



NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

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## **NATO DEFENCE PLANNING CAPABILITY REVIEW 2019/2020**

### **DENMARK**

### **OVERVIEW**

1. The 2018-2023 Danish Defence Agreement remains extant, and assesses that Denmark faces more serious threats than in any other period following the fall of the Berlin Wall. In response to this, Denmark wishes to enhance its capacity for collective deterrence and defence within NATO; to enhance its ability to participate in international military operations and international stabilisation efforts for the purposes of, inter alia, fighting terrorism, capacity building, and handling of irregular migration flows; to strengthen its ability to contribute to the national security of Denmark, which includes increasing support to the Danish National Police; and to enhance its ability to protect Danish society from cyber threats and propagandaa campaigns. Denmark considers NATO as the cornerstone of its security and defence policy. It recognises, inter alia, that it may become a staging area for reinforcements from other NATO Allies, and that, therefore, it must be able to receive, to host and to protect these reinforcements. Denmark wishes to improve its ability to operate with larger Allied army formations that can be deployed within NATO territory. Denmark also wishes to: enhance its cyber defences; allocate more resources to the Danish Defence Intelligence Service; and enhance its military presence and surveillance in the Arctic.

2. In January 2019, a supplementary defence agreement was agreed in the Danish Parliament, with broad cross-party support. This out-of-cycle political agreement provides additional funding of DKK 1.5 billion (US\$ 238.03 million) in 2023. Denmark indicates total defence expenditure will reach 1.5 % of GDP in 2023. According to Denmark, it is politically agreed that the premise of the next defence agreement will be the Wales Defence Investment Pledge (DIP).

3. In terms of capability development, Denmark plans, inter alia, to provide a medium infantry brigade, with heavier elements and enhanced capabilities, by 2024, with the capability to deploy roughly 4,000 soldiers in an independent formation. To accomplish this, Denmark is investing in anti-tank capability, main battle tanks (MBT), indirect fire support, ground-based air defence (GBAD), intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance, command and control, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS) capabilities in the short term. Denmark also plans to improve the anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability of the Danish Navy, by upgrading the new maritime helicopters with advanced sonar systems and anti-submarine torpedoes. Anti-air warfare capability will



be enhanced with the delivery of long and short-range missiles. The capabilities of the Danish Air Force will be enhanced by the replacement of their F-16s with F-35 fighter aircraft until 2026. A fifteen-year capability development plan reflects the acquisition and sustainment priorities of the Defence Agreement, and will provide continuity of planning past 2023, into the medium term.

4. At the end of 2019, the strength of the Danish Armed Forces was 17,973 military personnel, including 2,071 conscripts, supported by 4,759 civilians. As part of the Defence Agreement, the Danish Armed Forces is reorganising and slimming-down higher staffs in order to refocus personnel resources on operational capabilities. This is intended to increase the operational force structure by approximately 1,100 full-time regular personnel by 2024. The number of conscripts called up each year is some 4,200, and the intent is to increase this number by up to 500 to meet yearly demands. Basic training lasts for four months, and conscripts seeking employment following compulsory service will receive a further advanced military training.

5. The overall strength of the Danish Home Guard (HG) is about 550 permanently employed personnel, 14,500 volunteers in the active structure, and some 30,000 personnel in the reserve structure. The primary mission of the HG is homeland security, but it is also used in support to the regular armed forces, in the reception and protection of Allied reinforcing forces and for the protection of infrastructure. HG personnel also serve as augmentees in international operations and missions, and defence capacity building engagements.

6. Denmark's GDP growth in real terms increased from 2.04% in 2017, to 2.39% in 2018 and was estimated to have been 2.37% in 2019. In 2020, GDP is projected to fall by 5.78%. The proportion of GDP devoted to defence decreased from 1.35% in 2009 to an estimated 1.31 % in 2019, and is projected to be 1.47 % in 2020, 1.49 % in 2021 and 1.40 % in 2022, which is below the NATO guideline of 2%. In 2018, expenditure on major equipment and associated research and development was 11.66% of total defence expenditure. Expenditure on major equipment was estimated to have been 18.06% in 2019 and is forecast to be 22.35% in 2020, 24.04 % in 2021 and 19.55% in 2022, which straddles the NATO guideline of 20%.

7. Denmark makes regular contributions to operations, missions and engagements abroad, generally commensurate with the size of its armed forces, and without caveats. Denmark has offered land, maritime and air capabilities to the NATO Readiness Initiative.

