



# THE STRONG TIES THAT BIND: DENMARK, SWEDEN, NORWAY AND THE UNITED STATES

Council of American Ambassadors

Mission to Scandinavia

Delegation Report

2011



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## Foreword

As this report went to press, the world was shocked to learn that Norway had been rocked by dual terrorist attacks. On July 22, 2011, approximately one month after the Council of American Ambassadors' mission delegation departed Norway, a car bomb detonated near the Prime Minister's office in downtown Oslo, killing eight people. The Oslo bombing was immediately followed by a shooting rampage on Utoya Island, an hour outside of Oslo, where a Labor Party youth retreat was in progress. Sixty-nine people were killed. Between the two incidents, July 22 became the deadliest day for Norway during peacetime.

The events of July 22 brought into stark focus the issue of immigration and the challenge of successfully integrating into society individuals of various backgrounds, ethnicities, faiths and creeds. The events also renewed debate on multiculturalism as the self-confessed mastermind of the attacks, Andrew Behring Breivik, "harbored nationalist, anti-immigration views and obsessed about a 'cultural Marxist' political climate in Europe that enabled the threat of Muslim domination."<sup>1</sup>

Concerns over integration and multiculturalism are not limited to Norway. German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in October 2010 that Germany had "absolutely failed" in implementing multiculturalism due to the unwillingness of many immigrants to integrate into their new homelands.<sup>2</sup> While Europeans used to believe that immigrants were entitled to "preserve their language, customs and values," the principle of multiculturalism has recently been questioned.<sup>3</sup> In areas where immigrant populations experience high levels of unemployment, and increasingly rely on social welfare programs, resentment has risen over "the reluctance of some to adopt local customs."<sup>4</sup> In turn, political parties are "tapping into a surge of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment...propelling right-wing and nationalist parties to their biggest gains in years."<sup>5</sup> Throughout Europe "the debate over immigration and Islam are now the same thing."<sup>6</sup>

In Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the Council delegation met with officials working on immigration and integration issues. The Danish, Swedish and Norwegian Governments are deepening and broadening integration and societal inclusion of immigrant and refugee populations through the expansion of language and training programs. As in the United States and other countries, immigration and integration are sensitive and sometimes polarizing issues. Denmark, Sweden and Norway's discussion and implementation of integration efforts while upholding freedom of expression and maintaining an open society can serve as positive examples for other nations dealing with immigration and integration challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Vanessa Fuhrmans and Sven Grundberg, "Suspect Posted Manifesto on Web," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 July 2011. Available online: [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903999904576465532138212562.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903999904576465532138212562.html?mod=googlenews_wsj).

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Faiola, "Anti-Muslim Feelings Propel Right Wing in Europe," *The Washington Post*, 26 October 2010. Available online: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/25/AR2010102505601.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Executive Summary

The Council of American Ambassadors sponsored a fact-finding mission to Denmark, Sweden and Norway from June 11-23, 2011. The ambassadors who participated in the mission were: Keith L. Brown (Denmark, Lesotho), Diana Lady Dougan (International Communications and Information Policy), Bruce S. Gelb (Belgium, USIA), John D. Ong (Norway), Robert D. Stuart, Jr. (Norway), and Timothy L. Towell (Paraguay).

The countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway were selected for the 2011 mission in order to further strengthen the strong ties the United States shares with these nations; how they weathered the global financial crisis; and the ways each is dealing with global issues, including immigration, environmental concerns and the pursuit of renewable and clean energy sources.

The delegation managed an intensive schedule of meetings and discussions in the short time spent in each nation, coming away with substantive country-specific and regional observations and those pertaining to all three of these Nordic countries. Briefings focused on four main issue areas: foreign policy and international relations; the economy; migration and immigration; and energy and the environment.

The delegation's general findings are highlighted as follows:

### *Foreign Policy and International Relations in Denmark, Sweden and Norway*

- Denmark, Sweden and Norway are active players in the international community. Involvement in international and regional organizations is viewed within the context of a moral responsibility to act.
- All three countries have strong political and economic ties with the United States. United States' relations with each country are among the best they have ever been.
- Denmark, Sweden and Norway should all be recognized for "punching above their weight" in foreign affairs and for advancing international security, particularly through their contributions in Afghanistan and Libya.

### *The Economy in Denmark, Sweden and Norway*

- The mixed market economies of Denmark, Sweden and Norway generally follow the "Nordic Model," demonstrated through extensive welfare states relative to other developed countries, low barriers to free trade, and high levels of unionization. Services provided under the social safety net include schooling, health care and extensive maternal and paternal leave.
- Danes, Swedes and Norwegians believe in good governance and trust their governments to use expansionary fiscal policy for the good of the nation. In turn, governments feel a strong responsibility to their citizenry.

### *Immigration and Integration in Denmark, Sweden and Norway*

- Immigration is one of the more sensitive issues in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. As signatories of the Schengen Agreement, which eliminates border controls, Denmark, Sweden and Norway have seen an influx of immigrants over the past decade. Earlier this year, Denmark decided to reintroduce border controls in an effort to curtail criminal activity; European Union member states have voiced their concern over these measures.
- Denmark, Sweden and Norway are working to broaden and enhance integration measures, particularly through education and training programs. A history of ethnic homogeneity and the controversy over the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten's* 2005 decision to publish a series of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad act as a backdrop to integration discussions. While there is recognition of the challenge of effective integration and an expansion of programs aimed to assist immigrant populations, the long-term success of country-specific integration initiatives has yet to be fully realized.

### *Energy and the Environment in Denmark, Sweden and Norway*

- Denmark, Sweden and Norway are committed to finding and developing renewable energy sources.
- Each country is actively involved, through the international community and regional organizations, in safeguarding the environment for future generations. They are signatories to international treaties dealing with the environment, and all three countries recognize the challenges associated with climate change and global warming, particularly in the High North.

