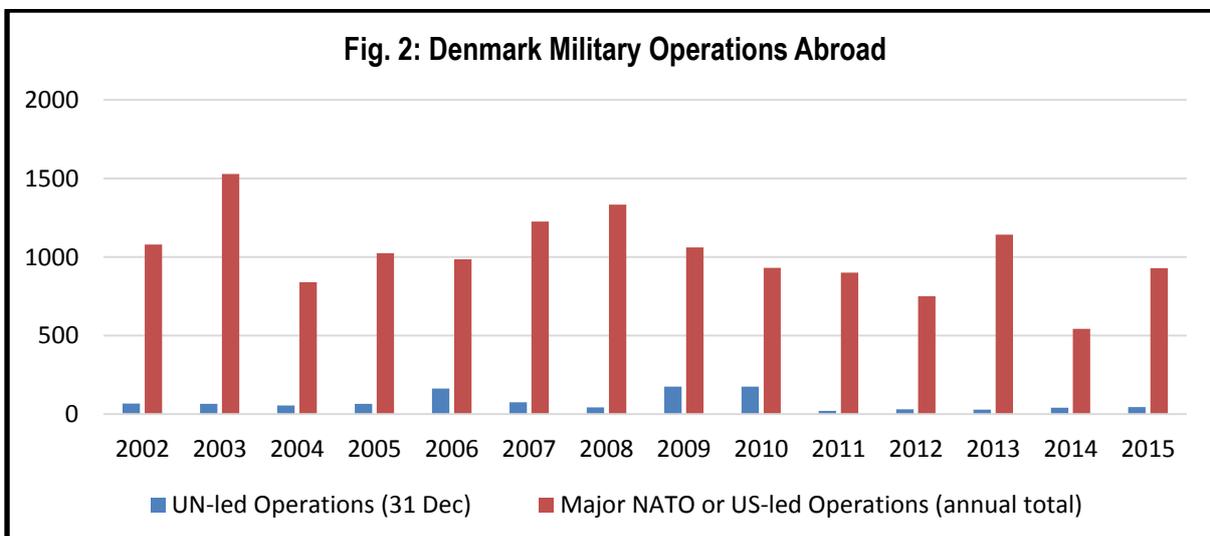
Part 1: Recent Trends

Denmark played a key role in UN peacekeeping operations during the Cold War, contributing forces, developing doctrine and training manuals and programs in close cooperation with the other Nordic countries. It continued to do so in the first half of the 1990s making significant contributions to UNPROFOR and establishing and hosting the Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), a multi-national rapid reaction brigade earmarked for UN peacekeeping operations, which became operational in 1997.

Denmark's major involvement in UN peacekeeping operations came to an end with NATO's takeover from the UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, however (see figure 1). Since then Danish troops have primarily served on UN-authorized NATO missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR/SFOR 1995-2003), Kosovo (KFOR 1999-present), Afghanistan (ISAF 2002-2014; and Resolute Support 2015-present), Ocean Shield (2009-present) as well as the US-led UN-authorized mission in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003-07) and the US-led mission against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria (Operation Inherent Resolve 2014-present) (see figure 2). In the last decade Denmark has only made substantial contributions to UN-led operations on three occasions: UNMEE in Eritrea-Ethiopia in 2001 (320 troops), UNIFIL in Lebanon in 2006-08 (four naval vessels), and UNIFIL again in 2009-11 (150 troops).³ During most of this time Danish contributions have consisted of some 50 military observers, staff officers and mission experts serving on various missions.



