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Denmark boosts Arctic defense spending by \$1.96bn amid security concerns

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- by Shipping Telegraph

The Danish government has pledged \$1.96bn of extra spending to boost its military presence in the Arctic and North Atlantic region and improve its capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region. The decision comes amid Denmark's evolving challenges in the region, including the increased strains in the relationship between Copenhagen and Washington over control of Greenland.

The Ministry of Defence said in a Monday release that three new Arctic naval vessels and more long-range drones and satellites are included in the first part of an agreement concluded between the Danish government and the political parties behind the Danish Defence Agreement in close collaboration with the Greenlandic government and the Faroese government.

Denmark this week announced a defence agreement worth approximately \$1.96bn (14 billion Danish kroner) to increase its military presence in the region.

A second part of the deal will be concluded in the first half of this year, according to the officials.

The political parties behind the agreement aim to improve capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region.

At the same time, support to Allies and NATO's efforts in the Arctic and North Atlantic is essential to strengthening overall security and defence. Overall, the initiatives entail a financial commitment of 14,6 billion Danish kroner.

Among other things, the initiatives include three new arctic naval vessels to ensure that tasks around Greenland may be carried out more effectively and with greater flexibility. The ships will be able to carry other capabilities with them such as helicopters and drones.

The agreement includes two long-range drones with the ability to conduct surveillance over large areas at great distances and provide detailed surveillance. Meanwhile, the Danish defence ministry believes that satellite capacity and ground-based sensors will strengthen situational awareness and intelligence by identifying and surveying activities in areas such as the Arctic and North Atlantic.

"We must face the fact that there are serious challenges regarding security and defence in the Arctic and North Atlantic. For this reason, we must strengthen our presence in the region. That is the objective of this agreement, which paves the way for further initiatives already this year," stated Danish Minister of Defence Troels Lund Poulsen.

"Greenland is facing a changing security landscape. I am pleased with the steps we are taking towards increased security in and around Greenland with this partial defence agreement. Naalakkersuisut is looking forward to continuing the dialogue with the Government of Denmark" said Vivian Motzfeldt, Minister of Statehood and Foreign Affairs, Greenland.

The initiative also focuses on supporting local workplaces and businesses in the Faroe Islands and in Greenland, whilst it includes among other things provisions for an increased admission to the Arctic basic military training.

"It is essential that the strengthened efforts in the Arctic and North Atlantic are carried out in close cooperation with the Faroe Islands and Greenland in order for the initiatives to be rooted in local communities and have a positive impact on civil society. That is what we will achieve with this agreement," added Minister of Defence Troels Lund Poulsen.