Country-specific findings are outlined in the following pages. They are organized around four issue areas: foreign policy and international relations, the economy, migration and immigration, and energy and the environment. Conclusions are discussed at the end of the report.

## Denmark

### *Foreign Policy and International Relations*

Denmark exercises foreign policy through extensive participation in multilateral organizations and aligning with countries that share its high regard for human rights and democracy. In line with this multilateral foreign policy approach, Denmark was a founding member of NATO in 1949. The Danes are strong believers in the transatlantic relationship, demonstrated through partnerships with NATO and the European Union, and are an active and loyal partner in foreign policy.

The country has been a member of the European Union since 1973 but has opted out of EU policies related to common defense, common currency, EU citizenship and legal cooperation. Denmark is a willing participant in other areas under the European Union's purview, and Danish foreign policy coordinates with EU policy in areas of strategic interest. In January 2012, Denmark will assume the presidency of the European Union. The priorities of the Danish presidency are streamlining the decision-making process in the EU; strengthening the internal market, especially in the area of services; the financing of EU policies, particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); and addressing the problems with deficit financing in light of the economic support measures provided to Greece, Ireland and Portugal.<sup>7</sup> Denmark supports free trade negotiated through the Doha Development Round and sees a multilateral trading system as the way to level the playing field for companies.

Since 2002, Denmark has been an active partner in Afghanistan; 738 Danish soldiers are currently deployed in Helmand province. Under the Helmand Plan, Denmark will phase out combat troops beginning in 2014. In turn, the country will increase its internal development assistance in Afghanistan in an effort to bring about a more secure economic, social and political environment. Denmark has provided significant development assistance (approximately 100 million Danish kroner per year) to Afghanistan since the beginning of the conflict, and it is projected that Afghanistan will be the largest recipient of Danish foreign assistance in 2012.<sup>8</sup> Development assistance has focused primarily on programs promoting good governance, education at the national and provincial levels and rural development.

The United States-Danish relationship has never been better or more important than it is today. There are strong political and personal ties between the Obama administration and the Danish foreign ministry and President Obama is popular with the Danish public. Particularly in the business sector, the affinity between Denmark and the United States is one of the strongest. Outside of the European Union, the United States is Denmark's most important trading partner.

Development assistance is a key element of Denmark's foreign policy. There is broad public support for development assistance with 75 percent of the population in favor.<sup>9</sup> Development assistance is viewed not only as a moral obligation but also in Denmark's national interest as the world becomes more globalized and interconnected. Denmark currently devotes

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<sup>7</sup> Presentation by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Presentation by Ministry for Development Cooperation (DANIDA), Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

just over 0.8 percent of its GNP to international development—a higher percentage than the United Nations’ target contribution of 0.7 percent of GNP.<sup>10</sup> Danish aid is primarily channeled through United Nations’ organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Between 2011 and 2015, Danish development assistance will be reduced from 26 to 15 “partner” countries in order to allow for more comprehensive engagement and maximum impact.<sup>11</sup> Danish development assistance will seek to advance five key areas:<sup>12</sup>

- 1) freedom, democracy and human rights
- 2) growth and employment
- 3) gender equality
- 4) stability and fragility, and
- 5) environment and climate

Danish development assistance is increasingly focused on Africa and fragile states; two-thirds of the International Development Corporation (DANIDA)’s development assistance is pledged to Africa.<sup>13</sup> Denmark regularly partners with other nations and EU member states to accomplish its development assistance goals.

As of 2011, there are 25,109 personnel serving in the Danish Army, Navy, Air Force and Joint Service.<sup>14</sup> Despite their relatively small size, Denmark’s armed forces are highly respected and have proven their strength and competence by undertaking anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa and being actively involved in Afghanistan. Danish defense spending accounts for one and a half percent of GDP.<sup>15</sup> The United States and Denmark also work closely together on efforts related to antipiracy, counterterrorism, climate change, human rights and the Arctic and Danish-US interoperability is high.

Counterterrorism is high on the Danish Government’s agenda. The country has experienced more terrorist threats with respect to its size than any other nation and Danes see terrorism as a fact of life.<sup>16</sup> The population is aware of the challenges in conducting effective counterterrorism operations and the focus of the security agenda has changed from counterterrorism to efforts focused on integration and the reduction of radicalism in society. The 2009 action plan, “A Common and Safe Future,” laid out a framework for preventing extremism and radicalization in Denmark by focusing on early integration and strengthening democratic

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<sup>10</sup> Presentation by Ministry for Development Cooperation (DANIDA), Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

<sup>11</sup> “Priorities of the Danish Government for Danish Development Assistance: Overview of the Development Assistance Budget 2011-2015,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Development Cooperation, Government of Denmark, August 2010, p. 3. Available online: [http://amg.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/1C903D5E-3A75-453F-BACB-8EBF8B55F7F2/0/Priorities\\_danish\\_development\\_assistance20112015.pdf](http://amg.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/1C903D5E-3A75-453F-BACB-8EBF8B55F7F2/0/Priorities_danish_development_assistance20112015.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 2

<sup>13</sup> Presentation by Ministry for Development Cooperation (DANIDA), Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

<sup>14</sup> “Facts and Figures: The Danish Armed Forces,” Danish Defense Command, February 2011, p. 8. Available online: [http://forsvaret.dk/FKO/eng/Facts%20and%20Figures/Documents/Fakta%20om%20Forsvaret\\_UK.pdf](http://forsvaret.dk/FKO/eng/Facts%20and%20Figures/Documents/Fakta%20om%20Forsvaret_UK.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Presentation by Danish Defense Command, 15 June 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

cohesion. The Ministry of Integration coordinates, gathers and shares knowledge among the various state, local and civil society actors in order improve cohesion and prevent extremism.

