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Military Assistance of the Nordic Countries to Ukraine in 2022–2025 in the Context of the Formation of a Regional Deterrence System

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the evolution of Nordic military assistance to Ukraine in 2022–2025 within the broader transformation of the security environment in Northern Europe. It analyses how Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland moved from emergency transfers of weapons and financial-logistical support to a more complex model combining the delivery of heavy systems, military training, multi-year financial instruments, capability coalitions, and defence-industrial cooperation. Drawing on comparative, historical-chronological, and institutional analysis, the study shows that this transformation developed in parallel with Finland’s and Sweden’s accession to NATO, the strengthening of NORDEFECO, the expansion of Nordic-Baltic coordination, and the growing role of multilateral frameworks for supporting Ukraine. The article argues that Nordic military assistance has a dual strategic effect: it strengthens Ukraine’s defence capacity through expanded combat capabilities, personnel training, and support for the reproduction of defence potential, while also contributing to the densification of a regional deterrence framework within the Nordic-Baltic and Euro-Atlantic security space. It concludes that in 2022–2025, support for Ukraine became for the Nordic countries not only an instrument of external assistance, but also a practical mechanism for implementing a new model of regionally concentrated allied security.



KEYWORDS

military assistance, Nordic countries, Ukraine, regional deterrence, Northern Europe, Nordic-Baltic coordination, NATO, defence-industrial cooperation.



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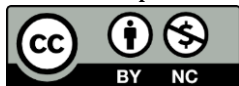
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У статті досліджено еволюцію військової допомоги Північних країн Україні у 2022–2025 роках в контексті трансформації безпекового середовища Північної Європи. Проаналізовано, як Данія, Швеція, Норвегія, Фінляндія та Ісландія перейшли від екстрених поставок озброєнь і фінансово-логістичної підтримки до складнішої моделі, що поєднує передачу важких систем, підготовку військовослужбовців, багаторічні фінансові механізми, коаліції спроможностей і оборонно-промислової кооперації. На основі порівняльного, історико-хронологічного та інституційного аналізу показано, що ця трансформація відбувалася паралельно зі вступом Фінляндії та Швеції до НАТО, посиленням NORDEFCO, розширенням північно-балтійської координації та зростанням значення багатосторонніх форматів підтримки України. Обґрунтовано, що військова допомога Північних країн має подвійний стратегічний ефект: вона посилює обороноздатність України через розширення бойових спроможностей, підготовку персоналу та підтримку відтворення оборонного потенціалу, а також сприяє переуцільненню регіональної системи стримування в межах північно-балтійського та євроатлантичного безпекового простору. Зроблено висновок, що у 2022–2025 роках підтримка України стала для Північних країн не лише інструментом зовнішньої допомоги, а й практичним механізмом реалізації нової моделі регіонально згуртованої союзницької безпеки.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

військова допомога, Північні країни, Україна, регіональне стримування, Північна Європа, північно-балтійська координація, НАТО, оборонно-промислова кооперація.

1. Introduction

The full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine, launched on February 24, 2022, radically changed the security configuration of Northern Europe. For Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland, the war was an impetus for an accelerated revision of defense policy, institutional coordination formats and military support practices for Ukraine. In the professional literature, this shift is described as a movement towards convergence of the foreign and security policies of the Nordic states after the Russian invasion [5, p. 21]. Its institutional markers were Finland's accession to NATO on April 4, 2023 [25] and Sweden on March 7, 2024 [27], the reorientation of NORDEFECO through Vision 2030 to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense [28], as well as the activation of the JEF as a regional coordination format [24].

The military assistance of the Nordic countries to Ukraine has already gone beyond the totality of individual weapons packages. It covers the supply of systems and ammunition, training of personnel, long-term financial mechanisms, defense-industrial cooperation and multilateral coordination. Under such conditions, support for Ukraine simultaneously strengthens its defense capability and affects the security configuration of the Northern and North-Baltic regions, which in modern analytics is associated with the deepening of defense cooperation and the search for additional formats of deterring Russia [15; 33].

The key question of the article is whether the military assistance of the Nordic countries to Ukraine is only a set of decisions in support of the state waging a defensive war, or whether it has already acquired the characteristics of an element of a new regional deterrence system in the Nordic Baltic space. In this perspective, the subject of analysis is not individual aid packages per se, but their structure, dynamics, coordination mechanisms and strategic implications.