Denmark’s rhetorical commitment to UN peacekeeping remains strong. In its 2015 written input to the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations chaired by Ramos-Horta, Denmark characterized itself as ‘a dedicated and engaged contributor to UN Peace Operations’. It furthermore stated that ‘UN peace operation activities remain a central pillar of Denmark’s foreign and security policy’, and that Denmark since 1948 has provided more than 84.000 soldiers and staff members to more than 30 UN peacekeeping operations.⁴ Official discourse holds that the considerable Danish contributions to UN-authorized peace operations conducted by NATO also count as support for the UN. Danish decision makers would object to the argument that its termination of SHIRBRIG in 2009 indicated a reduced commitment to UN peacekeeping. To them, SHIRBRIG was closed down because it never became the effective rapid reaction capability for UN operations that Denmark had hoped for. UNMEE proved to be SHIRBRIG’s only major troop contribution to a UN mission, and this led Denmark to conclude that it could support UN peacekeeping more effectively by investing its money in enhancing Nordic-UN cooperation instead. So far, however, this change of policy has not produced major joint Nordic force contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. The emphasis has recently been placed on training and capacity-building in Africa rather than Danish troop contributions.



Figures 1 and 2 show that Denmark's contributions to international operations have remained fairly consistent since the end of the Cold War; the big change has been the shift from UN to NATO- and US-led missions. Since Danish troop contributions have always reflected the policies pursued by the Western great powers, a major Danish return to UN-led operations is only likely if they take the lead in providing troops for such operations.

Part 2: Decision-Making

The government is constitutionally obliged to seek consent from the Parliament when it considers participating in operations involving the use of force beyond self-defense. Traditionally, the government only consulted with the Foreign Affairs Committee (Udenrigspolitisk Nævn) in parliament before committing troops to UN peacekeeping missions. Since the end of the Cold War, the increased use of force on peace missions resulted in a new practice whereby all major troop contributions regardless of mission type are submitted to a vote in parliament. Small contributions to observer missions, such as the ten personnel deployed to UNSMIS in 2012 are still made without parliamentary votes. In 2011 the government introduced a new principle according to which the deployment of troops on international operations involving the use of force beyond self-defense requires a two-thirds majority to be approved. In practice this principle makes little difference as all Danish military deployments abroad since World War Two except one, the 2003 Iraq war, have enjoyed broad parliamentary and public support.

A decision to commit troops goes through the following steps. Once a request for a military contribution has been received or is perceived as likely, the government will ask the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to draw up a list of options. The government will then present a proposal to the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee for reactions and recommendations, which will then serve as input for the proposal that is presented to parliament as a whole for the first reading. This proposal is subsequently sent to the Defence Committee for review. Here, parliamentarians can put forward questions, remarks, concerns, etc. which are then answered jointly by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. The Defence Committee then submits a written report including a recommendation to parliament for the second reading, at the end of which the fate of the (amended) proposal is decided by a vote. The entire procedure with the two readings can be rushed through parliament in less than 24 hours in emergencies. This was, for instance, the case when Denmark committed F-16s to enforce the UN-authorized no-fly zone over Libya in 2011.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Danish force contributions are motivated by a combination of security interests, normative values and identity considerations. Denmark's peacekeeping policy balances the need for national security, the desire for establishing an international rule-based society based on respect for international law, peaceful conflict resolution and development and an identity-driven urge to do its duty and 'make a difference' on the international scene. Supporting NATO operations in the Balkans and later Afghanistan was seen as the best way of protecting Denmark's security, while at the same time supporting the values embodied by the UN because NATO was operating with a UN mandate, and because NATO was regarded as far more effective with respect to 'doing good' in the wake of the troubled UNPROFOR mission in Bosnia culminating in the Srebrenica massacre. From an identity perspective, NATO's more robust approach to peace operations also fitted the emerging Danish warrior identity better than the traditional UN approach to peacekeeping emphasizing impartiality, neutrality and the non-use of force except in self-defense. Denmark's successful use of tanks in UNPROFOR in 1994-95 paved the way for a more robust Danish approach to peace

operations that made the traditional UN approach look ineffective and morally problematic in the eyes of Danish decision makers.