### *The Economy*

Unlike its neighbors, Denmark has few natural sources. As a result, the agricultural, industrial, maritime shipping, pharmaceutical, and renewable energy sectors underpin the economy and the country is dependent on foreign trade. This reliance on foreign trade has adversely affected the Danish economy during the global economic crisis, resulting in slow growth. The economy continues to struggle to grow, compounded by low productivity growth, high wage increases, low annual working hours, a need for greater renewal and innovation by Danish companies, and increased competition in the public sector.<sup>17</sup> Despite these challenges, Denmark remains fiscally strong and government spending is on the rise.

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with representatives of A.P. Moller - Mærsk and the Danish Shipowners' Association during its Denmark visit. Mærsk is the largest container shipper in the world and a conglomerate with operations in the shipping, oil, gas and business industries, among others. It has a global presence with over 120,000 employees and offices in 130 countries.<sup>18</sup> The Danish Shipowners' Association, of which Mærsk is a member, is a trade organization which represents the Danish shipping industry when dealing with governments and organizations nationally and internationally. Shipping is a major driver of the Danish economy: Danish shipping represents 17 percent of total Danish foreign-exchange earnings.<sup>19</sup> Approximately 10 percent of world trade is carried on Danish-operated vessels.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the shipping industry is vulnerable to international incidents, particularly piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Additionally, while climate change may allow for shorter shipping routes through the Arctic Sea, more shipping vessels, which may be unprepared for passage through these austere waters, make the Arctic Council's agreement to cooperate on Search and Rescue—reached on May 12, 2011 in Nuuk, Greenland—all the more important.

### *Immigration and Integration*

There are nearly 543,000 immigrants and second generation Danes in Denmark today, accounting for almost 10 percent of the population.<sup>21</sup> Immigration to Denmark has tripled over the past ten years while the number of individuals seeking asylum has decreased.<sup>22</sup> The demographics have also changed: Immigrants in the 1980s were primarily from Nordic and Western countries; today immigrants come primarily from non-Western countries, including Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia.<sup>23</sup> The increase in immigration can be attributed to freedom of

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<sup>17</sup> “Denmark in the Global Economy: Competitiveness Report 2010,” Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, Government of Denmark, 23 August 2010, p. 6-8. Available online: [http://www.oem.dk/resources/oem/publications/FE03AC2FA29144789354A84C40A7342F/978-87-786-2329-4-KER\\_UK/978-87-786-2329-4.pdf](http://www.oem.dk/resources/oem/publications/FE03AC2FA29144789354A84C40A7342F/978-87-786-2329-4-KER_UK/978-87-786-2329-4.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> “Careers,” Mærsk Line, Limited. Available online: <http://www.maersklinelimited.com/Working/careers.php>.

<sup>19</sup> “Annual Logbook 2011,” Danish Shipowners' Association, 11 May 2011, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, Government of Denmark, 14 June 2011.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

movement under the Schengen Agreement and an increase in migrants entering Denmark in pursuit of work and study. In contrast to the United States, few immigrants enter Denmark illegally.<sup>24</sup>

Increased immigration rates have necessitated that the Danish Government devote greater resources to integration. In 1999, Denmark became the first country in the world to establish an Integration Act with programs—paid for by the state—that provide free and compulsory language and job training opportunities.<sup>25</sup> The Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs reports that 60 percent of immigrant boys drop out of vocational education programs and 40 percent of immigrant children leave primary school without the qualifications needed for further education.<sup>26</sup> Because their families often cannot afford extracurricular participation fees, young immigrant boys face societal isolation. Special attention has been focused on this age and gender demographic, which may be more prone to radicalization as the young boys try to “discover a sense of identity and belonging,” in their new homelands.<sup>27</sup> The national action plan, “A Common and Safe Future,” aims to prevent extremist views and radicalization among young people through seven focus areas: direct contact with young people, inclusion based on rights and obligations, dialogue and information, democratic cohesion, efforts in vulnerable residential areas, special initiatives in prisons, and knowledge, cooperation and partnerships.<sup>28</sup>

Residency requirements and passage of a Danish language exam and citizenship test are preconditions for obtaining a permanent residence permit and Danish citizenship. In recent months, the Government has focused attention on those individuals entering Denmark on invalid visas. In response to an increase in cross-border crime, Denmark plans to augment the number of customs control officers at its border crossings. Other members of the European Union have viewed this increase in border security as stemming from concern over right-wing forces and economic and social difficulties in Europe.

In October 2011, the European Union will launch a biometric border control system. Danish systems will be linked with a centralized database, allowing for sharing fingerprints and facial recognition information amongst the EU member countries. Danish officials see this as a positive development with the potential to reduce the number of people entering Denmark on invalid/illegal visas and improve identification, particularly of terrorists trying to enter the country.

### *Energy and the Environment*

Denmark possesses oil and natural gas reserves concentrated in the North Sea and primarily uses coal for electricity generation. With a greater focus on renewable energy, however, wind power is increasingly used to meet electricity demand. The country began

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Kenan Malik, “Assimilation’s Failure, Terrorism’s Rise,” *The New York Times*, 6 July 2011.

<sup>28</sup> “A Common and Safe Future,” Government of Denmark, January 2009, p. 12. Available online: [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/58D048E7-0482-4AE8-99EB-928753EFC1F8/0/a\\_common\\_and\\_safe\\_future\\_danish\\_action\\_plan\\_to\\_prevent\\_extremism.pdf](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/58D048E7-0482-4AE8-99EB-928753EFC1F8/0/a_common_and_safe_future_danish_action_plan_to_prevent_extremism.pdf).

utilizing wind power during the 1980s and the industry has rapidly developed over the past 10-15 years. Today, the country is a leader in on and offshore wind power with over 5,000 wind turbines accounting for over 20 percent of electricity production.<sup>29</sup> The share of wind power contributing to electrical generation is only expected to increase with future energy production.<sup>30</sup> In February 2011, the Danish Government unveiled “Energy Strategy 2050,” which outlines how Denmark can be fossil fuel independent and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This plan requires a significant commitment to the pursuit of renewable energy, particularly biogas, biomass and wind.

