



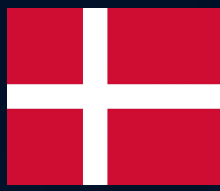
# DENMARK

## NATO Country Assessment — *TIER ONE* —

DEFENSE BUILDUP • UKRAINE LEADERSHIP • ARCTIC & BALTIC SECURITY



JULY 2026



# TIER 1

Model Ally



# AT A GLANCE

## *Toplines*

- **Defense Spending Nearly Tripled in Three Years:** from 1.3% in 2022 to 3.22% in 2025, bolstered by a \$7.6B Acceleration Fund, \$13.7B long-term plan, and commitment to the full Hague 5% framework.
- **Ukraine's #1 European Supporter at 3.27% of GDP:** \$12B allocated, a dedicated \$8.8B Ukraine Fund through 2028, and a pioneering model of financing Ukrainian domestic weapons production rather than drawing from allied stocks.
- **Combat-Proven in the Red Sea:** frigate *Iver Huitfeldt* deployed to *Operation Prosperity Guardian* and shot down four Houthi drones, one of the few European allies to take combat action in the theater.



# FORCE STRUCTURE AT A GLANCE



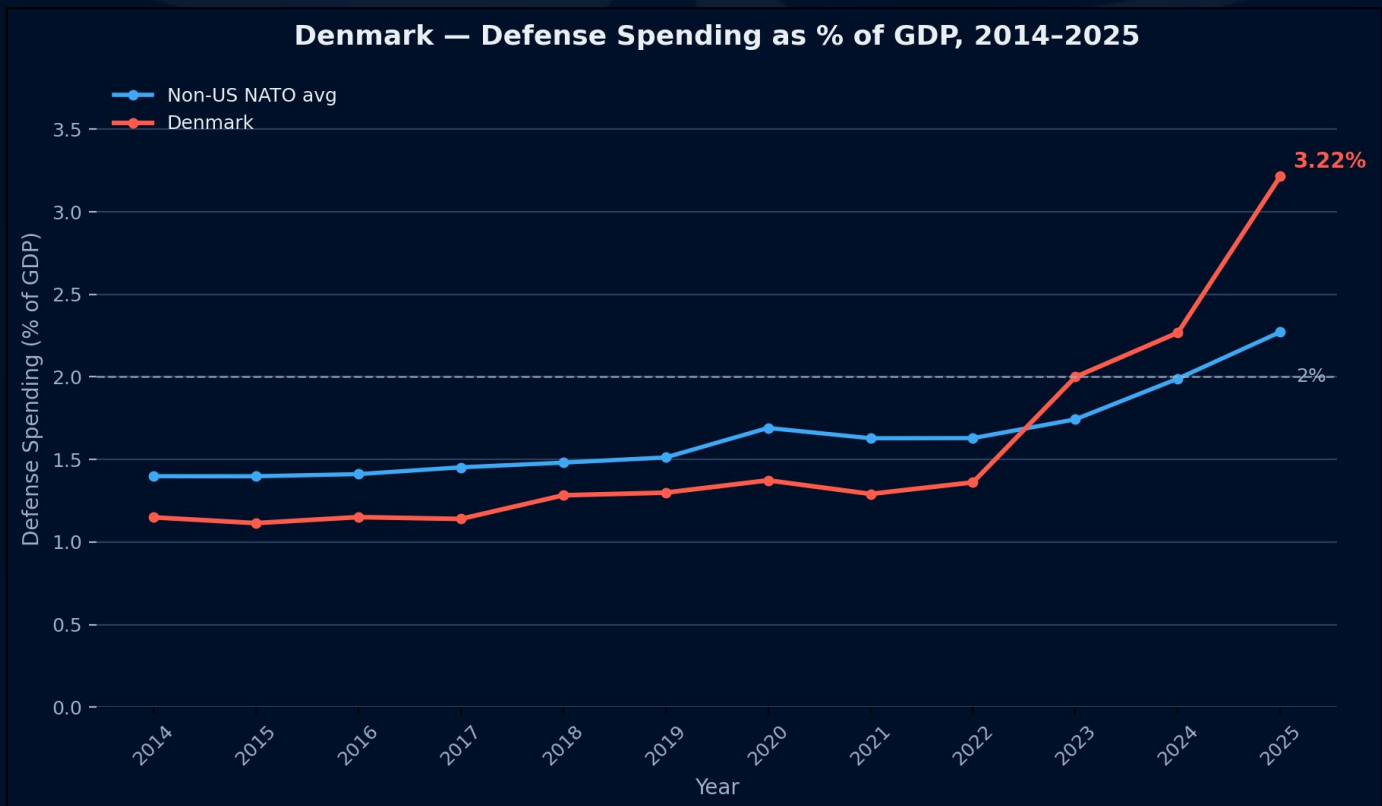
This radar chart compares a country's force structure to the Non-US NATO median (data from IISS's 2026 Military Balance) across six capability areas: Land Combat (tanks, IFVs), Active Personnel (total active-duty troops), Naval Combat (submarines, destroyers/frigates/corvettes), Air & Missile Defense (long/medium-range SAM systems), Air Combat (4th-gen+ combat aircraft), and Fires (artillery, rocket launchers). Scores are weighted, with modern platforms counted fully and legacy platforms counted at reduced weight.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## *Defense Spending Level*