Political and Security Rationales: Protecting national security has always been paramount in Danish decisions to contribute to peacekeeping operations, even if it is seldom articulated explicitly. Of the approximately 62,000 Danish personnel deployed on peace missions during 1948-2002, 60,000 served in the Middle East, Cyprus and the Balkans. Denmark has, in other words, primarily sought to manage conflicts close enough to home that they were likely to affect national/regional security or result in refugees arriving on its doorstep. The deployment to Afghanistan since 2002 also fits this pattern insofar as it was perceived and legitimated as a way of preventing new terrorist attacks against Denmark and its allies, and as a way of supporting the United States and NATO. Needless to say, these operations were also legitimated with references to the core UN values that Denmark wants to promote and with references to the new Danish warrior identity. The ability to fight and sustain casualties in Afghanistan (43 fatalities) thus constituted a source of national pride.⁵

Economic Rationales: None. The UN's compensation system covers only a fraction of the costs involved when Denmark makes troops available for peacekeeping operations, and the UN has historically not been able to pay Denmark for its contributions. That an economic rationale does not play a role is also reflected in the fact that Denmark has been happy to make large contributions to NATO-led operations, which are financed fully by the troop-contributing states themselves.

Institutional Rationales: The Ministry of Defense and the armed forces prefer deployments with NATO allies and the Nordics in order to enhance force protection. The perceived quality gap between Western forces and those in the majority of the developing world acts as a deterrent against deploying Danish troops in high-risk operations with limited Western participation.

Normative Rationales: Supporting the core values that the United Nations is tasked to uphold and promote – international law, human rights, peaceful conflict resolution, disarmament and development – is an important Danish foreign policy objective in its own right, but the UN is no longer seen as the single most important institution for doing so. These values may just as well be pursued through the EU, the OSCE or NATO. Today, the role played by the UN in Danish foreign policy is primarily a legitimating one. A UN mandate is not necessary for Denmark when resorting to force, however. Since the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, Denmark has been prepared to use force for humanitarian purposes without a UN mandate. A “mandate” from the EU or NATO is now regarded as an acceptable second-best solution. This willingness manifested itself most recently in 2011, when a large parliamentary majority was prepared to use force to stop attacks on civilians in Libya without a UN mandate if necessary.⁶ The decision to participate in the Iraq war in 2003 without a UN mandate and in the face of deep divisions within NATO is not likely to be repeated however. It became a highly divisive domestic issue forcing the government to undertake a premature withdrawal in 2007.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

The principal obstacle to UN contributions is the political preference for contributing to NATO- and US-led missions. The deterrence and reassurance measures undertaken by NATO in response to the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and its subsequent destabilization of Eastern Ukraine will bind considerable resources significantly reducing the

number of forces that can be made available to UN peacekeeping operations. The enhanced military support (some 400 personnel in total) for the US-led Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria decided by a large parliamentary majority in April 2016 all but rules out more than token support for UN-led missions. In 2015 the Danish government came close to meeting a UN request for a 250-strong contribution to a Combat Convoy Battalion for MINUSMA, which is currently commanded by the Danish Major-General Michael Lollesgaard. Although Lollesgaard lobbied hard for this contribution,⁷ a majority in parliament in the end opted to contribute 30 special operations forces and a medium transport plane supported by 60 personnel instead on the grounds that the other option would be far too expensive, and that they preferred to reinforce the Danish contribution to the US-led campaign against ISIL.

Financial costs: Financial costs have traditionally not been a serious barrier to Danish participation in international operations. Although, the costs of international operations have exceeded the budget almost every year since the mid-1990s, the force commitments have not been reduced. That financial constraints are not decisive is also demonstrated by the fact that Denmark decided to contribute F-16s to the Libyan operation in 2011 at a time where there was no money left in the defense budget for additional international commitments.