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<sup>29</sup> “Key Figures & Statistics,” Danish Energy Agency. Available online: <http://www.ens.dk/en-US/supply/Renewable-energy/WindPower/Facts-about-Wind-Power/Key-figures-statistics/Sider/Forside.aspx>.

<sup>30</sup> “Energy Strategy 2050: From Oil and Gas to Green Energy,” Government of Denmark, February 2011, p. 18. Available online: <http://www.denmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2BD031EC-AD41-4564-B146-5549B273CC02/0/EnergyStrategy2050web.pdf>

## Sweden

### *Foreign Policy and International Relations*

Swedish society is described as moralistic and consensus-based; these values are a cornerstone of the country's domestic and foreign policies. No large reforms are made without rather broad consensus and with an eye toward the moral high road. Other countries, the United States included, view Sweden as an honest broker in terms of foreign policy. The country is a leader regionally, assuming chairmanship of the Arctic Council—an intergovernmental forum that promotes cooperation and coordination among the Arctic states—in May 2011 for a two-year term.

The country is not a member of NATO but is involved with the organization through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (the political framework of the PfP). The Partnership for Peace allows for cooperation between NATO and non-NATO members in response to international crises, however, the content and extent of cooperation is the decision of the participating nation. This flexibility has allowed Sweden to choose its level of involvement based on national concerns and interests. Sweden is a member of the European Union but is not a member of the Eurozone, keeping the Swedish krona as the currency. Swedish support for the United Nations is strong. The country has participated in several UN peacekeeping operations and, as of March 2011, had personnel deployed to five UN missions: the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), UN Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East (UNTSO), and the UN Missions in Sudan (UNMIS).<sup>31</sup> In 2010, approximately one percent of Sweden's estimated gross national income (GNI) was devoted to the development cooperation budget.<sup>32</sup>

Sweden has moved beyond its traditional policy of neutrality; in a deal worth approximately US\$ 600 million, the Swedish Government recently purchased 15 Blackhawk helicopters from the United States in order to decrease its reliance on other nations' Air Forces.<sup>33</sup> Sweden is actively involved internationally through NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and the country also recently contributed eight Gripen fighter planes to NATO's operation in Libya. The Swedish Armed Forces and the US military are partners with significant engagement and our countries enjoy strong relations.

Today's threats are international in nature and require a global response. As a member of the European Union, Sweden takes an active role in maintaining Europe's collective security as a participant in European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP). The Swedish military is being used more extensively abroad, particularly in creating and maintaining security and stability through the United Nations. Within Sweden, al-Shabaab—a Somali Islamist organization with ties to al-Qaeda—has increased its recruitment efforts. In response, the

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<sup>31</sup> Swedish Armed Forces, March 2011. Available online: <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/Forces-abroad/>.

<sup>32</sup> "Budget and Objectives: International Development Cooperation," Government of Sweden. Available online: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/3102/a/114382>.

<sup>33</sup> Presentation by the US Embassy - Stockholm, 16 June 2011.

Swedish Secret Police and law enforcement officials have stepped up their efforts to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of youth and the breeding of jihadists.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Economy*

The Swedish economy places Sweden among the strongest nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>35</sup> Four primary factors account for the strength of the Swedish economy:

- 1) A commitment to sound public finances based on an expenditure ceiling, multiannual surplus targets, a balanced budget requirement, and a strong budget process
- 2) Making work pay again through earned income tax benefits
- 3) Pro-growth structural reform, and
- 4) Education and strengthening the employment prospects for vulnerable groups

The fiscal policy framework sets forth an annual surplus target of one percent that is renewed each year. Success has been driven by structural reforms and strong public finances during crises as well as a high level of public support and trust for the Government. In 2011, the economy is forecasted to grow at a rate of four percent.<sup>36</sup>

Swedes place a great deal of trust in the Government and allow large shares of the economy to be channeled through the state. Strong public finances have resulted in high employment and low rates of poverty. In return for high taxes (Swedes are currently taxed at a rate of 46 percent),<sup>37</sup> the state provides free education and healthcare. Workers are entitled to five to six weeks of paid vacation and generous maternal and paternal leave is awarded. The extensive welfare state and the high cost of labor makes Sweden a challenging place to do business, despite the Swedes' good business ethic. The US Embassy - Stockholm showcases American products in the hopes of increasing the number of US companies exporting to Sweden.

Interlocutors voiced concern over the future of the Swedish economy in light of a number of factors. They feared that other countries' persistent and large deficits will complicate future expansionary fiscal policy, sovereign debt problems will create uncertainty, and world trade competition will increase. In response, western companies will have to work harder to counter China's increasing share of world trade.<sup>38</sup> Sweden has moved from a pay-as-you-go pension system to a semi-privatized system that grows at the same pace as the economy, guaranteeing that what Swedes pay in is what they get out.<sup>39</sup> The rapidly-aging Swedish population will pose challenges, requiring greater numbers of people paying into the pension system in order to adequately support the country's extensive welfare state.

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<sup>34</sup> "Swedes Answer Call for Somali Jihad," *Nordstjernen*, 30 January 2010. Available online: <http://www.nordstjernen.com/news/briefs/1897/>.

<sup>35</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Sweden, 16 June 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Presentation by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 17 June 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Sweden, 16 June 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Sweden, 16 June 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Presentation by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 17 June 2011.

