

Federick Doeser, *In search of security after the collapse of the Soviet Union Foreign policy change in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, 1988-1993* (Stockholm Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2008).

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The present work is Frederik Doeser's academic dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at Stockholm University, publicly defended in June 2008. The purpose of the study, as the author affirms in the introduction, was to explain the evolution of the foreign policy of Denmark, Finland and Sweden with regard to western security cooperation between 1988 and 1993. The study analyzes the foreign policy change in these three states at the end of the Cold War with regard to the ongoing security cooperation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Western European Union and to the proposal for security cooperation within the European Community and the emerging European Union.

The study is divided in seven chapters. Chapter two presents the external political perspective related to previous theoretical research on the linkage between the external political environment and foreign policy, and defines a number of independent variables and elaborates on the expectations that follow from these theoretical premises. In chapter three the author presents the domestic political perspective, provides an overview of previous theoretical research and defines a number of theoretical variables and discusses the expectations that follow from the theoretical premises of this perspective. In chapter four the author elaborates on how he intends to link the two theoretical perspectives to the empirical material. Chapters from five to seven investigate the evolution of security cooperation policy in Denmark, Finland and Sweden between 1988 and 1993. The final chapter compares the findings of the three empirical studies, evaluates the theory testing approach of the study, integrates the findings from the external and domestic political analyses and elaborates on some implications for further research.

The study test two theoretical perspectives on the security cooperation policies of these three small states: the external and the domestic political perspective. In a large body of literature the change in states' foreign policy is seen as responsive to the changes of the international system rather to domestic political pressures. Doeser demonstrates in this study also the importance of the domestic politics in foreign

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policy making. In studying the relationship between the environment and foreign policy change, the author applies a perceptual approach, which means that he explains foreign policy action on the basis of the perception the actors have of the environment. The term “environment” is used in this study “as an analytical entity consisting of all the human and nonhuman phenomena that exist external to a government; it has both external and domestic dimensions, with the *external political environment* referring to the human and nonhuman phenomena located external to the geographic space of the government’s own country and the *domestic political environment* referring to those phenomena located external to government but exist within the geographic space of its own country”.

After a short overview of the Danish, Finnish and Swedish foreign policy for the period previous to 1988, the author investigates the foreign policy change of these three states at the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, all these three states sought the greatest possible freedom of action in their security cooperation with the west. The change in the international system and the characteristics of the domestic environments determined a shift in the foreign policy of the three nations at the end of the 1980s. In mid-1988, Denmark ended the footnote policy and the government shifted towards a deeper commitment to transatlantic security cooperation. The main external political reason for the change in policy was the government fear that NATO’s security guarantee could become less secure if Denmark appeared as a disloyal member. The domestic political factors that influenced the change of the foreign policy were changes in political party opposition and in public opposition. The Danish government attempted to change again the foreign policy in 1990 and 1992, but the results were insignificant because, despite the alternation in the external political environment, domestic factors were in the end more important than the external ones. In other words, the government was not able to change Denmark’s security cooperation policy due to the constraints of the domestic environment.

In Finnish case, the government perceived the external environment as being the most important factor for bringing about a gradual change in Finland’s security cooperation policy. However, domestic political factors mattered as well. The policy change involved a desire to increase Finland’s territorial security through political alignment with the EU while keeping other options opened, such as Western European Union and NATO membership, as well as contributing to the building up of EU crisis management and peacekeeping. The main external factors that influenced this shift in foreign policy were system polarity, the degree of tension and the USSR perceived as a threat, the most important factor being the last one. Domestic factors also contributed to the timing and effect of change: the existence of polarization over the EU issue within the government delayed a decision on the matter before consensus could be reached in February-March 1992.

In the case of Sweden the gradual change in security cooperation policy started in October 1991 as a result of a shift in the composition of the government which brought new individuals into the foreign policy decision-making process, who had different perceptions about the implications of change in the external political environment on Sweden’s foreign policy than had their predecessors. Both the external and the internal factors influenced the change of the foreign policy line.

Among the three external political factors was the degree of threat posed by the Soviet Union. This was identified as the most important factor behind the change in policy, while the system factors were less important.

With this study Frederik Doezer contributes to two specific areas of the international relations research: the study of small state security and foreign policy and the study of foreign policy change. This study offers a new understanding of foreign policy change in Denmark, Finland and Sweden between 1988 and 1993 and on the basis of empirical findings, the next conclusions can be drawn, with regards to foreign policy change: a perceptual approach is needed in order to a state's specific responses to international political change; the domestic factors are not only important for foreign policy in general, but also for the evolution of security cooperation policy in small states under conditions of fundamental shift in the international system; it is possible to attribute some degree of relative explanatory power to external factors and to assign a range of different roles to domestic factors; governments of Western democratic small states pay relative equal attention to external and domestic considerations when making their foreign policies.