



Føroyar Bretland



Ein rímulig marknasemja

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So er avtalan avtalað. Men tað tók «bert» 20 ár at koma so langt.

Tað er sjálvandi lætt at vera spoykskur viðvíkjandi tíðini, tað hevur tikið at fáa eitt kompromis, sum ber til, um markíð millum Bretland og Føroyar.

Um ein lutfalsliga einfaldr spurningur um at draga eina linju millum tveir friðarsinnaðar norður-atlantiskar grannar kann taka so langa tíð, hvørjar vónir eru so fyrri at rokka semjur, har politikurinn er nógv meira torgreiddur, og har partarnir kunnu vera beinleiðis ósamdir?

Her sipi eg sjálvandi til óruddið í Jugoslavia og – nærri hjá okkum – Norður-Írland.

Hinvegin var tað, sum var eitt átrókandi mál fyrri Føroyar, heilt greitt ikki so átrókandi fyrri Bretland, sum hevur ein nógv størri og fjølbroyttari búskap og størri altjóða áhugamála.

Tórshavn noyddist at biða og biða – og biða – og hyggja at, meðan eitt nú BP hevði fleiri vaeleynaðar boringar vestan fyrri Hetland; Foinaven, Schiehallion, Suliven og kanska enn tá eisini Conival.

Tað má hava verið ótrúliga frusterandi.

Tað góða við marknasemjuni millum Føroyar og

Bretland er, at hon tykist vera rímilig.

Oljufólk eru fegin. Fiskifólk eru nøgd.

Nógv av markinum er javnfjart. Tað er bert eitt óki, har Bretland sær út til at hava fingið meira burtúr, men tað er lítið.

Fyrri umleið fimm árum síðani ákærdu føroyingar bretar fyrri at roynd at fáa fatúr á so nógvum, teir yvirhøvur kundu, av tí, sum føroyingar søu sum sít óki – bølmenistaktikkur, vildi onkur vera við.

Um vit ímynda okkum, at London hevði fingið sín vilja, høvdu fiskimennirnir hjá hesum partinum av danska ríkinum noyðst at funnið seg í, at útlendskir boripallar órógaðu á fiskileiðunum.

Tann sannroynd, at bert ein atfinningarsom rødd var hoyrd, tá føroyska tingið umrøddi avtaluna, má merkja, at avtalan eisini hevur verið góð fyrri fiskivinnuna.

Um ikki, høvdu krókapolitikkarnir (lobbyistarnir) hjá fiskivinnuni uttan at ivast gingið ímóti avtaluni. Tað er merkisvert, at atfinningarsama røddin var tann hjá fyrrverandi lögmanni Edmund Joensen.

Einum er komið fyrri oyrað, at hann helt, at ein betri avtala kundi verið gjord, hevði bretska ísráðharrin Tony Blair persónliga verið við í samráðingunum við danir í Key-

mannahavn um lagnuna hjá føroyingum.

Leiðarin í føroysku samráðingarnevndini, Árni Olafsson, eigur at fáa eitt tillukku fyrri sitt kvirra áhaldni. Tað tykist ikki vera so langt síðani, at hann segði greinaskrivaranum frá, at hann ívaðist í, um nokur brúkilig semja kom í lag eftir so nógv ár uttan úrslit.

Kanska kom veruliga broytingin í bretska stóðuni mótevís Føroyum, tá the Tories (teir konservativu) taptu seinasta valið. Seinna kom so nógv umrødda brævið frá bretska úttanríkisráðharranum Robin Cook til núverandi føroyska lögmannin Anfinn Kallsberg.

Síðani kom meira fyrri-reikingararbeiði, og kvirri og lítillátni Árni Olafsson rakk eini semju, hann við vissu kann vera nøgdur við.

At roynd at rokka eini avtalu, sum á øllum økjum er grundað á Geneve-konventionina, og sum fevnir um umleið 40.000 ferkilometrarkundi havt tikið fleiri ár afturat og inniborið eitt dyrt sakarmál móti Bretlandi við altjóða dómstólin í Haag.