## *Immigration and Integration*

Sweden receives and accepts large numbers of immigrants, many of whom are well-educated migrants or refugees seeking asylum on political grounds. To become a naturalized citizen, immigrants must reside in Sweden for five years. They may also qualify for refugee asylum if they meet the qualifications for refugee status under the Geneva Convention. Some interlocutors stated that Sweden's liberal immigration policy may be viewed as a way of atoning for the country's neutrality during World War II. With low unemployment (three percent), immigrants are the foundation of the Swedish labor force and the ongoing acceptance and integration of immigrants is vital to the continued growth of Sweden's economy.

According to a migration report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), immigration to Sweden reached a record high of 102,000 in 2009, the most recent year for which complete data are available.<sup>40</sup> It is estimated that 15 percent of the Swedish population is born abroad and nearly 19 percent of the population has foreign background.<sup>41</sup> Within the County of Stockholm alone, residents have immigrated from 187 countries.<sup>42</sup>

Refugees seeking asylum post World War II were primarily of Jewish descent; today, many come from the Middle East to escape ongoing conflict. Sweden has promoted multiculturalism but waves of immigrants of different ethnicities, in combination with high unemployment among immigrant populations, have led to greater support for far-right political parties such as the Sweden Democrats. In 2010, the Sweden Democrats earned most of their votes from Swedes residing in rural areas with significant immigrant populations.<sup>43</sup> Muslims feel that "Islamophobia is a growing issue," and another ingredient in anti-immigration discontent.<sup>44</sup> Hate crimes and ethnic divisions have risen in recent years in Malmö, Sweden's third largest city.<sup>45</sup> In 2009, British media sources reported that a Jewish chapel in Malmö had been set aflame, Jewish cemeteries had been desecrated, and that Jews were the targets of abuse.<sup>46</sup> The same year, the windows of a mosque were smashed and there were a string of racist shootings in which "dark skinned Swedes or immigrants" were targeted.<sup>47</sup>

Countrywide, there have been several challenges in effectively integrating the immigrant population; this process is referred to as "The Swedish Dilemma." Most immigrants stick with

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<sup>40</sup> "International Migration Outlook 2011," Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 12 July 2011, p. 324. Available online: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/36/29/48364350.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> "Press Release from Statistics Sweden," Statistics Sweden, 22 December 2010. Available online: [http://www.scb.se/Pages/PressRelease\\_\\_\\_305658.aspx](http://www.scb.se/Pages/PressRelease___305658.aspx).

<sup>42</sup> "One Step Ahead: Stockholm-Sweden's Driving Force," County Administrative Board, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Faiola, "Anti-Muslim Feelings Propel Right Wing in Europe," *The Washington Post*, 26 October 2010. Available online: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/25/AR2010102505601.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Suzanne Daley, "Swedes Begin to Question Liberal Migration Tenets," *The New York Times*, 26 February 2011. Available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/world/europe/27sweden.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>45</sup> Nick Meo, "Jews Leave City After Sharp Rise in Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes," *The Telegraph*, 21 February 2010. Available online: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/7278532/Jews-leave-Swedish-city-after-sharp-rise-in-anti-Semitic-hate-crimes.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Brown, "Malmö Shootings: Swedish Man Charged on Six Accounts," *The Guardian*, 9 November 2010. Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/09/malmo-shootings-man-charged>.

people of their own ethnicity upon arrival in Sweden, which has made assimilation into society difficult. While the state has made progress in putting immigrants to work and into training programs, the employment gap between people born in Sweden and those born outside the country is large. The Government recognizes the challenge of integration and has placed immigrants immediately into training programs, provided courses that teach Swedish on the job, and increased benefits for those immigrants that begin work immediately after arriving in country. The state has attempted to forge a strong relationship with civil society to improve acceptance of the immigrant population and reduce tension and conflict. Interlocutors stated that the state has become fairly good at integration but that the process still takes too long.

### *Energy and the Environment*

Sweden was an oil dependent country through the 1970s, when the global oil crisis caused Swedes to question their reliance on foreign oil. In 1991, Sweden was the first country in the world to impose a carbon tax, which levied an environmental tax on the carbon present in fossil fuels. This was a second turning point for Sweden's energy industry, spurring the move from non-renewable fuel sources to biomass. Emitters primarily pay the high carbon tax of approximately \$150 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which has faced some resistance from the business sector. The tax has done little to stymie the Swedish economy as it is levied on a commodity that the government deemed would cause the least economic disruption. Overall, Sweden's carbon tax is considered a success. Heat generation has largely shifted from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources. Sweden thus serves as a model country that has effectively managed the environment while maintaining strong growth.

Swedish energy is predominately nuclear and hydro, allowing for virtually carbon-free energy generation. The nuclear program began in the 1960s when climate change was not on the national agenda—the pursuit of inexpensive electricity sources was the key objective. In a 1980 referendum the year following the 1979 incident at Three Mile Island, Swedes decided to continue expanding the nuclear energy industry, primarily because there was not another viable energy alternative. Swedish energy policy has resulted in historically cheap and competitive energy prices, particularly electricity, which has negated the interest in phasing out nuclear energy generation. Despite recent events in Japan, interlocutors did not anticipate a change in Swedish nuclear policy. They did, however, voice concern over Germany's recent decision to phase out nuclear energy generation, fearing this will affect all of Europe and result in higher energy costs. This decision may also necessitate a recalculation in how to reach international renewable energy and climate change targets.

Deregulation led to a joint market for trading electric power, known as Nord Pool Spot, now the largest market for electrical energy in the world. Denmark, Norway, Finland, Estonia and Sweden all participate in this electrical energy market. Within Sweden, there are two privately-held electricity companies and one that is publically-owned, which allows for price competition and lower electricity rates.

