

Fact Sheet

Danish Host Nation Support for the USA and NATO

April and May 2024

Background

In a defense alliance like NATO, an important objective is to deter any potential aggressor. This is achieved through exercises that demonstrate NATO's ability to stand together, move its units collectively, and defend its territories. In spring 2024, NATO is conducting Steadfast Defender 24, the largest exercise since the Cold War. As part of this exercise, large units are being moved from North America across the Atlantic to participate in European land-based exercises.

Swift and seamless cooperation and coordination are essential when NATO operates professionally and under time pressure. Denmark and Danish ports play a vital logistical role. Access to ports near the Baltic Sea is critical for deploying American equipment destined for Eastern Europe, the Baltic countries, or our Nordic neighbors. This logistical task is known as host nation support.

The Danish Armed Forces have previously had the opportunity to practice host nation skills and procedures when the USA has moved equipment through Denmark during exercise activities and materiel rotations for American units in Europe.



*Danish and American soldiers coordinate transport of U.S. equipment in Esbjerg Port in 2021.
Photo: Lars Skjoldan / Forsvaret.*



Operation Hawk Assistor

The Danish host nation activities in April and May 2024 have been named Operation Hawk Assistor. This operation is conducted by the Danish Armed Forces with support from several government agencies and select private corporations.

Hawk Assistor involves the reception of large quantities of American equipment, vehicles, and combat helicopters at the ports of Kalundborg, Aarhus, Esbjerg, and at Roskilde Airport. Subsequently, this equipment is moved to other NATO countries where it will be used either in Exercise Steadfast Defender or as part of an extensive materiel rotation.

The majority of the equipment passing through Denmark is intended for use in connection with the U.S. enhanced presence in Europe - Operation Atlantic Resolve. The purpose of this operation is to demonstrate the U.S. capability and willingness to reinforce NATO and its allies in Eastern Europe with combat units and combat support units.

Before the transport vessels arrive, American and British personnel are deployed to several arrival points. Their primary task is to receive the equipment and ensure its onward movement to the final destinations within NATO.

Once docking is close, the ports will be partially closed to the public and the companies that normally operate there.

Arrival Points, Timeline, and Equipment

- **Kalundborg Port**

In mid-April 2024, equipment arrives by ship at Kalundborg Port. This equipment will be used in exercise activities during Steadfast Defender 24 and will also be part of materiel rotations elsewhere.

- **Roskilde Airport**

In late April / early May, American combat helicopters arrive for preparation before further transport. These helicopters will participate in exercise activities during Steadfast Defender 24.

- **Esbjerg Port**

In early May 2024, equipment will be docked at Esbjerg Port. This equipment will be used in connection with an extensive materiel rotation in Europe.

- **Aarhus Port**

In early and mid-May 2024, equipment arrives by ships at Aarhus Port. It will also be used in connection with an extensive materiel rotation in Europe.

Equipment for U.S. Forces in Europe includes:

- Wheeled vehicles
- Containers
- Tracked vehicles

Partners

The Danish Armed Forces plan and execute host nation tasks in concert with various agencies and other government organizations, including:

- The Police
- The Home Guard
- Relevant military and civilian agencies
- Municipal authorities
- Select Danish companies

Spokespersons

Danish Armed Forces Spokesperson:

- Major General Ulrich Johan Hellebjerg, Head of Joint Operations, Defence Command Denmark

Home Guard Spokespersons:

Roskilde and Kalundborg:

- Lieutenant Colonel Kristian Kirsch Bentsen, Commander of the regional Home Guard District (Midt- og Vestsjælland)

Esbjerg:

- Lieutenant Colonel Tobias Tesch, Commander of the regional Home Guard District (Syd og Sønderjylland)

Aarhus:

- Lieutenant Colonel Christina Pojezno, Commander of the regional Home Guard District (Østjylland)

Press Contact

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Imagery can be downloaded here, when available:

<https://www.forsvaret.dk/ha-billedlink>