2. Literature Review

The literature on the topic of the article is centered around several interrelated areas: the prerequisites for the security transformation of Northern Europe, the institutional evolution of the Nordic defense cooperation, changes in the Euro-Atlantic environment after 2022, and studies of international military assistance to Ukraine. The background to the current breakdown is best revealed by works devoted to the longer history of northern security restructuring. E. Aliyeva [2] showed even before the full-scale war that Sweden's vulnerability was determined not only by the general aggravation of relations with Russia, but also by the specific geostrategic configuration of the Baltic region: Gotland and Norrland play a special role in Swedish security, and the long-term reduction in defense spending and the departure from the invasion defense model have created favorable conditions for pressure from Russia. In the same pre-war dimension, T. Forsberg [14] explained the rise of northern defense cooperation not only by material factors, but also by the effect of "northern" identity: it facilitates informal interaction between political and military actors and at the same time makes international defense cooperation politically acceptable for domestic audiences. Fundamentally, in its interpretation, the Nordic framework does not compete with NATO or the EU, but complements them. These works are important as a theoretical background: they show that the reaction of the Nordic countries after 2022 did not mature from scratch, but relied on existing regional and identification prerequisites.

A separate body of literature explains the institutional logic of northern defense cooperation. A.-S. Dahl [7], analyzing the first decade of NORDEFECO, defines the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 as a turning point, after which cooperation went beyond the logic of "smart defense" and acquired a new, more operational weight. At the same time, the author emphasizes that the previous non-entry of the two states of the region into NATO restrained the depth of integration, but did not neutralize the importance of NORDEFECO as a coordination mechanism in the Baltic region. This line is continued by D. Brommesson, A.-M. Eckengren and A. Michalski [5], who prove that after 2022, there was a transition from variability to convergence of security policy in the Nordic countries: the growth of threat perceptions led to a revision of foreign policy roles and a convergence of common models of cooperation. Taken together, these works convincingly show that after 2022, we are not talking about an accidental rapprochement of positions, but about accelerating the existing institutional trajectory.

The next step in the literature is associated not just with cooperation, but with a qualitative change in the security status of the Nordic countries. O. Sanin [34] in his comparative analysis of Sweden and Finland emphasizes that their previous neutrality had different origins: for Sweden, it was the result of internal political choices, for Finland, it was the result of external pressure from the USSR. The rejection of neutrality was not mechanically symmetrical, although the final result was common. The author also emphasizes that the rapid accession of both states to NATO became possible due to previous compliance with the Alliance's standards, developed defense capabilities and long-term practice of cooperation with NATO. R. Shestedt and E. Noreen [38], in turn, interpret the Nordic countries' reaction to the Russian invasion as a revival of the Nordic security community: if the COVID-19 pandemic stimulated the nationalization of politics and extraordinary unilateral measures, the 2022 war, on the contrary, returned the region to cooperative logic, symbolized by the joint application of Sweden and Finland to join NATO and mutual security guarantees. Thus, modern literature increasingly interprets 2022 as a moment not only of political reaction, but also of the restoration of the regional security community.

Another important direction focuses on the heterogeneity of reactions within the northernmost space. M. Migliorati [21] analyzes the changes, and sometimes the absence of changes, in the security policies of Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway and shows that even under the influence of a common shock, there was no uniform "northern" response. For Sweden and Finland, the combination of a gradual erosion of public commitment to non-alignment with a sharp jump in threat perceptions after the 2022 invasion turned out to be decisive; Denmark, on the other hand, took advantage of the moment to dismantle its long-standing defensive opt-out within the CSDP. M. Blackburn [4] adds an important external dimension to this: Russia's reaction to Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO turned out to be less one-dimensional than in the case of Ukraine or Georgia. In the mass and propaganda discourse, rigid securitized rhetoric was preserved, while in the formal-expert discourse, more restrained and pragmatic assessments were traced. This allows the author to talk about the gap between Russian discourse and practice. As a result, these works are useful in that they warn against an oversimplified idea of the automatic homogeneity of the Nordic countries after 2022.

The Euro-Atlantic context of the war in Ukrainian academic literature is represented primarily by works on NATO's adaptation and Ukraine's place in this transformation. O. Demenko [8] argues that the Russian invasion has become an impetus for rethinking NATO's role, strengthening its defense potential, expanding the geography of activities and clarifying the range of security tasks for the next decade. At the same time, he directly connects Ukraine's heroic resistance with the opening of a historic window of opportunity for future accession to the Alliance. N. Andrianova, V. Gordiyshuk and V. Ilchenko [3] consider Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration more practically: they emphasize the record level of public support for membership, the constitutional consolidation of the Euro-Atlantic course, and military reforms of interoperability with the armies of NATO member states. For the topic of this article, this block of literature is important because it shows that military assistance to Ukraine is developing not in isolation, but in a broader process of restructuring Euro-Atlantic security.