In Sweden, there is wide support and acceptance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 1990 findings in support of global warming. Since 2006, climate change has become a major issue, and it only increased in prominence in the lead up to the

Copenhagen conference of 2009. International climate change negotiations have produced few results through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which entered into force March 21, 1994.<sup>48</sup> This may be due in part to the nature of the Convention, under which national governments share information on policies and best practices and encourage each other to initiate strategies to respond to climate change issues. In contrast, the Kyoto Protocol, adopted on December 11, 1997 at the third Conference to the Parties of the UNFCCC, is a commitment by signatory nations to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>49</sup>

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (FORES), a think tank specializing in environmental, immigration, entrepreneurship, labor market and civil and individual rights issues. FORES representatives felt that international institutions have done a “poor” job on climate change because agreements require follow up at every stage of the process in order to ensure implementation. Sweden has accepted and agreed to implementation of the European Union’s 20-20-20 targets, which call for cutting greenhouse gases by 20 percent, reducing energy consumption by 20 percent through increased energy efficiency, and meeting 20 percent of energy needs through renewable sources, all by the year 2020. Sweden stands out as a country which has been able to balance strong economic growth with effective environmental management with an eye toward sustainability.

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<sup>48</sup> Presentation by the Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (FORES), 16 June 2011.

<sup>49</sup> “Fact Sheet: The Kyoto Protocol,” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, February 2011. Available online: [http://unfccc.int/press/fact\\_sheets/items/4977.php](http://unfccc.int/press/fact_sheets/items/4977.php).

## Norway

### *Foreign Policy and International Relations*

Norway sees itself in four ways: Nordic, European, transatlantic and global. The Norwegian worldview—as a small country in a rapidly-changing world—has led to a policy of building long term relations with emerging powers, including Brazil and India. The Norwegian Government has taken great efforts to engage these countries and others in the areas of human rights, trade and development, and has taken a leadership role in several international agreements focused on these areas.

The country places high importance on the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. Norway is also actively involved in NATO and recently contributed fighter planes to the operations in Libya. The Norwegian Government chose to become involved in the Libya campaign, viewing the issue through a humanitarian crisis lens; it is anticipated that they will stay the course in Libya until the end of the campaign. Interlocutors highlighted that Norway's sound public management of oil funds might serve as a potential model for Libya.<sup>50</sup>

United States officials stated that Norway has a desire to always be a part of an international mission, whether under the auspices of the United Nations, NATO or the European Union. However, Norway has a complicated relationship with the European Union. The country is not a member and has no plans to join in the near future, but quickly associates with EU decisions and is the fifth most compliant nation in terms of adhering to EU directives.<sup>51</sup> For example, Norway is connected to the Schengen Agreement. Although the country lacks a vote in the European Union, it makes an effort to influence the body's thinking and its policy decisions.

The High North is the Norwegian Government's top foreign policy priority.<sup>52</sup> Norway and Russia recently reached a maritime delimitation agreement in the High North after 40 years of negotiation, which the Norwegian Government sees as an important precedent.<sup>53</sup> There is a strong desire on the part of the Norwegian Government to increase international awareness of the Arctic Ocean, which connects North America, Asia and Europe. Melting ice has made this area more commercially attractive; sailing time is greatly shortened and the region potentially has enormous natural resources which could be exploited.

Norway's security outlook is "Atlantic" in that it has identified with the United States and the United Kingdom since World War II. NATO is seen as highly relevant because Norway is not a member of the European Union. Article V of the NATO charter, in which an armed attack on one is an attack on all, governs the Norwegian Government's relationship with NATO. The Government genuinely feels that if Norway's interests in the High North were threatened, NATO

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<sup>50</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway, 20 June 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Presentation by the US Embassy - Oslo, 20 June 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Jonas Gahr Støre, "Arctic State," *The Parliament Magazine: Politics, Policy and People*, Issue 325, 4 April 2011. Available online: [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/speeches\\_foreign/2011/arctic\\_state.html?id=637863](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/speeches_foreign/2011/arctic_state.html?id=637863).

<sup>53</sup> "Norway and Russia Ratify Treaty on Maritime Delimitation," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway, 7 June 2011. Available online: [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/press/news/2011/maritie\\_delimitation.html?id=646614](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/press/news/2011/maritie_delimitation.html?id=646614).

forces under the auspices of Article V would come to the country's assistance. While ties with Russia have been strengthened, the relationship between Norway and Russia continues to be one of wariness.<sup>54</sup>

The Norwegian defense budget is steadily increasing as the Armed Forces modernize and become more competent. The Norwegian military is sophisticated and technologically advanced. The United States and Norway maintain a strong military-to-military relationship and actively coordinate on NATO operations. Many Norwegian pilots and officers attend US Air Force and Army flight and military schools, and the Norwegian Special Forces train with other countries.<sup>55</sup> The challenge for US-Norway military cooperation is interoperability, since Norway utilizes the best and newest equipment. Norway is well integrated in NATO and a willing partner, with the Joint Warfare Center of NATO located in Stavanger, Norway.

While the terrorism threat level in Norway is low, the changing domestic and international situation led the Government to issue a Counterterrorism Action Plan in December 2010. The plan, which attempts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, focuses on four major areas: knowledge and information, strengthening the authorities' cooperation, strengthening dialogue, and greater involvement and support to vulnerable and at-risk persons. Because radicalism and extremism are seen as multisectoral, several government departments and ministries work on these issues.

