Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Anders Fogh Rasmussen has been at the center of European and global politics for three decades as Secretary General of NATO, Prime Minister of Denmark, Danish Minister of Economic Affairs, and a leading Danish parliamentarian.

Born on a farm in Jutland in 1953, Rasmussen became the first member of his family to go to university, earning a M.Sc. in Economics in 1978. He started his political career the same year, becoming the youngest Member of Parliament in Denmark at age 25.

During the 1980s, he played a key role in Danish foreign and economic policy, serving as deputy chairman of the Liberal Party and Minister of Taxation. Rasmussen was promoted to Minister of Economic Affairs in 1990 and served as the Danish negotiator of and signatory to the Maastricht Treaty, which eventually led to the introduction of the single currency, the euro.

In 1998, Rasmussen became chairman of the Liberal Party and leader of the Danish opposition. In the parliamentary elections 2001, his party won a landslide victory and became the biggest party in the Danish parliament. He formed his first government, and became Prime Minister of a coalition consisting of the Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party. His government was re-elected in 2005 and 2007 respectively, and he held the position as Prime Minister until he was elected as future NATO Secretary General at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009.

During the Danish Presidency of the European Union from July to December 2002, Rasmussen played a key role in concluding the accession negotiations with 10 candidates for EU-membership. Rasmussen has often mentioned the EU Summit in Copenhagen in December 2002 as a truly historic event and one of the highlights of his political career. He firmly believes that the enlargements of the EU and NATO have contributed to peace, progress and prosperity in Europe.

Rasmussen took office as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s 12th Secretary General on August 1, 2009 and held that position until September 30, 2014.

His tenure marked a fundamental transformation of the Alliance. Rasmussen oversaw the Alliance’s operational peak with six operations on three continents including Afghanistan, Kosovo and Libya, as well as counter-piracy along the Somali coast, a training mission in Iraq and a counter-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean.

He developed a new Strategic Concept, which sets the Alliance’s core priorities for the future. In the midst of the most serious economic crisis in recent time, he launched “Smart Defense” to help nations make more efficient use of their resources through more multinational cooperation. And in response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, he initiated a “Readiness Action Plan” adopted by Heads of State at a historic summit in Wales to strengthen the collective defense to an unprecedented level since the end of the Cold War. A reformer who made the Alliance leaner and more efficient, Rasmussen also extended and strengthened NATO’s partnerships with nations around the world, making it the hub of a network of international security partnerships.

Rasmussen has advocated stronger ties between the world’s democracies, including a truly “Integrated Transatlantic Community”, a Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement between the EU and North America, and a global community of democracies.

Rasmussen has been married to Anne-Mette Rasmussen since 1978. They have three adult children and six grandchildren. In his spare time, he is a passionate runner, and he also enjoys cycling and kayaking.