A separate group is made up of studies devoted to international assistance to Ukraine as such. K. Schmidt [35] based on a two-stage quantitative analysis shows that the distribution of aid is determined not only by normative solidarity, but also by the interests of donors: wealthier, more numerous and democratic states, as well as countries with trade ties with Russia, are more likely to provide aid; At the same time, the factors affecting the very generosity of help are more complex. J. Massey and B. Tallova [19], applying Qualitative Comparative Analysis to 32 Western allies, found that the main paths to a high level of military support were a combination of defense spending, geography and threat perceptions. Their conclusion is especially valuable for our topic, because it allows us to consider northern donors not as random "moral" supporters of Ukraine, but as states whose decisions are rooted in a specific security position. At the same time, these studies work mainly at the Western level and do not provide a separate explanation for how the military assistance of the Nordic countries begins to perform the function of regional deterrence.

The available literature fully covers the prerequisites for the security transformation of Northern Europe, the institutional evolution of the Nordic defense cooperation, the breakdown of 2022, the Euro-Atlantic context of the war, and the general patterns of international assistance to Ukraine. Another question is much less disclosed: how the military assistance of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland to Ukraine is transferred from a set of individual support decisions to a structural element of a new regional deterrence system in the North Baltic space. The article is aimed at filling this gap.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of the article is to analyze the volume, structure and evolution of the Nordic military support to Ukraine in 2022–2025, assess its impact on Ukraine's defense capability and determine its place in the formation of a regional deterrence system in Northern Europe.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been identified: to find out the institutional and political prerequisites for the intensification of military assistance from the Nordic countries to Ukraine; to trace the chronological dynamics and structural transformation of such assistance in 2022–2025; to assess its functional impact on Ukraine's defense capability; to find out how this support is built into the new configuration of regional deterrence.

4. Methods and Materials

The methodological basis of the study is a combination of comparative, historical-chronological, institutional, and analytical-synthetic approaches. The comparative analysis is used to compare the policies of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland in terms of scale, mechanisms and priorities of assistance to Ukraine. The historical-chronological approach made it possible to trace the transition from the first decisions of 2022 to more complex formats of 2024–2025 related to the training of military personnel and coalition capabilities, long-term financing and defense-industrial mechanisms. Institutional analysis is used to assess the role of NATO, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF and bilateral coordination formats, while analytical-synthetic analysis is used to summarize empirical data and interpret it in the broader context of regional security transformation.

5. Results and Discussion

Military assistance to Ukraine from the Nordic countries did not arise in a political vacuum, but was the result of a deeper transformation of the region's security policy, which unfolded after 2014 and accelerated sharply after February 24, 2022. The Nordic states increasingly perceived the threat to the multilateral order and their own space for foreign policy maneuver, which led to the convergence of their security orientations [5]. Until 2022, these orientations were still asymmetrical: Denmark, Norway and Iceland were members of NATO, while Finland and Sweden maintained a military non-alignment. Russia's full-scale invasion was a decisive factor that brought this previous evolution into a phase of accelerated strategic restructuring [5; 25; 27].

In May 2022, Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO, and then their full institutional inclusion in the Alliance took place: Finland became the 31st member of NATO on April 4, 2023, Sweden – on March 7, 2024 [25; 27]. These decisions radically changed the security configuration of Northern Europe. After the accession of the two states to the Alliance, all the coastal states of the Baltic Sea, except for Russia, found themselves in the NATO security space, which does not mean the automatic disappearance of regional risks, but creates qualitatively different conditions for coordinated defense planning, maritime security and deterrence on the northern flank. From this moment on, it is advisable to consider assistance to Ukraine not only in the categories of interstate support, but also in the broader context of restructuring the regional security environment.

At the same time, regional coordination formats have become more active. In 2024, the Nordic defense ministers signed the Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation 2030, which explicitly states that the new NORDEFECO vision reflects the strategic reality of the war in Europe and the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, and should also strengthen the ability of the countries of the region to prepare and conduct joint operations for the security of the Nordic region and the Euro-Atlantic area [28]. NORDEFECO is increasingly functioning not as an auxiliary political platform, but as a mechanism for coordinating defense cooperation in the new NATO configuration.