President Obama has recognized Norway as a strong US partner, particularly in Afghanistan where the country has supplied troops since 2002. Interlocutors expressed an interest in the international community undertaking a greater role in Afghanistan and acknowledging that solutions must be addressed in a political context and through civil society. Norway places significant emphasis on development support, allocating approximately one percent of gross national product (GNP) to development cooperation aimed at humanitarian aid, improving the long-term development outlook through UN and bilateral aid program support, and supporting civil society development through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

### *The Economy*

Norway's petroleum industry represents 26 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>56</sup> Norway is also active in the seafood, maritime, forestry, and hydro electric industries. Unemployment is low at approximately three percent and highly-skilled immigrants are readily sought for development of the High North and the technology and engineering sectors.<sup>57</sup> Recruitment is difficult in Norway because the country is rich but egalitarian, meaning that workers are paid the same as they would be in other countries but taxed at a higher rate. There is also no exemption from paying taxes in Norway for non-citizens working in country.

In abiding by the principles of the European Union, Norway adheres to the four freedoms: free movement of labor within the European Union (approximately 450 million

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<sup>54</sup> Presentation by the US Embassy - Oslo, 20 June 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Presentation by Statoil, 20 June 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Presentation by the Norwegian Confederation of Industry (NHO), 22 June 2011.

people), free movement of services, free movement of goods and free movement of capital. The free movement of labor has posed some challenges in Norway. Immigrants have a low tendency to stay in the workforce and a high tendency to enter the Norwegian welfare state with its abundant benefits. There is fear that if the economy were to undergo a downturn, migrant forces could cause social unrest.

The Norwegian Government exercises enormous discipline with regard to the Government Pension Fund. Surplus income from the petroleum industry is placed into this fund, now the largest sovereign fund in the world, and invested, primarily in the international stock market. The fund represents the security of the Norwegian welfare state for the next generation and is viewed as a contract with the future. As such, the Government has decided that no more than four percent of the fund may be used in a given year toward offsetting the state budget and government spending. Additionally, all the political parties in Parliament have agreed that revenues from the North Sea will be placed in the pension fund instead of being put toward the budget.<sup>58</sup>

### *Immigration and Integration*

Norway experienced its highest immigration rates ever in 2010, in which 73,850 immigrations were registered.<sup>59</sup> Actual immigration accounts for .9 percent of population growth (1.3 percent annually).<sup>60</sup> High levels of immigration have dramatically changed Norway's demographics: The city of Oslo is now 20-25 percent first generation immigrant and 3.5 percent of the Norwegian population is Islamic.<sup>61</sup> The number of foreigners seeking asylum fell in 2010 in response to a crackdown on asylum seekers.<sup>62</sup>

Integration challenges remain under the radar in Norway and have not fully erupted.<sup>63</sup> Various ministries are involved in meeting targets for social inclusion of the immigrant population with the Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion maintaining overriding policy responsibility. Immigration plans are focused on family reintegration while integration efforts are outreach-based, and include programs to advance English language skills.

### *Energy and the Environment*

Statoil is one of the largest companies in Norway. It has a global reach with a presence in 34 countries including Angola and Brazil. While 67 percent of the company is owned by the Norwegian state, Statoil operates independently of the Government. According to a 2009

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<sup>58</sup> Presentation by the Norwegian Confederation of Industry, 22 June 2011.

<sup>59</sup> "Highest Immigration Ever in 2010," Statistics Denmark, 5 May 2011. Available online: [http://www.ssb.no/innvutv\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/innvutv_en/).

<sup>60</sup> Presentation by the Norwegian Confederation of Industry, 22 June 2011.

<sup>61</sup> Presentation by the US Embassy - Oslo, 20 June 2011.

<sup>62</sup> "Fewer Asylum Seekers to Norway: Annual Report 2010," Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 7 April 2011. Available online: <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Annual-Report-2010/Asylum-and-reception-centres/Fewer-asylum-seekers-to-Norway/>.

<sup>63</sup> Presentation by the US Embassy - Oslo, 20 June 2011. The tragic events of July 22, 2011, one month after the delegation's departure, brought these events to the fore.

estimate, the company produces nearly two million barrels of oil equivalent per day and is one of the largest sellers of crude oil in the world.<sup>64</sup> It is the second largest exporter of gas to Europe.

Statoil realizes that the same level of oil production will be necessary in 2020 as today because the demand for gas will increase in Europe, despite decreasing production capacity. While Statoil's primary business is and will remain oil and gas, the company is pursuing renewable energy development in areas of competence. For example, Statoil has developed the first offshore floating windmill in the world, utilizing the strength and stability of offshore wind as an energy resource. Additionally, Statoil is working to decrease its carbon footprint by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> output.

Presently 75 percent of energy demand in Norway is covered by fossil fuels.<sup>65</sup> Despite the pursuit of renewable energy sources, the Norwegian Government anticipates the same energy demand in the year 2035. The Government is undertaking the following initiatives in order to address this reality, including:

- Expanding gas exploration, which is viewed as a more benign fossil fuel than oil or coal
- Undertaking a different approach to energy efficiency
- Producing and consuming hydrocarbons and fossil fuels in a friendlier manner, and
- Increasing efforts to find renewable energy sources that stand the life cycle test and account for the whole environmental cost factor.

Norway is the seventh largest exporter of oil and gas in the world and the world's fifth largest exporter of carbon products. The Government sees gas as a bridge fuel and clean export, and Norway possesses the largest offshore gas pipeline grid in the world. The oil and gas industry is Norway's economic and industrial engine, accounting for almost one half of exports. Goods and services related to the oil and gas industries are also highly exported. The country's petroleum investment fund, known as the Government Pension Fund, is the largest in the world (3.3 billion Norwegian kroner, nearly US\$ 600 billion). Norway also places a strong emphasis on renewable energy sources and is the sixth largest producer of hydropower in the world. Approximately 97 percent of Norway's installed electricity capacity is hydro.<sup>66</sup>

Norway is a signatory of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and sees United States' ratification as important for delineating its territorial waters and areas of the High North. The United States observes the treaty in practice but without ratification, there is fear that United States' claims may not be recognized. Several officials urged United States' ratification of the Convention. The Ministry of the Environment views climate issues as a global problem requiring a global solution through international agreements. To solve the climate issue, there will have to be incentives that encourage developing countries to pursue environmentally-friendly development objectives.