On the other hand, financial costs can be seen as an increasingly important barrier in the sense that repeated defence cuts have considerably reduced the international capacity of the armed forces forcing Danish politicians to prioritize harder among missions. The decision to refuse the UN request for a 250-strong Combat Convoy contribution to MINUSMA reflects this reality. While increased NATO and US pressure on Denmark to increase its defense spending is likely to stem the decline in Danish defence spending, no Danish defence spending except major budget increases in the next defence agreement covering the 2017-2021 period.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: On the contrary. Denmark is a long-time advocate of a comprehensive approach to conflict management and has been in favor of expanding the UN peacekeeping agenda since the early 1990s. Denmark views itself as a leading advocate of closer civil-military cooperation on UN missions (integrated mission planning process), the [Responsibility to Protect](#) agenda and has also worked hard to establish and consolidate the [UN Peacebuilding Commission](#).

Difficult domestic politics: Not at all. A large majority in both parliament and the public at large favors Danish military participation in international operations. The support for ISAF is higher in Denmark than anywhere else and all parties in parliament and 80% of the public supported the decision to go to war against the Qaddafi regime in Libya in 2011. International operations have become the *raison d'être* of the armed forces and the hallmark of the so-called “activist foreign policy” that Denmark has pursued since the end of the Cold War. The question in Danish domestic politics is not whether Denmark should contribute to peacekeeping or peace enforcement but where and how.

Resistance in the military: The Danish armed forces have generally been skeptical towards the UN since their UNPROFOR experience. The SHIRBRIG failure reinforced this perception as it was generally seen as additional proof of the UN’s inability to act. NATO is the organization of choice for the armed forces, and following their engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Danish army regards itself as part of the elite due to its ability to operate side-by-side with UK and US forces in the toughest operational environments. Given a

choice, the Danish armed forces therefore prefer to work together with UK and US forces in the field.

The level of military resistance should not be exaggerated, however. The military preference for cooperating with the UK and the US is by no means a decisive factor in the decision-making process, and the Danish armed forces will go where their political masters tell them. It should also be pointed out that most officers who serve on UN-led missions as staff officers, advisors or observers generally come home with a positive view of the organization. This also applies to the officers serving as military advisors in the [Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN](#) in New York, and the current MINUSMA commander Michael Lollsgaard has also made the case for larger UN contributions on several occasions.

Legal obstacles: There are no legal obstacles preventing deployment of Danish troops in UN-led peacekeeping operations. By contrast a [defense opt-out](#) in the EU legally prevents Denmark from making military contributions to EU-led missions.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

A major Danish return to UN-led operations will only take place as part of a general Western return. If peace agreements and cease-fires pave the way for the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in Libya and Syria dominated by the EU and NATO member states, large Danish contributions can be expected as well. In the absence of such operations, Danish UN contributions are likely to continue to take the form of small and specialized contributions that have become the norm in the past decade. In its written input to the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the importance of facilitating the rapid deployment of ‘critical enablers’ like helicopters, information- and analysing capacities, engineer units, Special Forces and units capable of contributing to military capacity building. These are the kinds of contributions that most Danish officials and decision-makers envisage for UN-led operations in the foreseeable future barring any unforeseen developments such as a launch of major UN-led operations in the Middle East/North African region aimed at stopping the flow of refugees coming to Europe. The challenge with regard to critical enablers is that Denmark lacks the capacity for making sustained contributions. This is a challenge that cannot be overcome in the near to medium term.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The [United Nations Association Denmark](#) is one of the few vocal supporters for a Danish return to UN peacekeeping but it does not have much impact. The same goes for the informal network, Friends of the United Nations, made up of Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel (both retired and active) with UN experience, former EU and UN officials, politicians, and academics. This network tries to stimulate interest and debate concerning the UN in Denmark but also with limited success. The military advisors working at the [Danish Mission to the UN](#) in New York also voice their support for UN peacekeeping on a regular basis. Most recently Danish nationals working in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations have also begun to advocate a Danish return to UN-led peace operations.⁸

There is no overt resistance to participation in UN peacekeeping in Denmark.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The Danish armed forces continue to possess relevant air, sea and land capabilities for peacekeeping operations (See Figure 3), and they are generally made available for international operations with few or no national caveats.