A related role is played by the Joint Expeditionary Force. The JEF unites ten states – the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, five Nordic countries and three Baltic states, and Iceland joined it in 2021 as the tenth member [24]. In this configuration, the JEF acts as an instrument for rapid political-military coordination in the area from the North Atlantic to the Baltic Sea. For this study, it is important that the JEF does not replace NATO, but complements its regional architecture, strengthening the readiness of the states of the North for coordinated actions in crisis conditions [24].

The NB8 format has also gained more weight due to support for Ukraine. In March 2025, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine announced new assistance packages from the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries, including strengthening air defense, supporting maritime and air capabilities, training the military within the Nordic-Baltic Brigade, and investments in the Ukrainian defense industry [22]. In October 2025, a separate Nordic-Baltic Initiative was launched to train and equip Ukrainian military personnel [23]. As a result, support for Ukraine is less and less reduced to isolated bilateral solutions and is increasingly integrated into multilateral Nordic-Baltic coordination formats [22; 23].

Table 1. Institutional framework for Nordic engagement in support of Ukraine and regional deterrence

Country	Key Security Formats	NATO status (2022–2025)	The main forms of participation in supporting Ukraine	Author's analytical assessment of strategic importance
Denmark	NATO, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF, EU	NATO member	transfer of F-16s, training of Ukrainian personnel, long-term military support, financing through the “Danish model”, military-industrial cooperation [9; 10; 11]	one of the key northern providers of military-technical and production support to Ukraine
Sweden	NATO, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF, EU	NATO member from 07.03.2024 [27]	packages of heavy systems and ammunition, procurement financing, participation in training and security initiatives [16; 17]	critical for the security of the Baltic theater and the maritime infrastructure of the region
Norway	NATO, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF, EEA	NATO member	Nansen Program, Air Defense Funding, F-16, Naval and Unmanned Capabilities, Long-Term Budget Decisions [29–32]	a key financial and North Atlantic pillar of regional deterrence
Finland	NATO, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF, EU	NATO member from 04.04.2023 [25]	numerous defense aid packages, preparation, purchase of Finnish defense industry products for Ukraine [12; 13]	The central link of the land dimension of deterrence due to its proximity to the Russian federation
Iceland	Talk: NB8, JEF	member of NATO, without its own armed forces [18]	financial contributions, transport of military cargo, support for individual defense initiatives, civil protection [18]	provides a political, logistical and North Atlantic dimension of regional support

Source: Compiled by the author based on [9–13; 16–18; 24; 25; 27–32].

Institutional changes 2022–2025 allow military assistance to Ukraine to be considered as part of a broader restructuring of regional security. Empirically, there is a strengthening of coordination of the Nordic countries within NATO, NORDEFECO, JEF and NB8, as well as a significant expansion of the scale and formats of support for Ukraine [22–24; 28]. This set of changes creates grounds for further analytical interpretation of assistance not only as interstate support, but also as an element of the new security configuration of the region.

For this study, military assistance is considered in an expanded but substantively defined sense – as a set of transfers of weapons and military equipment, training of personnel, participation in coalitions of capabilities, long-term financial mechanisms directly aimed at meeting Ukraine’s defense needs, as well as military-industrial solutions related to the reproduction of its military capabilities. Iceland is also included in the common analytical circuit: despite the absence of its own armed forces, its contribution is realized through financial, logistical and multilateral security mechanisms [18]. Periodization of 2022–2025 is built according to a functional criterion: from emergency response to complication of the nomenclature, then to institutionalization and, ultimately, to a proactive defense-industrial phase.

Empirical material shows that in 2022–2025. Nordic military assistance to Ukraine has evolved from urgent deliveries from existing stockpiles to a multi-tiered support system that combines arms transfers, training, long-term financial frameworks, participation in capability coalitions, and defense-industrial cooperation. Changing the form of aid, and not just expanding its scope, is the main characteristic of the Nordic contribution to support Ukraine.

In 2022, assistance was mainly emergency and focused on immediate defense needs. Sweden provided Ukraine with helmets, bulletproof vests, dry rations, anti-tank weapons, small arms, ammunition and demining equipment in the first packages [17]. In the spring of 2022, Denmark handed over Harpoon coastal anti-ship missile systems to Ukraine [11]. At the initial stage, Finland provided protective equipment, small arms and other types of defense property [12]. In 2022, Norway transferred anti-tank weapons, protective equipment, and later Mistral complexes [32]. Iceland has focused on financial and logistical support through multilateral security mechanisms [18]. Thus, the first stage was determined by a quick response to the critical needs of the front and the dominance of supplies from existing stocks over long-term planning.