Meðan hetta hevði staðið á, kundi Big Oil havt mist áhugan fyrri bretska partinum av ókinum við markíð. Sum nú er, er áhugin minni, andið orsakað av lágum olju-prisum, stórum útreiðslum av royndarboringum og menning, so tí ókið ikki hevur verið so ríkt, sum

vinnan hevði vónað.

Loksins er hurðin opin fyrri fyrsta føroyska útbjóðingarfarnum og fyrri oljufelaginum at kanna varhugan av, at ein rúgva av olju og gassi liggja goymd undir stóru basaltfláunum, sum eru í føroysku undirgrundini.

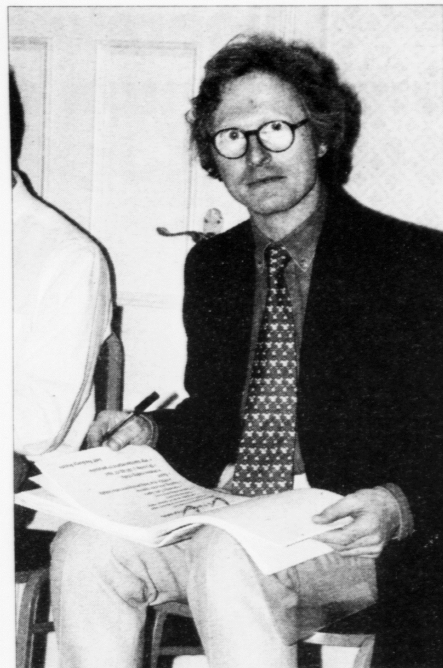
Ein gevandi figgaravtala er í væntu.

Fyrirtekurnar eru serliga óðar eftir at kanna óki í Føroyar-Hetlandsrennuni, sum kunnu fara tvørturum júst avtalaða markíð – um Greenpeace og aðrir umhvørvisfelagsskapir loyva hesum. (Greenpeace hevur fingið loyvi frá Hægstarætti í London at fara í rættin við bretska stjórnini í sambandi við oljuleitingar vestan fyrri Hetland).

Eingin eigur at ivast í, at tann sonevndi UK Atlantic Frontier hevur mist sín glans. Hetta ókið er dottið langt aftur um Vesturafrika og endurfødda Mexico-flógvan, og Smith Rea Energy Analysts vísa á hetta í teirra seinastu meting av møguleikum oljuleiðum í djúpum sjógvum um allan heimin.

Átlanir eru lagdar um brunnar í ár, men bert fáir, og Clair-ókið, sum nógvur vónir vórðu settar til, er framvegis lagt á ís, eftir at tað varð steðgað fyrri einum ári síðani.

Beint nú er Mobil har úti á Frontierinum, har teir arbeida við Jack Bates – ein



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flótandi boripallur («semi-submersible»), sum teir annars søgdu frá sær fyrri nokrum mánaðum síðani, tí hann ikki riggaði sum hann skuldi, og Mobil hótti við endurgjaldskravi til framleiðararnar.

Jack Bates er ikki langt frá nýggja markinum og byrjaði tann 21/4/1 stóra brunnin tann 26. april. Wood Mackenzie sigur um

arbeiðið: «Føarin leitar eftir eini stórar gasskeldu har norðuri í kassanum, stutt frá har bretska ókið endar.»

Mobil fer uttan íva at halda síni kort tætt inn at sær. Men um nakað verður funnið, og keldan gongur inn á føroyska ókið, fara tíðindini kanska at leka út skjótari enn annars – av eyðsýndum orsökum!

The deal is done

By JEREMY CRESSWELL

Business Editor Aberdeen Press & Journal

SO The deal is done. It only took about 20 years to get there, however.

It is of course easy to be cynical about the time taken to achieve a workable compromise on the resources boundary between the UK and Faroe.