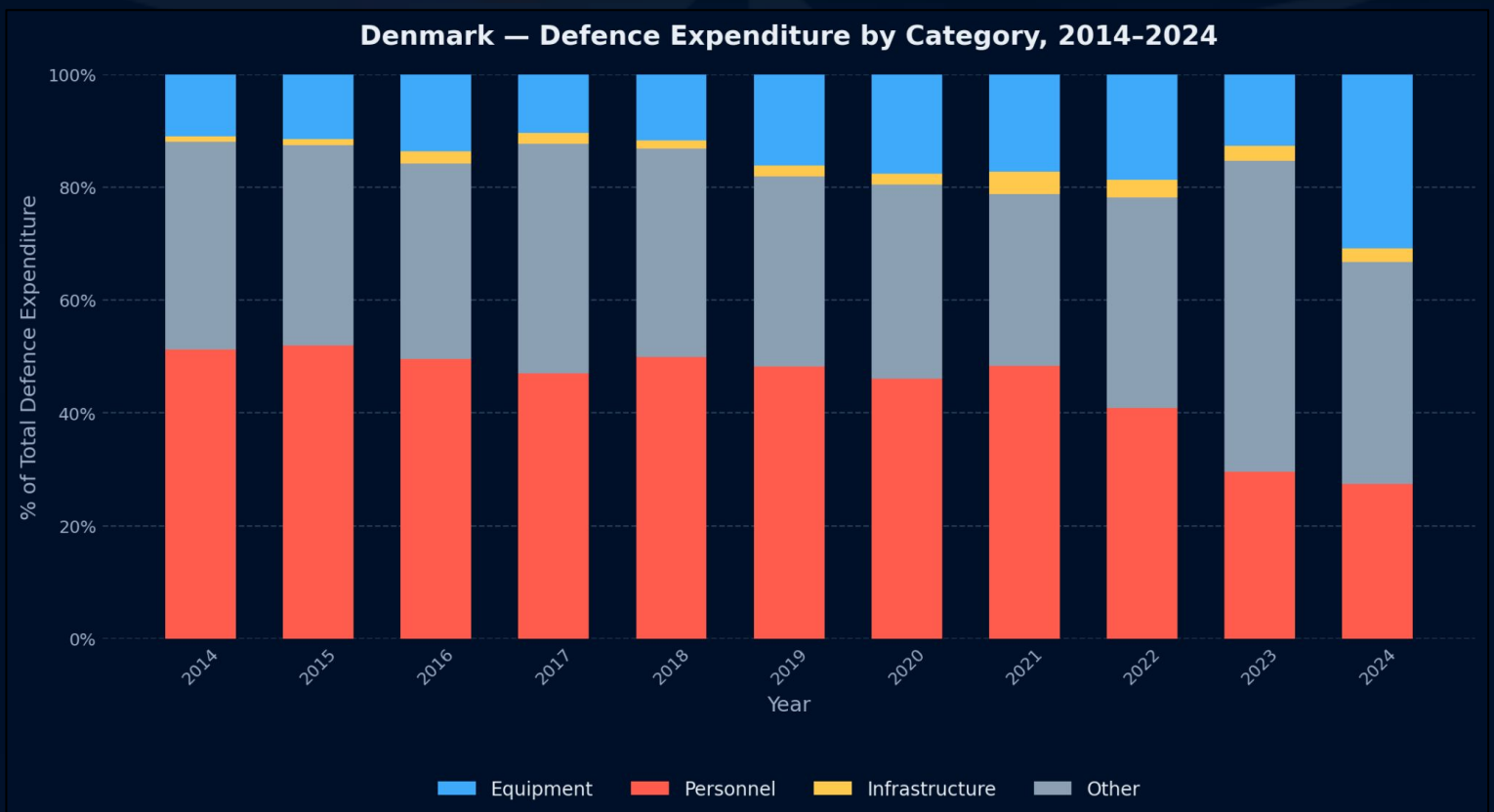
Denmark's [defense spending](#) trajectory is one of the most dramatic in the alliance. Spending tracked below the non-US NATO average for most of the past decade and hovering around 1.1–1.3% of GDP through 2022. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Danish defense spending accelerated: 2.0% in 2023, 2.3% in 2024, and 3.22% in 2025, now well above the non-US NATO average of 2.5%. The chief enabler was the [February 2025 Acceleration Fund](#) of \$7B, nearly doubling defense spending in a single year. An [additional \\$13.7B plan](#) through 2033 covering F-35s, air defense, and Arctic capabilities followed in October 2025. Denmark has committed to the Hague 3.5% core plus 1.5% framework by 2035.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## *Equipment Share*