In 2023, assistance has become more complicated both in terms of nomenclature and implementation mechanisms. Sweden switched to the transfer of heavier systems, including the CV90, Archer and Leopard 2 [17]. Denmark included CAESAR self-propelled artillery systems, Leopard tanks, and training of Ukrainian pilots and technical personnel within the F-16 direction [11]. Norway launched the Nansen Support Programme in 2023 as a multi-year framework mechanism for supporting Ukraine [32]. Finland has extended regular defense aid packages; In October 2023, the 19th package was announced, and the total value of Finnish packages at that time reached 1.4 billion euros [12]. 2023 was a turning point in the transition from initial response assistance to the maintenance of more complex combat capabilities and the formation of more stable organizational and financial contours.

In 2024, this evolution entered the institutionalization phase. The official website of the Ministry of Defense of Denmark states that the Ukraine Fund, established in March 2023, provides approximately DKK 64.8 billion in military support through 2028 [11]. Sweden in 2024 formed large combined aid packages: the 15th package was estimated at SEK 7.1 billion, and the 16th at SEK 13.3 billion; They combined direct transfers, procurement, financial contributions, and support for capacity coalitions [17]. Norway extended and expanded the Nansen Support Programme until 2030 in autumn 2024, setting a minimum annual level of funding [32]. 2024 cemented the transition from a series of separate packages to a programmable, coalition-linked model of military support.

In 2025, northern assistance has become distinctly proactive and military-industrial in nature. As of March 2025, Sweden announced the largest military aid package at that time: the package itself amounted to SEK 15.9 billion, and the total amount of Swedish military support to Ukraine in 2025 was estimated at SEK 29.5 billion [16]. In May 2025, Denmark was given the role of an executor to allocate more than €800 million for military supplies to Ukraine through its own procurement mechanism [9], and in June 2025, it signed an agreement that allows Ukrainian defense companies to locate production in Denmark; More than 67 million euros were allocated for this [10]. In April 2025, Norway allocated NOK 10 billion for the training and equipping of the Ukrainian brigade [29]. In 2025, Finland switched to a model that combines regular packages with direct orders from its own defense industry for the needs of Ukraine [13]. As of October 2025, the Nordic-Baltic Initiative was launched to train and equip Ukrainian military personnel on a scale equivalent to the brigade level [23]. Thus, in 2025, the military assistance of the Nordic countries will have already gone beyond the logic of transferring existing property and moved to the logic of recreating Ukraine's defense capabilities through financing, procurement and production cooperation.

The structural transformation of care took place simultaneously in several planes. Support was complicated by nomenclature, moving from light anti-tank weapons, equipment and protective equipment to artillery, armored vehicles, aviation component, air defense systems and more complex capability development packages. At the same time, bilateral solutions were increasingly embedded in multilateral mechanisms, funds and coalitions, and one-time solutions were inferior to long-term programming, which is especially evident in the example of the Ukraine Fund and the Nansen Support Programme [11; 32]. In 2025, this evolution was complemented by the strengthening of the military-industrial dimension: assistance began to focus not only on the transfer of existing systems, but also on production financing, direct procurement, and the formation of longer production and logistics circuits to support Ukraine. The main result of this process is a change in the functional nature of the aid itself.

Figure 1 shows that the growth of military deployments of the Nordic countries was accompanied by an increase in their share in pan-European support for Ukraine. This provides visual confirmation of the thesis about a qualitative change in the role of the Northern region in the architecture of military support for Ukraine in 2022–2025.

Within the framework of an open-source base, it is advisable to assess the impact of military assistance on Ukraine's defense capability through functional indicators: expansion of combat

capabilities, formation of training and technical support circuits, as well as support for the long-term reproduction of defense potential. Accordingly, the partial regionalization of the deterrence function in this article does not mean the emergence of an autonomous northern security system outside NATO, but the growing role of the Nordic Baltic mechanisms in coordinating assistance to Ukraine, integrating this assistance into the NATO framework, and forming sustainable financial, production and training support circuits [15; 28; 33]. This interpretation is consistent with the emphasis of NORDEFCON Vision 2030 on strengthening NATO's deterrence and defense in the Northern region and with K. Vries' argument that the new northern defense integration should unfold within the broader NATO architecture [15; 28].