8. Allied Defence Ministers agreed that Denmark should give priority to the development of: a heavy infantry brigade, including associated CS and CSS elements; joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (JISR) capabilities; and ASW capabilities. As a stepping-stone to delivering the heavy infantry brigade by 2032, Denmark aims to enhance its combat, CS and CSS capabilities by 2024 and plans to deliver a medium infantry brigade by that year. NATO regards this as a positive step, especially given that until 2024, the Danish medium infantry brigade has critical combat deficiencies, and is likely to be unusable in practical terms in a high-end conflict (given also that it is at 24 months' notice). However, there are still no concrete plans to deliver all of the required heavy infantry capabilities, including infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) with sufficient firepower and mobility, a key

component of the brigade, and other shortfalls are anticipated to persist. The second prioritised capability, JISR, will be partially met in qualitative terms, but will not be met in quantitative terms. Denmark still has no plans to develop the long-range signal intelligence (SIGINT) capability, or to acquire the two SIGINT aircraft requested by NATO, which is the key component of the JISR prioritised capability. Denmark is also challenged to meet the third capability priority, namely ASW. While the navy has funded plans to fit the flexible support ships with an advanced towed sonar capability, this upgrade of ASW capability is now not fully expected until 2028, six years later than requested. Also of pressing concern is the lack of lightweight ASW torpedoes, until at least 2024, for the nine MH-60R Seahawk maritime helicopters. Clearly, Denmark needs to commit significantly more effort, funds and far greater resources to deliver all of three capability priorities. The lack of progress since the previous Capability Review is of concern.

9. Denmark is transforming its army to widen the spectrum of its operational capabilities from battalion level and low-intensity operations to brigade level and high-end warfighting operations. The Danish Army Command is responsible for developing, planning, and generating land forces, and has been restructured to include: the 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanised Infantry Brigade (1<sup>st</sup> Brigade); the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade (2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade); an engineer regiment; an artillery regiment; a signals regiment; a logistic regiment; and an intelligence regiment, as well as the Jutland Dragoons, the Royal Life Guard, the Guard Hussars and the Slesvig Regiment of Foot. The Danish Division Headquarters (HQ) was transformed to become HQ Multinational Division North (HQ MND-N), in Latvia and Denmark. Denmark's land force capability development priorities are focussed on delivering a medium brigade with its enhanced capabilities by 2024 as an interim step towards providing the requested heavy infantry brigade by 2032. In this respect, the Danish plan to supplement the CV-9035 IFVs in the combat battalions with modern Leopard 2A7 MBTs will increase the offensive, direct fire capabilities in the brigade by 2024. The introduction of modernised MBTs, new artillery and mortar systems, and plans to introduce GBAD and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, as well as modern engineering and communications and information systems are welcome. However, instead of introducing IFVs, Denmark intends to replace its current armoured personnel carriers (APCs) with new APCs, which will fall short of the direct fire capability requirements for medium infantry in the short term. In the medium term, it is evident that Denmark will need to transform its incoming Piranha 5 APCs to become IFVs with potent autocannons and anti-tank missiles, or procure new IFVs in order to meet the firepower requirements for heavy infantry.

10. Denmark can currently provide one heavy infantry battalion group, as a high-readiness element of the medium infantry brigade in the NATO Capability Targets, albeit with significant qualitative shortfalls. However, the requested medium infantry brigade is provided at 24 months' notice and with numerous critical quantitative and qualitative limitations in combat capability, CS and CSS at least until 2024. Given the number of capability limitations including combat power, readiness and the low stocks of battle decisive munitions (BDM), it remains to be seen whether Denmark will be able to meet the requirement to develop a fully-capable heavy infantry brigade as requested by 2032. Until these critical shortfalls are addressed, the operational utility of the Danish Army, in a high-end conflict against a peer competitor, will remain constrained.

11. The naval staff has been transformed into a two-star Navy Command, responsible for developing, planning, and generating naval forces. The Navy Command has three subordinate naval squadrons: Arctic and Northern Atlantic; International Operations; and National Operations. The naval surveillance centre and the training, technical and expert centres are also organised under the three squadrons. Naval forces are either controlled by the National Maritime Operations Centre, or by the Joint Arctic Command when in the North Atlantic area. The composition of the ocean-going fleet is unchanged since the last assessment. The core of the navy are three multi-role frigates and two flexible support ships. They are supplemented by four ocean patrol vessels (OPVs) and three Arctic patrol ships that are mostly dedicated to national operations patrolling the North Atlantic and the Arctic. In the short term, the navy capability development priorities include the development of ASW capabilities; delivery of an area air-defence capability; procuring a class of multi-purpose vessels; preparing for the potential acquisition of SM-6 missiles; and studying the requirements for a long-range joint-precision strike capability. The medium-term naval capability development priorities are to develop an Arctic capability to replace the Thetis-class OPVs; to develop a concept for maritime unmanned aerial systems; and further develop the navy's overall ISR capabilities.