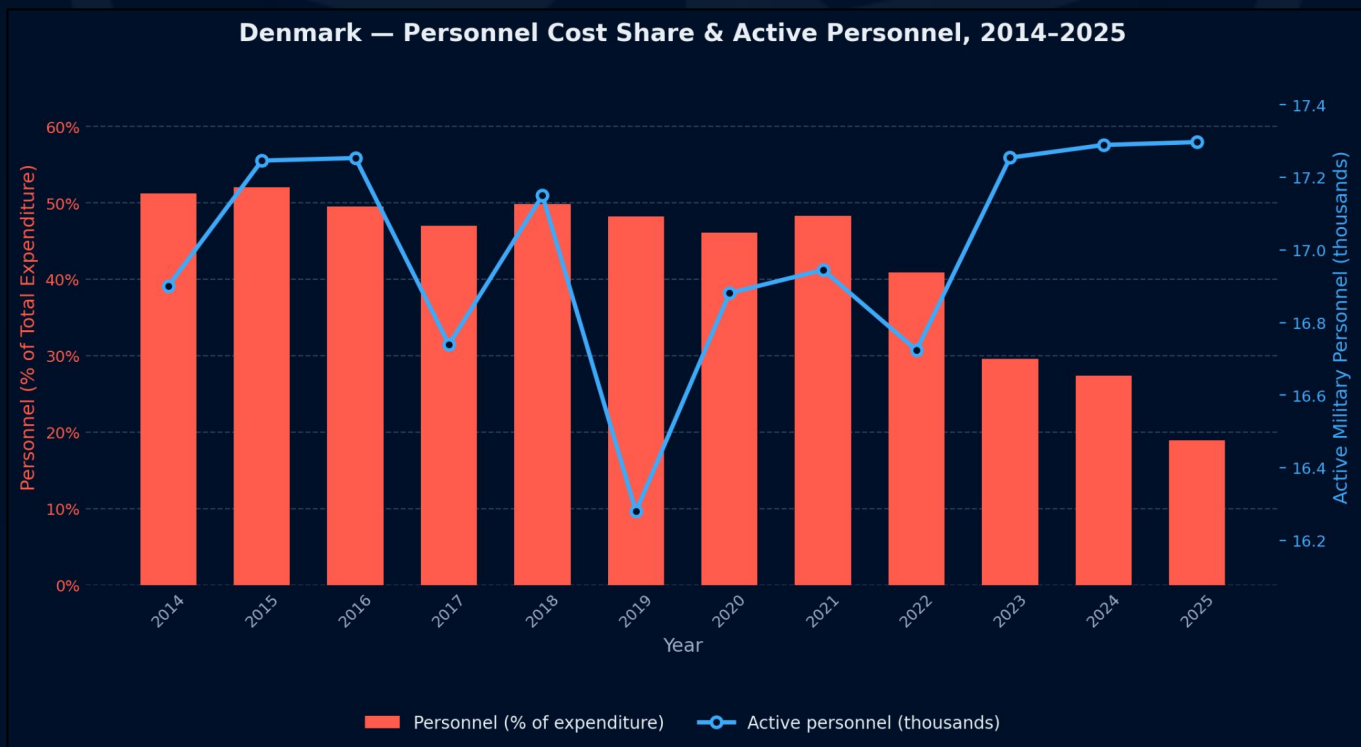
Denmark's equipment share transformation is a model story of transformation. Personnel costs ran at roughly 48–52% of the defense budget through most of 2014–2022, with equipment investment modest and relatively flat. The inflection comes sharply in 2023 and 2024: equipment has surged to roughly 30%+, reflecting the F-35 deliveries, air defense procurement, Naval Strike Missiles, and CV9035 IFVs all registering in actual expenditure simultaneously. Denmark has moved from a personnel-heavy, equipment-light budget to one of the most equipment-dominated spending profiles in the alliance.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## *Manpower & Recruitment*