Figure 3: International ambitions for the Danish armed forces 2013-2017

- Force contributions set up across defence and government agencies, such as a task force for humanitarian operations.
- The army will have the capacity to deploy a battalion combat command (typically from about 300 and up to about 800 soldiers) on short notice, either for short or sustained missions (18+ months).
- Up to two large units from the navy deployed at short notice, or a large unit from the navy deployed in a sustained mission.
- Up to three simultaneous military air contributions at short notice consisting of, for example, transport aircraft, helicopters, combat aircraft, and capabilities in monitoring and warning systems. Some of these deployed to sustained missions.
- Special operations forces as well as capabilities from the rest of the Danish armed forces in support.
- Tactical planning staffs from the army, navy and air force.
- Contributions from the army, navy, air force and home guard to the military capacity building, and military support to the civilian capacity building. The contribution must be adaptable into a comprehensive approach together with civilian elements in the combined effort.
- Other smaller contributions from the army, navy, air force and home guard, including single person deployments to international staffs, etc.

Source: Danish Ministry of Defence, *Danish Defence Agreement 2013-2017*, p.3.

In view of current commitments to NATO- and US-led operations, Denmark is most likely to continue to provide small but specialized contributions that the UN has difficulty in obtaining. Capacity-building experts, logistics, mentoring, staff officers, and naval assets are areas that Denmark will be both able and willing to make available to UN peacekeeping operations. But as mentioned above, Denmark lacks the capacity for making sustained contributions of this nature.

In terms of civilian capacity, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' [Peace and Stabilisation Roster](#) (formerly International Humanitarian Service) has some 400 experts covering Rule of Law, human rights, mission support, water and sanitation, logistics, management etc. The Danish Red Cross, [the Danish Refugee Council](#) and Medicines sans Frontiers have government-funded rosters totaling some 600 personnel available for humanitarian and emergency actions as well as in reconstruction activities. Finally, the Danish police force has some 75 personnel available for peace operations, and the [Danish Emergency Management Service](#) has equipment and 500 personnel deployable at short notice in natural emergencies.

Part 8: Further Reading

[Danish Defence Agreement 2013-2017](#) (Copenhagen, 30 November 2012).

Jakobsen, Peter Viggo, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations: A New Model in the Making?* (London and New York: Routledge 2009).

[Summary Danish Defence – Global Engagement](#). Report by the Danish Defence Commission 2008 (March 2009).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise noted, data is taken from IISS, *The Military Balance, 2016* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2016).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of *active* armed forces. Using figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2016*.

³ In addition, a patrol vessel from the Danish navy escorted ships from the [World Food Programme](#) transporting food supplies to Somalia in 2008 and a Danish Naval vessel also commanded multinational maritime Task Group removing the chemical weapons from Syria (Operation RECSYR 2013-2014) as part of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons United Nations Joint Mission (OPCW-UN).

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *Overview of suggestions by Denmark to the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, February 2015.

⁵ Peter Viggo Jakobsen and Jens Ringsmose, 'In Denmark, Afghanistan is worth dying for: How public support for the war was maintained in the face of mounting casualties and elusive success', *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol.50, No.2, 2015, 211-27.

⁶ Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'The Danish Libya Campaign: Out in Front in Pursuit of Pride, Praise and Position', in Dag Henriksen and Ann Karin Larssen (eds.) *Political Rationale and International Consequences of the War in Libya*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 192-208.

⁷ Michael Lollesgaard, 'Giv Mali et lille ekstra skub', *Jyllands-Posten*, 11 August 2015.

⁸ Peter N. Due, Sara Rendtorff-Smith, 'Få Danmark tilbage på FN-sporet', *Politiken*, 28 September 2015.