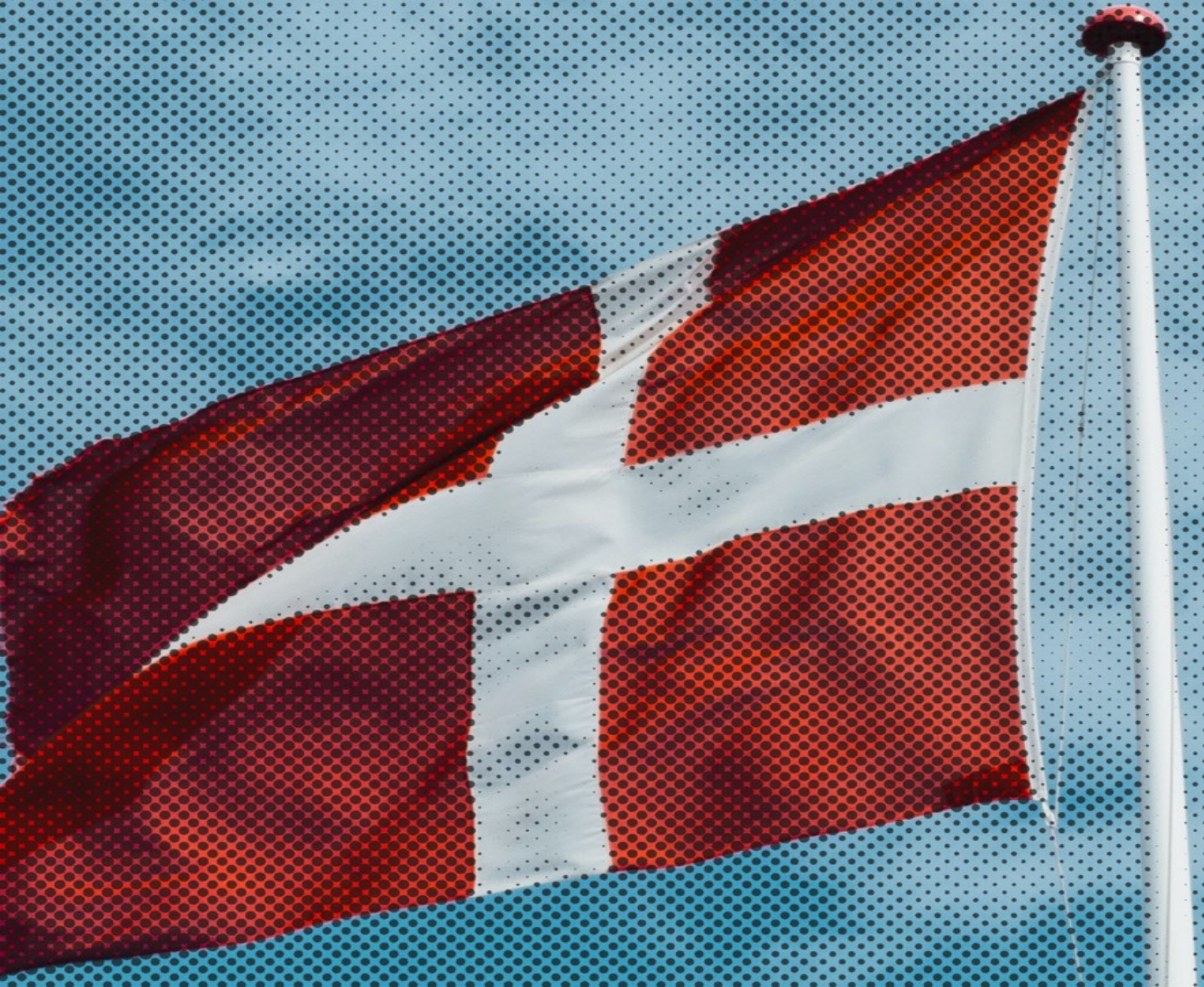


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*Denmark and
Germany*

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Mr. Speaker,—Some of the longest and most disastrous wars of modern Europe have been wars of succession. The Thirty Years' War was a war of succession. It arose from a dispute respecting the inheritance of a duchy in the north of Europe, not very distant from that Duchy of Holstein which now engages general attention. Sir, there are two causes why wars originating in disputed succession become usually of a prolonged and obstinate character. The first is internal discord, and the second foreign ambition. Sometimes a domestic party, under such circumstances, has an understanding with a foreign potentate, and, again, the ambition of that foreign potentate excites the distrust, perhaps the envy, of other Powers; and the consequence is, generally speaking, that the dissensions thus created lead to prolonged and complicated struggles. Sir, I apprehend—indeed I entertain no doubt—that it was in contemplation of such circumstances possibly occurring in our time, that the statesmen of Europe, some thirteen years ago, knowing that it was probable that the royal line of Denmark would cease, and that upon the death of the then king, his dominions would be divided, and in all probability disputed, gave their best consideration to obviate the recurrence of such calamities to Europe. Sir, in these days, fortunately, it is not possible for the Powers of Europe to act under such circumstances as they would have done a hundred years ago. Then they would probably have met in secret conclave and have decided the arrangement of the internal

government of an independent kingdom. In our time they said to the King of Denmark, 'If you and your people among yourselves can make an arrangement in the case of the contingency of your death without issue, which may put an end to all internal discord, we at least will do this for you and Denmark—we will in your lifetime recognize the settlement thus made, and, so far as the influence of the Great Powers can be exercised, we will at least relieve you from the other great cause which, in the case of disputed successions, leads to prolonged wars. We will save you from foreign interference, foreign ambition, and foreign aggression.' That, Sir, I believe, is an accurate account and true description of that celebrated treaty of May, 1852, of which we have heard so much, and of which some characters are given which in my opinion are unauthorized and unfounded.

There can be no doubt that the purpose of that treaty was one which entitled it to the respect of the communities of Europe. Its language is simple and expresses its purpose. The Powers who concluded that treaty announced that they concluded it, not from their own will or arbitrary impulse, but at the invitation of the Danish Government, in order to give to the arrangements relative to the succession an additional pledge of stability by an act of European recognition. If honourable gentlemen look to that treaty—and I doubt not that they are familiar with it—they will find the first article entirely occupied with the recitals of the efforts of the King of Denmark—and, in his mind, successful efforts—to make the necessary arrangements with the principal estates and personages of his kingdom, in order to

effect the requisite alterations in the *lex regia* regulating the order of succession; and the article concludes by an invitation and appeal to the Powers of Europe, by a recognition of that settlement, to preserve his kingdom from the risk of external danger.

Sir, under that treaty England incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and by Russia. If, indeed, I were to dwell on moral obligations—which I think constitute too dangerous a theme to introduce into a debate of this kind—but if I were to dwell upon that topic, I might say that the moral obligations which France, for example, had incurred to Denmark, were of no ordinary character. Denmark had been the ally of France in that severe struggle which forms the most considerable portion of modern history, and had proved a most faithful ally. Even at St. Helena, when contemplating his marvellous career and moralizing over the past, the first emperor of the dynasty which now governs France rendered justice to the complete devotion of the Kings of Denmark and Saxony, the only sovereigns, he said, who were faithful under all proof and the extreme of adversity. On the other hand, if we look to our relations with Denmark, in her we found a persevering though a gallant foe. Therefore, so far as moral obligations are concerned, while there are none which should influence England, there is a great sense of gratitude which might have influenced the councils of France. But, looking to the treaty, there is no legal obligation incurred by England towards Denmark which is not equally shared by Russia and by France.