12. The navy is a modern ocean-going force that is expected to meet most of the requested quantitative NATO Capability Targets, but not until the medium term. In qualitative terms, there are shortfalls in ASW (as mentioned above), above-water warfare, maritime BDM stockpiles, mine countermeasures, and maritime situational awareness. Some, but not all, of the shortfalls identified are being addressed by funding identified in the Defence Agreement.

13. The Royal Danish Air Force reorganised at the beginning of 2019, merging the Air Staff and the Expeditionary Air Staff into a new Air Command, which includes a new National Air Operations Centre. The air force structure also includes a new operations support wing, a fighter wing, an air control wing, a helicopter wing, an air transport wing and a joint movement and transportation organisation. The air force consists of 30 F-16 combat aircraft, four C-130J medium-transport aircraft, 14 EH-101 Merlin medium transport and nine MH-60R Seahawk tactical transport helicopters, eight AS-550 Fennec light transport helicopters, and three CL-604 Challenger maritime ISR aircraft, plus one dedicated to VIP and light transport. The introduction of 27 F-35 combat aircraft to replace the F-16 fleet, over the period 2021-2026 will leave a gap in Denmark's deployable combat air capability in the period 2022 to 2024. With the exception of F-16 crews, who are slightly below requirements, all aircrews met Allied Command Operations Forces Standards for flying hours. Aircrew-to-aircraft ratios meet NATO standards, except for the EH-101 fleet, which is slightly below the required level.

14. Denmark's relatively modern air force will not provide all of the capabilities requested in the aerospace-related NATO Capability Targets. For some of these targets, there will be delays. For others targets, Denmark has no plans and no intent to provide the requested capabilities in full. This applies particularly to the number of combat aircraft, the deployable airbase activation modules, and the three air-to-air refuelling platforms requested in the medium term. Crucially, it also has no plans to develop a long-range SIGINT capability mentioned earlier.

15. The Danish Special Operations Command structure and capabilities have not changed since the last Capability Review. Denmark can provide most of the special operations forces contributions sought by the NATO Capability Targets, albeit with shortfalls in quantity, quality and readiness, due in part to lack of organic or dedicated CS and CSS capabilities. Enhancements in land mobility are ongoing. However, Denmark is still mostly reliant upon other Allies to operate above the task unit level.

16. Progress in the implementation of Denmark's joint enabling NATO Capability Targets has been generally moderate, although many shortfalls persist. Denmark provides several of the quantitative forces and capabilities requested in the NATO Capability Targets, and is expected to fully implement a few of its qualitative enabling requirements. Denmark's focus rests on the provision of the required CS and CSS capabilities for its heavy infantry brigade. However, this leads to a situation in which a significant number of joint and enabling capabilities requested at a theatre-level will either not be provided, or only be available on an ad-hoc basis and, in many cases, at a lower readiness than required. These shortfalls include: reception, staging and onward movement; transport; supply; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear capabilities; and medical capabilities.

17. Denmark attaches high importance to a comprehensive approach for achieving coherence among the actions of governmental, non-governmental and international actors involved in stabilisation and reconstruction. Denmark is fully implementing its related Capability Targets.

18. Denmark is broadly resilient and has a clear structure for civil preparedness, where responsibilities are clearly assigned. A number of sector-specific programmes are in place and a cross-government body ensures coordination of civil preparedness, but its work would benefit from an overarching framework for the implementation of the seven baseline requirements.

19. In sum, Denmark is making progress towards implementing the Defence Investment Pledge, including a political commitment to spend 1.5% of GDP on defence in 2023, and to exceed the 20% guideline for major equipment and associated research and development before 2024. However, it is clearly not enough to meet Denmark's commitments. Denmark needs to further increase its defence spending in order to fully implement all of its NATO Capability Targets.

20. Progress is evident, and Denmark is expected to meet many of its NATO Capability Targets, albeit with significant shortfalls in quantity, quality and readiness in the short term. In the medium term, some of the shortfalls should be addressed by funding identified in the Defence Agreement. In other cases, Denmark has no plans and no intent to provide certain capabilities requested by the Alliance, which is most concerning. Until critical shortfalls in combat power, readiness, and stocks of BDMs are addressed, the operational utility of the Danish Armed Forces in a high-end conflict against a peer competitor, will remain constrained.

21. Allied Defence Ministers agreed that Denmark should give priority to the development of: a heavy infantry brigade, including associated CS and CSS elements; JISR capabilities; and ASW capabilities. The lack of progress since the previous Capability Review is of concern. These developments lead to the conclusion that the Danish and the

NATO defence planning priorities are misaligned. Denmark needs to fully implement all of its NATO Capability Targets, in full and on time, with a special emphasis and urgency on all three of the prioritised capabilities. Until it does so, other Allies may potentially have to pick up part of Denmark's fair share of the Alliance burden.

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