After all, if a relatively simple issue concerning drawing the line between peaceable North Atlantic neighbours can take this long, what hope is there for reaching deals where the politics are far more complex and where open conflict may exist.

I am, of course referring to the Yugoslavia mess and, nearer to home, Northern Ireland.

On the other hand, what was an urgent matter for the Faroes, was clearly not so for the UK with its much larger and more diverse economy and wider international interests.

Thorshavn had to wait and wait... and wait... and watch BP for one notch up a string of successes west of Shetland... Foinaven, Schiehallion, Suliven and perhaps even Conival.

It must have been horribly frustrating.

The good thing about the UF-Faroe boundary deal is that it appears reasonably equitable.

Oil folk are happy. Fishermen folk are appeased.

Much of the boundary is equidistant. There is only one sector where Britain appears to have gained the upper hand, but it is modest.

Step back five years or so, and Thorshavn was accusing the Brits of trying to grasp everything they could of what the Faroes regarded as their territory... bullseye tactics, it was said on some quarters.

Assuming London had got its way, then the Danish possession's fishermen would have been forced to put up with foreign oil installations disrupting operations on their fishing

grounds.

The fact that only one dissenting voice was heard when the Faroe parliament debated the terms of the agreement means the deal must have been fair to the fishing industry.

It was not, the fishery lobby would have put paid to an agreement without hesitation. It is curious that the one dissenting voice was former isles prime minister... Edmund Joensen.

One hears that he believed a better deal could have been brokered, had UK PM Tony Blair been personally involved in talks with the Danes in Copenhagen over the fate of the Faroes.

Head of the Faroes negotiating team, Árni Olafsson, has to be congratulated for his quiet persistence. It seems not so long since he told the writer that he was dubious about achieving a workable settlement after years of getting nowhere.

Perhaps the real sea change in terms of the UK attitude to the Faroes boundary dispute came when the

Tories were chucked out at the last General Election. Later Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's much publicised letter to current Faroes PM, Anfinn Kallsberg.

More spade work followed and the quiet, unassuming Olafsson achieved a deal he can surely feel comfortable about.

To try and achieve an agreement totally based on the Geneva Convention formula and covering some 40,000 square km. could have taken several years more and involved a costly law suit against Britain in the International Court at the Hague.

During that time, Bog Oil could have lost interest in the UK portion of the Atlantic Frontier altogether. As it is, that interest is waning against a background of low oil prices, high exploration and development costs, and the fact that the area has not been as prolific as the industry had hoped.

At last the door is open to the first Faroes oil and

gas licensing round to be launched and for oil companies to test the hunch that reserves of crude and gas are trapped beneath the massive basalt shield that masks much of the sedimentary rock beneath the archipelago and its undersea shelf.

An attractive fiscal dial is widely expected.

The companies are particularly keen to evaluate targets located in the depths of the Faroe-Shetland Channel that may straddle the agreed median line... Greenpeace and other members of the environmental lobby permitting. (Greenpeace has been given leave by the High Court in London to challenge the British Government on west of Shetland).

No-one should be in any doubt about the fact that the UK Atlantic Frontier has lost its gloss. It has fallen a long way behind West Africa and the reborn Gulf of Mexico and Smith Rea Energy Analysts highlight this fact in their latest

assessment of deepwater prospects worldwide.

Wells are planned this year, but only a few and the hoped for Clair field development remains on ice, having been stopped a year ago.

Just now, Mobil is out there on the Frontier, working with the Jack Bates, a deepwater capability semi-submersible which the oil company summarily dumped a few months ago, alleging deficiencies and threatening litigation.

The Bates is close to the new boundary and started the 21/4-1 well on April 26. Wood Mackenzie says of the quest: «The operator is believed to be targeting a sizeable gas structure to the north of the block, close to the limit of UK designated acreage.»

Mobil will doubtless play it cards close to the chest. But if a find is made, and it extends into Faroes «geo-space» then maybe news will seep out more quickly than might otherwise be the case... for obvious reasons!