Table 2. Evolution of Nordic military assistance to Ukraine in 2022–2025

Country	2022	2023	2024	2025	The dominant type of assistance in 2024-2025	New mechanisms
Denmark	urgent arms deliveries, including Harpoon [11]	CAESAR, Leopard, F-16 exercise, Ukraine Fund deployment [11]	long-term military support through the Ukraine Fund [11]	scaling of the “Danish model”, financing through the Ukrainian defense industry, agreement on production in Denmark [9; 10]	Aviation and Defense Industrial Support	Ukraine Fund; Danish model
Sweden	helmets, bulletproof vests, ATGMs, small arms, ammunition [17]	CV90, Archer, Leopard 2 [17]	large combo packets 15 and 16 [17]	Package 19; a total of about 29.5 billion kroner as of March 2025 [16]	a combination of direct transfers, procurement, and financial contributions	large package frames; Industrial Component Expansion
Norway	anti-tank weapons, protective equipment, Mistral [32]	Launch of the Nansen Support Programme [32]	extension and expansion of Nansen until 2030 [32]	NOK 10 billion per brigade [29]	long-term military funding and capability support	Nansen Support Programme
Finland	Initial defence aid packages [12]	regular packages; 19th package in October 2023 [12]	continuation of package support after NATO accession [12]	direct purchases from the Finnish defense industry for Ukraine [13]	Defense Aid Packages + Industrial Component	regular packages; Procurement Program in the Finnish Defense Industry
Iceland	financial contributions and logistical support [18]	continued financial support [18]	support through multilateral mechanisms [18]	participation in Nordic–Baltic aid formats [18; 23]	financial and logistical security support	contributions to multilateral funds and initiatives

Source: Compiled by the author based on [9–13; 16–18; 23; 29; 32].

The first direction of influence concerns the direct strengthening of Ukraine's combat capabilities. Sweden has moved from initial deliveries of protective equipment and anti-tank weapons to the transfer of CV90, Archer, Leopard 2, air defense systems, and large packages of ammunition and procurement for Ukraine [17]. Denmark transferred, in particular, Harpoon, CAESAR, Leopard tanks and supported the F-16 direction [11]. Norway provided M109, Leopard 2, and funding for air defense, as well as resources for Ukraine's naval and air capabilities [29; 32]. In terms of their functional content, these

decisions affected various segments of defense capability – from counter-battery warfare and maneuvering capabilities to airspace protection and strengthening maritime stability.