Norway's Ministry of the Environment has focused attention on several core areas, particularly the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).

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<sup>64</sup> Presentation by Statoil, 20 June 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Government of Norway, 22 June 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

According to estimates, one-fifth of global greenhouse gases come from forest degradation and deforestation.<sup>67</sup> Within the past 60 years, one-half of the world's rainforests have been deforested; continuing at this rate, in only four years time, rainforests will be scattered, likely causing water scarcity issues in Africa, South America, and Central Asia.<sup>68</sup> To reduce emission from deforestation and degradation, Norway has pledged US\$ 1 billion for the period 2010-2012 through the International Climate and Forest Initiative. The Ministry of the Environment is active in World Bank, African Development Bank and United Nations projects' countering deforestation and forest degradation in over 40 countries.<sup>69</sup>

A second area in which Norway's Ministry of Environment has focused is biodiversity. Biodiversity, or the various living things within a given area, has often not been a part of the United Nations' Climate Change negotiations because of the difficulty in measuring and quantifying loss. There is now broad consensus that biodiversity must be included in new climate agreements. In 2006, Norway established national targets, which included avoiding infrastructure development in endangered habitats and the protection of certain areas for future generations, with the aim of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.<sup>70</sup> More recently, the country has focused on collaborating with other nations, particularly through the establishment of research, development and training centers and multilateral agreements, to prevent biodiversity loss. On May 12, 2011, Norway signed the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which "will strengthen efforts to protect biological diversity and achieve the Millennium Development Goals."<sup>71</sup>

Third, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recommended that the global temperature increase due to global warming be kept to two percent of industrial levels; Norway stands by this goal, has pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by reducing gas emissions 100 percent by 2050.<sup>72</sup> Norway is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions nationally and internationally.

Lastly, the Arctic Ocean and High North are areas for opportunity and exploitation as a result of climate change. Permafrost temperatures are steadily increasing, ice thickness is decreasing, and experts estimate that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free during the summer within the next ten years.<sup>73</sup> A melting Arctic offers new possibilities for the exploitation of minerals and raw materials, while offering significant commercial advantages, including new and shorter sea routes and tourism opportunities. Norwegian officials felt strongly that competition for resources must be managed in a way that safeguards this area for future generations while keeping the High North an area of low tension. Fisheries, petroleum development and an increase in traffic

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<sup>67</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Norway, 21 June 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> "Biodiversity," Ministry of the Environment, Government of Norway, 16 June 2006. Available online: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/md/Selected-topics/biodiversity.html?id=1298>.

<sup>71</sup> "Norway Signs the Nagoya Protocol," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway, 12 May 2011. Available online: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/pressemeldinger/2011/norge-undertegnet-nagoya-protokollen.html?id=642905>.

<sup>72</sup> "Binding Climate Policy," Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Norway, 2 November 2010. Available online: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/aktuelle-temaer5/klima/klimapolitikk.html?id=622495>.

<sup>73</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of the Environment, 21 June 2011.

in the Barents Sea, coastal areas and the continental shelf are also important policy concerns for Norway.<sup>74</sup>

Norway is making strides in securing and protecting the High North, Arctic and Barents regions through bilateral agreements, the legal framework of the Law of the Sea and, research and development programs. Norwegian officials were optimistic that the June 7, 2011 ratification of the Treaty on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean with Russia would build a precedent for international awareness and cooperation in the Arctic region.<sup>75</sup> Delineation of this “gray zone” allows for exploration in an area believed to contain significant oil and gas reserves. The Treaty was hailed as particularly significant following over 40 years of negotiation and was viewed as a win-win for both parties.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Presentation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway, 20 June 2011.

## Conclusions

The main outcome of the Council's mission was to reaffirm the strong and important relationship that the United States has with her allies in Scandinavia while better understanding what makes these countries significant United States' partners and international and regional leaders. This outcome was realized and delegates were reenergized by the strength, depth and breadth of the United States' ties with Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The mutually-beneficial, collaborative relationship between our countries is important and the strong ties between the US embassies in each country and each nation's respective government merit recognition.

Denmark, Sweden and Norway are leaders in its own right: Denmark in the field of development assistance, Sweden in fiscal and economic responsibility and Norway in pursuing environmental initiatives for the global good. All three countries have respective strengths in the energy industry: wind, power, nuclear energy and the use of fossil fuels with a focus on CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions.

Nearly every European country's demography has been transformed by immigrant populations since the establishment of the Schengen Area in 1995. Denmark, Sweden and Norway are no different: They face challenges with regard to immigration and effective integration of immigrant populations. However, all three have recognized this issue and are making efforts to ensure immigrant populations receive necessary social services and government support. In so many countries, governments do not or cannot meet the needs of their populations. The governments in Denmark, Sweden and Norway are responsive to their citizens and provide for their needs through the welfare state and extensive social services. At the same time, these governments are heavily invested in the global good and improving the lives of people around the world.

Strengthening awareness among the American public of the strong relations that exist between the United States and Denmark, Sweden and Norway is important. The United States' relationship with each country is deep and committed, as demonstrated through our military cooperation in Afghanistan through NATO and the cross-training and interoperability between our Armed Forces. Denmark, Sweden and Norway are leaders internationally and regionally and have proven their loyalty to multilateral institutions by promoting environmental awareness, human rights and the maintenance of the Rule of Law. Denmark, Sweden and Norway's achievements and contributions to the global good are significant and the United States values the extensive and devoted relationship it enjoys with these three Nordic countries.