Denmark's [personnel picture](#) shows a stable but now expanding force. Active military personnel had trended unevenly throughout 2014–2022, with some volatility but no dramatic collapse. Personnel cost share has fallen sharply—from roughly 51% in 2014 to approximately 19% in 2025—not because the force shrank but because the budget grew so fast that equipment investment now dominates. The conscript [cohort is being expanded](#) from 5,000 to 7,500 annually by 2033, with national service extended to eleven months, deliberately building mobilizable reserve depth alongside the high-end equipment surge. Denmark is growing the force while freeing budget space for procurement rather than trading one against the other.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## *Capability Modernization*

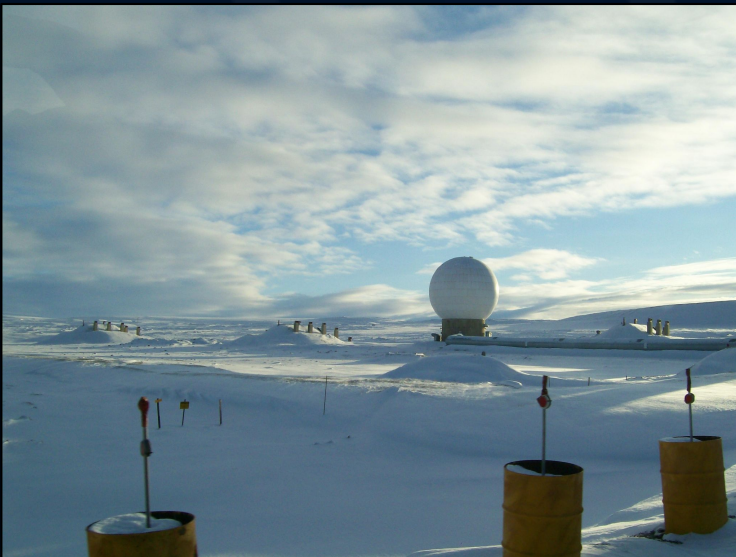
Denmark is executing one of the most [comprehensive modernization programs](#) in the alliance. The Headline: 43 F-35As total, replacing their fleet of F-16s. Air defense is the most dramatic shift, Denmark went from zero ground-based coverage to simultaneously procuring IRIS-T SLM, VL MICA, and NASAMS, with a \$9B commitment including long-range SAMP/T. Naval strike is being upgraded with Kongsberg Naval Strike Missiles. On land, 115 additional CV9035 IFVs address gaps created by Ukraine transfers. Arctic investment spans five new vessels, East Greenland radar, and a new Nuuk Joint Arctic Command headquarters. MQ-9B Sky Guardians add ISR depth.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## *Force Posture*