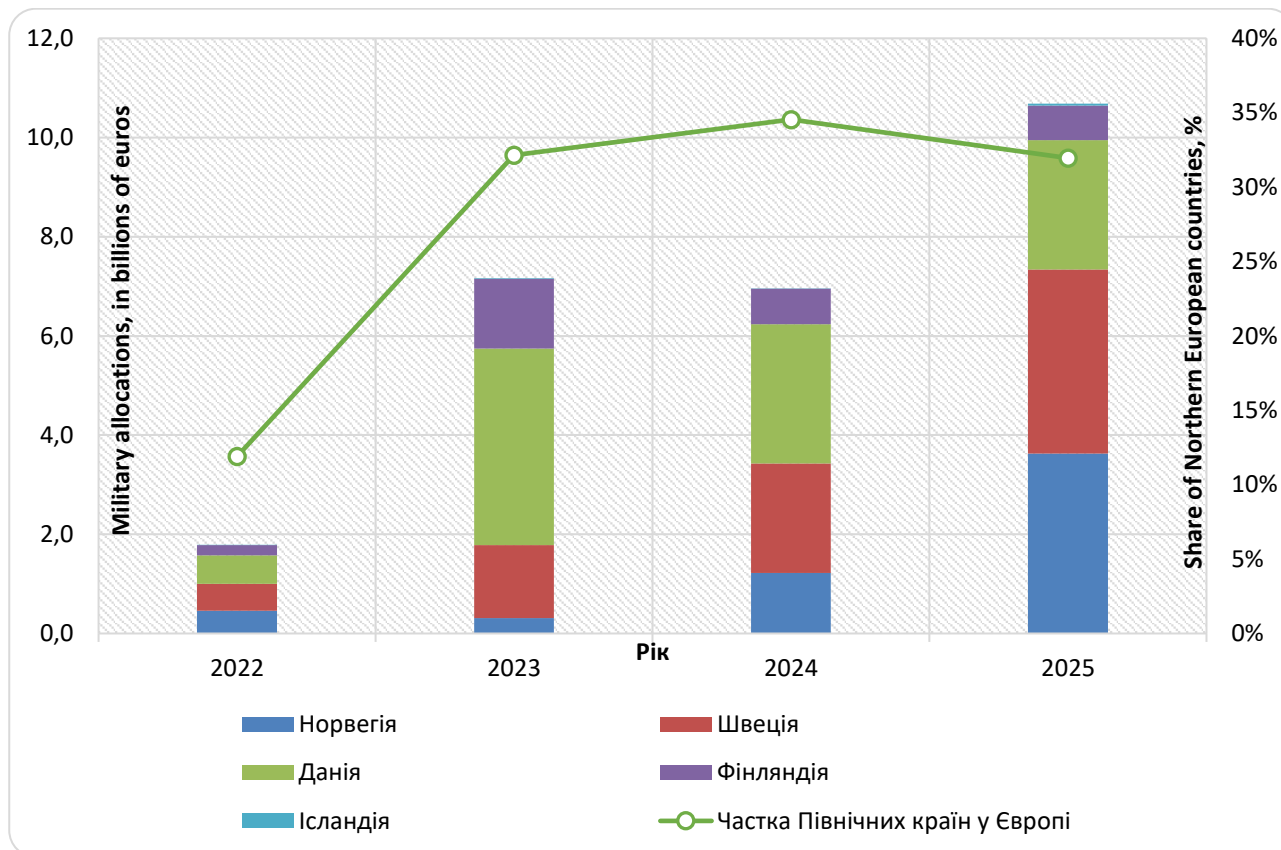


Figure 1. Dynamics of military deployments of the Nordic countries to Ukraine and their share in European military deployments in 2022-2025, billion rubles euro and the Nordic countries' share in Europe

Source: Compiled by the author based on [39].

The second direction is related to training, technical support and the ability to integrate complex systems into combat practice. The Swedish government explicitly notes that a significant part of the qualified weapons transferred to Ukraine require separate training of operators, technical personnel and re-training through personnel rotation [17]. Sweden also participates in EUMAM Ukraine, Interflex, Task Force Legio, and the Nordic initiative to train deminers and demining specialists [17]. Launched on October 15, 2025, the Nordic-Baltic Initiative provides not only for equipping, but also for training Ukrainian military personnel on a scale equivalent to the brigade level [23]. The effect of assistance is manifested not only in the transfer of systems, but also in the creation of institutional channels for their development, operation and maintenance of combat capability.

The third direction concerns the long-term reproduction of Ukraine's defense potential. In June 2025, Denmark signed an agreement that allowed Ukrainian defense companies to locate production in Denmark and allocated €67 million for this [10]. In February 2025, Finland announced a new program, under which products for Ukraine began to be ordered directly from the Finnish defense industry; The basic amount of funding amounted to EUR 660 million [13]. In 2025, Norway allocated NOK 10 billion to train and equip the Ukrainian brigade, and the government directly noted that it was not only about material assistance from its own stocks, but also about purchases from Ukrainian and international industry [29]. In this regard, the support no longer works as a one-time transfer of property, but as a mechanism for restoring and expanding Ukraine's production and resource sustainability.

However, the significance of this assistance is not limited to the Ukrainian dimension. K. Fries shows that after the accession of Finland and Sweden, northern defense integration has acquired a new quality, but its practical meaning is determined by the ability of the states of the region to coordinate actions within NATO and prevent fragmentation of efforts [15]. Vision 2030 states that northern defence cooperation should strengthen the ability of countries in the region to prepare and conduct joint operations, complementing European and transatlantic security [28]. L. Ogryzko, analyzing NB8,

directly connects support for Ukraine with the formation of an additional deterrent layer in Europe and considers the North-Baltic coordination as one of the most coherent circuits of such support [33]. It follows that military assistance to Ukraine acquires a double meaning for the Nordic countries: it works both for Ukrainian defense and for the reconsolidation of the regional security architecture.

The military assistance of the Nordic countries to Ukraine has a double strategic effect. For Ukraine, it means strengthening the ability to defend for a long time through the transfer of complex systems, personnel training, technical support and strengthening of the production base. For the Nordic region, the same process is related to the consolidation of deterrence, as support for Ukraine is increasingly embedded in the coalitions for capacity development, North Baltic coordination, and the NATO framework. The growth of coordination, programmability, and the industrial dimension of support are empirically recorded; The conclusion about the partial regionalization of the containment function is an analytical interpretation of this set of changes.

