

SWEDISH EXERCISE TARGETED BY RUSSIAN DRONES? LIVE ORDNANCE READIED TO RENDER A RESPONSE

Unidentified UAV systems have interrupted an exercise carried out by the Swedish Navy. The soldiers were even preparing themselves to shoot the UAVs in question down, with live ammunition - as Dagens Nyheter claimed.

According to Dagens Nyheter, during the Swenex exercise, unidentified UAV systems were spotted close to the region of operations, which made the exercise more difficult for the Swedes. At first, the involved soldiers have even received an order to get ready to shoot the drones down with live ammunition.

The event is quite important, as the Swenex-16 exercise involving mainly the Swedish Navy (participation of the Air Force could have also been witnessed) was focused on the capability of defending the Swedish "territory and interest". The operation took part in the Gotland area, and close to the eastern coast of Sweden, the region which is considered to be potentially prone to Russian aggression.

According to the official releases issued by the Swedish authorities, the training activities involved around 20 large vessels (including corvettes and submarines), and numerous small surface combatants, around 2000 soldiers and Air Force jets and helicopters. The UAV operators were trying to "spy" on the large scale operation which was arranged, in order to improve the Swedish defensive capabilities, and such stance may be interpreted to be aggressive. Thus it is quite probable (however, not certain) that the UAV systems in question were Russian. We know that throughout the last decade, the Russian Army gradually expanded the operational use of the UAV systems, this trend might have been witnessed in case of Syrian and Ukrainian crises as well.

It is worth noting that Sweden takes relevant steps, the goal of which is to improve its defensive capabilities in the Baltic region, in short- and long-term dimensions. Besides the contracts related to modernization of the Strv 122 main battle tanks and CV-90 IFVs, distributed across a long period of increasing the defence spending, the authorities have also decided to establish military presence on the island of Gotland. Until the moment when a permanent infrastructure is established, rotational presence of a company-sized unit is maintained there.

Moreover, recently a decision has been published that ground-based RBS-15 anti-ship missiles will be included in the inventory of the Swedish Army again, also within the scope of reinforcing the defensive capabilities of the Gotland Island. The threat is treated seriously, as rapid actions are taken, so unpopular in the West. The UAV sorties are well embedded within the dangerous situation in the Baltic area.