CYBER SECURITY AND
BUSINESS CONTINUITY

SCENARIO 1:
US Disengagement from Europe

Henrik Henriksen looked at his outlook calendar. He had 30 minutes before his next meeting, a coordination call amongst the Ministry of Defence budget forecasting team, just enough time for a quick walk across the street for a coffee. When Henrik had joined the Ministry 13 years prior, he never would have imagined that 16.30 meetings would become a regular feature in his workday, or that European NATO countries, including Denmark, would scramble to reach a 5% GDP target.

But this was the reality in 2026. Increased defence spending was the priority for most of Europe. Since Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 election, America had abandoned its traditional relationship with Europe, imposing stiff tariffs and retreating from longstanding security partnerships. The changes in America impacted most Danish businesses, at least indirectly. The new universal trade tariffs of up to 50% hit EU exports to the US, including the $6.46 billion in Danish exports to the US. This was forecast to negatively impact the pharmaceutical, optical, and precision machining industries, and many Danes worried about their long-term job security.

Legislative complexities meant the United States hadn't left NATO, but it had dramatically reduced its contribution to European security to redirect funds and troops to the Indo-Pacific. American troops withdrew from Germany, Italy, the UK, and Lithuania, reassigned to Hawaii, Guam, South Korea, and Taiwan. It was uncertain what role the US would continue to play in the alliance's nuclear sharing, and how much participation they would maintain in training exercises.

Along with reduced funding, America had relinquished the role of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). The ensuing leadership vacuum within NATO meant that defence in Europe was becoming increasingly fragmented and regionalised. Germany and France squabbled about leadership of a common European foreign and defence programme. Spain, Italy and Greece focused their defence on the Mediterranean. Hungary left the integrated command structure, opting to cultivate closer relationships with Turkey, Russia and China. The Nordic and Baltic countries, along with Canada and the UK cooperated on the defence of the Baltic Sea and the far North.

Canada, Australia and the UK increasingly sought to formalise intelligence-sharing agreements with the Nordics. The Five Eyes network had been disbanded after a series of security breaches, including a New Zealand official losing intelligence briefing materials on a trip to Hanoi, and the US Secretary of Defence accidentally sharing technical details of a North American missile defen-

ce system with a reporter from Tass. Without US intelligence, however, Denmark and its counterparts struggled to gather enough information on Russian activities.

Since the Russia-Ukraine ceasefire of December 2025, The Nordic and Baltic states were under near-constant sub-threshold attacks. The eight countries were subject to a sustained disinformation campaign and frequent cyber aggressions on banking systems, utility providers, and mobile phone networks, as well as defence manufacturing firms, shipping and logistics companies. There was constant concern that Russia would expand its cyber-attacks to offshore windfarms, and cripple electricity supply. Funding for additional civil sector cybersecurity training was Henrik's contribution to the meeting this afternoon, and he knew the budget increase would be approved as it was such a significant regional concern.

Henrik spoke to his Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish counterparts almost daily. They shared similar problems: a perennial shortage of regular troops, and the challenges in increasing reserve forces and civil defence forces. From 2033 onwards, two years of national service would be compulsory after completion of secondary school, followed by 15 years of reserve or civil defence service. Fortunately, the populations took military service seriously and adapted to these changes, but there was only so much force-generation capacity within small populations with low birth rates.

Perhaps the biggest, most evident change was the dramatic shift in spending priorities. The Danish government announced widespread cuts to the social welfare system, to come into effect by 2030. The state pension age would rise to 75, childcare would no longer be subsidised for households with an income over DKK 750 000, and university students would have to pay fees for their degrees. Defence would be the government's priority spending area.

Henrik exited the three airlock doors, and then to the personal electronics lockers to get his phone. These were new security measures introduced six months before, due to concerns that the ministry was too accessible and that personal phones posed a cyber espionage risk. He was not allowed to download apps like Tiktok or even Facebook messenger or Whatsapp, in case his messages could be accessed by a hostile party. He had the old iPhone 16, but couldn't upgrade to the latest software, as it contained features that were not accessible on the European market. The US had stormed ahead with artificial intelligence development to outpace Chinese innovation. However, most of the new AI features remained stuck in EU regulatory reviews.

He briefly glanced at the news notification popping up on his phone screen. There was a sensational story about US military activity in the waters beneath the Davis and Denmark Straits. It was another misinformation incident, of the sort that had become much more frequent since the end of the Russia-Ukraine war. Most were so sophisticated, it was hard to discern truth from fabrication, fact from fiction. This one, however, was bound to provoke a strong reaction in the upcoming meeting.

US Disengagement from Europe Potential risks for business
1. What are the key risk factors and vulnerabilities in this scenario?
2. What risks does this scenario pose to Danish businesses?
3. What vulnerabilities affect your business?
4. What mitigation, if any, has your business considered or implemented?