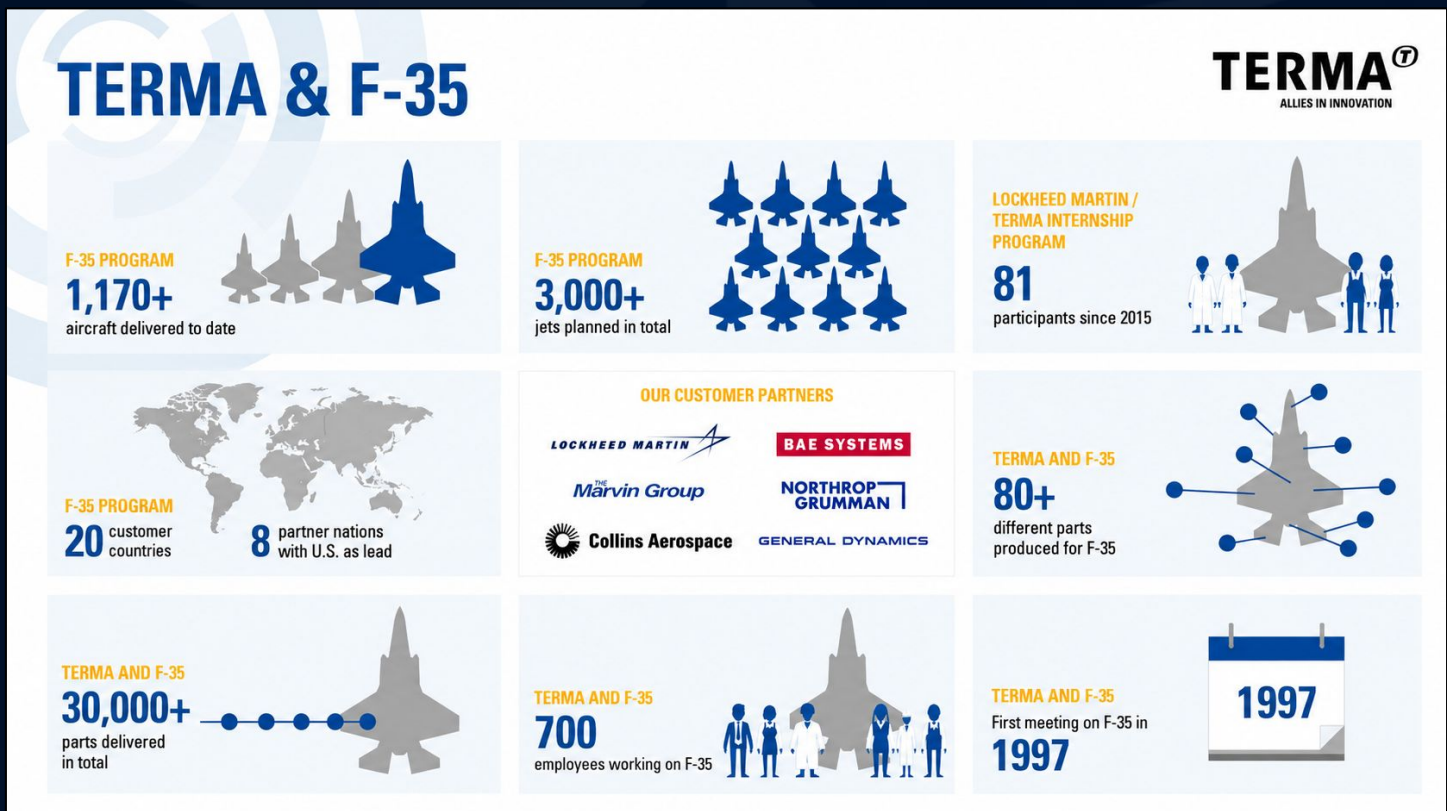
Denmark's force posture is defined by geographic leverage far exceeding its population of six million. Danish territory spans the Baltic approaches, North Sea, and High Arctic through Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Pituffik Space Base in Greenland, operating under the [1951 US-Denmark defense framework](#), is one of America's most important missile-warning and space-surveillance centers. Denmark co-leads [NATO's Multinational Division North](#) with Latvia, commands an 800-troop armored battlegroup in Latvia under Enhanced Forward Presence, and [contributes 130 instructors](#) to Operation Interflex training Ukrainian soldiers in the UK. Nordic air integration with Finland, Norway, and Sweden deepens the regional architecture. Denmark doesn't host a large US garrison, but Greenland's strategic value to the US Arctic and missile-defense posture gives it outsized significance.



# MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

## Industrial Base

Denmark's defense industrial base is specialized but strategically valuable. Terma produces electronic warfare systems and radar components embedded in the global F-35 supply chain. Systematic's SitaWare C4ISR software is deployed by multiple NATO allies including the United States, making Denmark a genuine military-software contributor. The July 2025 [Denmark-Ukraine defense industry agreement](#) gives Denmark access to Ukrainian battlefield drone innovation in exchange for allowing Ukrainian firms to operate in Denmark—positioning Danish industry at the leading edge of drone warfare development. Denmark also administered roughly €830M in EU frozen-asset windfall [proceeds for Ukrainian procurement in 2025](#), extending its industrial influence well beyond domestic production capacity. Denmark is not a major munitions producer or platform manufacturer, but its software, electronics, and procurement-architecture contributions punch above its size.



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## *Declared Posture*

Denmark's declared posture is among the sharpest in the alliance. The [2024–2033 Defence Agreement](#) frames Russia as the central security threat, and [PM Frederiksen has been consistently direct](#): "We are not safe" and "buy, buy, buy" have defined her public communications on rearmament. The [2025 Arctic and North Atlantic agreements](#) treat the High North as core NATO deterrence terrain. On China, Denmark voted yes on the October 2024 EU Chinese EV tariffs and has [explicitly warned against](#) Chinese predatory interest in Arctic mining, airports, and logistics—areas that intersect directly with US missile-warning infrastructure in Greenland. On Iran, Denmark joined the March 2026 Hormuz statement signaling conditional [openness to maritime security action](#). Now Frederiksen's minority government after the March 2026 snap election must balance rearmament ambition against welfare and cost-of-living pressures.

