Occupation of Denmark 9 April 1940

- 4:15 am Surprise Attack – *Blitzkrieg*  
  (phone call from German ambassador at 4:00 am)

- Simultaneous with attack on Norway

- German troops invaded from land, sea & air
  
  Bombers overhead

  Battalion set from Ship into Copenhagen

- Danish government presented with German ultimatum

- No Danish forces prepared; only 14,500 Danish soldiers; old naval fleet; airforce bombed; ground skirmishes. 16 Danish causalities +

- Surrender to Germans within hours

**German military objectives**  
(*Weser-übung*, "Weser exercise"):  

- Needed air-fields in Northern Denmark

- Access to Norway’s naval bases

- Shipping of Swedish Iron-ore
“Policy of negotiation” – a slippery slope
April 9, 1940 – August 29, 1943:

Peter Munch, Foreign Minister
Thorvald Stauning, Prime Minister (replaced by Erik Scavenius)

- Munch protested violation of neutrality; govt. “had decided in view of occupation, to arrange conditions in the country”
- No agreement with Germans, only “ad hoc solutions.”

Aims of policy of negotiation ("cooperation" or perhaps "collaboration"):

- Allowed Danish govt. to stay in power:
- Sustained the Fiction of Danish sovereignty

- Denmark continued to maintain neutrality (although violated); while territory occupied by a belligerent power
- New National government (with strong coalition of four parties in parliament formed) promised Germany cooperation if allowed autonomy.

- Danish govt agreed on 3 limits to negotiations with Germans:
  (no violation of democratic nature of govt.; no Danish participation in War; no anti-Jewish legislation)

=Unique position; not Resistance, not Collaboration; not neutrality. No precedence in International law.
Policy objectives for Danes:
• Avoided active Danish participation in War

• Sought to prevent or delay introduction of Nazi rule in Denmark

German advantages:
• Unchallenged control of Denmark with few troops & administrators

• Military base for operations in Norway

• Export of Danish agricultural products to feed the Reich

• P.R. for Denmark: Served as “Model Protectorate”
  Winston Churchill: “the gangsters’ canary birds”
  (quote by Karen Blixen)

Disadvantages of Policy:
• A slippery slope of concessions to German demands.

• Breeches of Democracy:
  Nov. 1941; Internment of leading Danish Communists

• Legal Jurisdiction unclear.

• Gradual loss of loyalty of populace;
• Perception of Denmark by Allies; nearly excluded from League of Nations after WWII.

National Symbols and Sentiments:

• Alsang (Community singing in public places)

• Popularity of Monarch; King Christian X

• Notion of “Passive Resistance”

• Early Resistance and acts of sabotage.