In the applied dimension, this double logic can be traced quite clearly. Denmark is not only a supplier of weapons, but also one of the key organizers of production and financial mechanisms to support Ukraine [9; 10]. Norway combines long-term budget funding, support for brigade training, air defense, and broader capability packages [29; 32]. Sweden integrates military assistance with training, technical support, and an increasingly wide range of procurement and service solutions [16; 17]. Finland supplements regular aid packages with direct mobilization of its own defense-industrial potential [13]. Iceland, without its own armed forces, maintains this circuit through financial and logistical mechanisms [18]. Together, these decisions form not just the number of national contributions, but a regionally related security toolkit.

The coordination of supplies, training, financial programming and defense-industrial solutions allows us to consider northern support for Ukraine as a partially regionalized instrument of allied deterrence. Such support already performs an additional security function for the Northern region, as it combines assistance to Ukraine with the practice of regional coordination, industrial interaction and long-term planning. It is advisable to interpret partial regionalization of deterrence not as an alternative to NATO, but as a regionally condensed way of implementing allied security through support for Ukraine.

Table 3. The Dual Effect of Nordic Military Aid: Impact on Ukraine's Defense Capability and Regional Deterrence

Direction of assistance	Effect for Ukraine	Analytically interpreted effect for the Nordic region	Strategic result
Transfer of heavy systems and ammunition	expansion of fire, armored and maneuver capabilities	deepening the compatibility of support with NATO nomenclatures and procedures	Convergence of Ukrainian combat practices with Western standards
Air defense and aviation component	strengthening the protection of cities, infrastructure and troops; Expansion of air capabilities	consolidation of joint mechanisms for supporting air defense and aviation on the northern flank	increasing the role of the Nordic countries in east-flank deterrence
Preparation, technical support and maintenance of systems	increasing the capacity to operate and restore complex weapons	formation of stable training and service circuits within the framework of Euro-Atlantic support	long-term maintenance of the combat effectiveness of the transferred systems
Capacity coalitions and multilateral formats	access to broader support and coordination mechanisms	strengthening NB8 and related formats as practical tools for security coordination	institutional consolidation of the regional containment architecture
Military-industrial cooperation and production financing	strengthening the ability to reproduce weapons and reducing dependence on one-time transfers	Integration of Nordic and Ukrainian manufacturing solutions into a longer safety cycle	Transition from the Donor-Recipient Model to the Shared Resilience Model

Source: Compiled by the author based on [9; 10; 13; 15–18; 23; 28; 29; 32; 33].

6. Conclusions

Military assistance from the Nordic countries to Ukraine in 2022-2025 has acquired a significance that goes beyond the totality of individual decisions on the transfer of weapons. Its evolution from emergency supplies from existing stockpiles to a multi-level support system testifies to the inclusion of the Ukrainian direction in the broader logic of the security transformation of Northern Europe. In this context, support for Ukraine is increasingly linked to the restructuring of the Nordic-Baltic coordination, NATO's new role in the region and the strengthening of long-term deterrence mechanisms. The intensification of military assistance to Ukraine was the result not only of political solidarity, but also of a revision of the security strategies of the Nordic countries under the influence of Russian aggression and changes in the Euro-Atlantic environment. The accession of Finland in 2023 and Sweden in 2024 to NATO has formed a new institutional framework within which support for Ukraine has begun to be considered as part of a broader regional security system. In 2022–2025, aid has undergone a structural transformation. If in 2022 urgent deliveries of weapons, equipment and individual systems from existing stocks dominated, then in 2023–2024, support has become more complicated in terms of nomenclature and implementation mechanisms, and in 2025, it acquired a distinct military-industrial dimension. This process included the complication of the aid nomenclature, the growth of institutional coordination, the transition to multi-year financial programming, and the strengthening of the production and industrial component through direct procurement, financing and cooperative solutions. The military assistance of the Nordic countries has a double strategic effect. It strengthens Ukraine's defense capabilities through the transfer of complex systems, training and operational support, and support for the long-term reproduction of defense capabilities, while at the same time contributing to the reconsolidation of the regional deterrence system, integrating more and more closely into the coalitions for capacity development, North Baltic coordination, and the broader NATO security architecture. It is not about an alternative to NATO, but about a regionally condensed way of implementing allied security through support for Ukraine. Experience of 2022–2025 shows that regional security consolidation can be implemented through external military assistance, training, financial programming, and military-industrial cooperation. Further research should focus on quantifying the contributions of individual countries, assessing the effectiveness of new production financing mechanisms for Ukraine, and determining the extent to which the North Baltic support model can influence the future European security architecture.

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