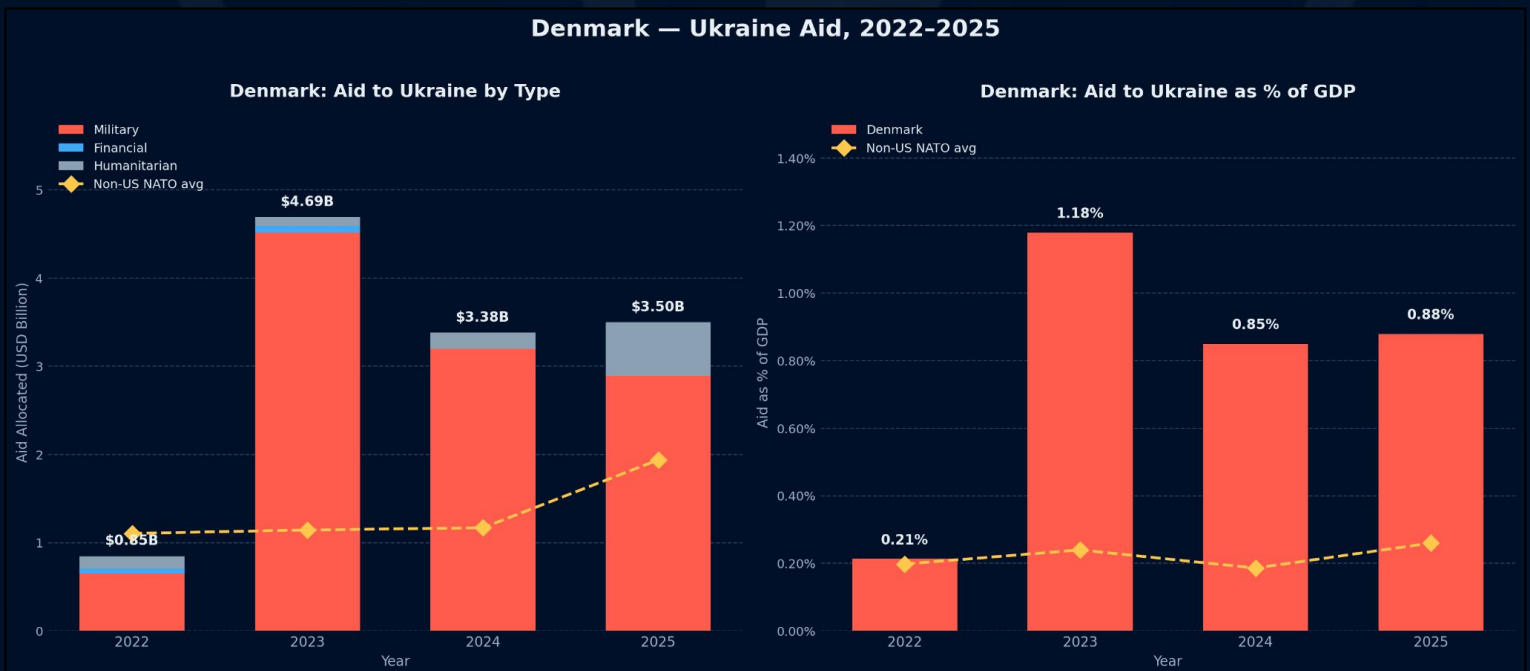


# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## Ukraine Support

Denmark is [Ukraine's number one European supporter](#) contributing massively in aid to Ukraine's fight. Aid surged to \$4.69B in 2023 before stabilizing at \$3.38B and \$3.50B in 2024–2025. The Kiel Institute tracks €11.020B allocated and €12.075B committed (3.272% and 3.586% of GDP) making Denmark top tier alongside the Baltics. The Ukraine Fund provides DKK 60.4B (~\$8.8B) in multi-year military support through 2028. Denmark [pledged 19 F-16s](#) to Ukraine and helped train Ukrainian pilots. The most distinctive contribution is the [financing of weapons](#) manufactured by Ukraine's own defense industry rather than drawing from allied stocks, cutting delivery timelines dramatically. For example, the Bohdana 155mm howitzer moved from contract to battlefield in roughly two months. Denmark also administers €830M in EU frozen-asset windfall proceeds for Ukrainian-industry procurement.

Denmark — Ukraine Aid, 2022-2025



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## *Russian Decoupling*

Denmark's Russian energy decoupling is among NATO's cleanest: no pipeline dependence, no Druzhba crude problem, no Rosatom nuclear, no significant Russian LNG. EU sanctions are implemented without obstruction. The vulnerability is maritime infrastructure. The [Nord Stream explosions](#) near Danish and Swedish waters brought the war to the deepsea, and Denmark's geography places it at the center of the pipelines, cables, and chokepoints that the post-Russian European energy system now depends on. Denmark's decoupling position is strong, but the challenge is defending the infrastructure that depends on it.



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## *Public Support & Political Resilience*

Denmark posted 85% for staying in NATO, 78% for defending another ally, and 83% feeling more safe from NATO cooperation, all near the top of the alliance. Forty-five percent favored increasing defense spending in 2024, above the alliance average and consistent with Denmark's trajectory well above 2% of GDP and growing toward 3%, and Ukraine support stood at 75% combined, among the alliance's highest. Seventy-nine percent agreed NATO membership makes a foreign attack less likely, and 72% said Russia's war had affected Denmark's security. The Frederiksen Social Democratic government has been one of the most decisive Ukraine supporters in the alliance, and the full parliamentary spectrum from conservatives to social democrats maintains near-total consensus on NATO. No major party challenges alliance membership, and Greenland's political salience has paradoxically strengthened rather than weakened Danish public attachment to NATO solidarity.



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## *Hedging Behavior*

Denmark's hedging behavior record is clean. No BRI participation, no adversary arms procurement, no high-level Moscow or Tehran engagement, no obstruction of Finnish or Swedish accession. Arms procurement is entirely Western: F-35A, NASAMS, IRIS-T SLM, SAMP/T, Naval Strike Missiles, CV9035, MQ-9B. Denmark voted yes on Chinese EV tariffs and has moved to restrict Chinese infrastructure access to Greenland's strategic assets, including ordering Huawei equipment removed from sensitive telecom networks. It did not obstruct Operation Epic Fury and joined the Hormuz statement. While the future of Greenland remains an unresolved point of friction with the Trump Administration, Denmark displays no meaningful hedging concerns.



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## *Operational Cooperation*

Denmark has one of the strongest operational track records in NATO relative to its size. It suffered 44 soldiers killed in Afghanistan—the [highest per capita death toll](#) of any NATO ally—deploying nearly [20,000 personnel](#) to the region and was the largest per-capita troop contributor to ISAF. Eight more died in Iraq. On recent operations, [Denmark deployed the frigate](#) Iver Huitfeldt to Operation Prosperity Guardian—shooting down four Houthi drones in combat. Denmark also joined the March 2026 Hormuz statement, and did not obstruct Operation Epic Fury. Pituffik Space Base in Greenland provides one of the most important US missile-warning and space-surveillance facilities in the world. Denmark has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the alliance and to shared operations with the United States, at real cost.

