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## Abstract

### In Lithuanian:

2023 m. balandžio 4 d. Suomija oficialiai tapo Šiaurės Atlanto sutarties organizacijos nare po to, kai 2022 m. gegužės 18 d. pateikė paraišką dėl narystės. Tai buvo Suomijos kelias į NATO. Kaip Rusija paveikė Suomijos saugumo vaidmens transformaciją iki narystės NATO? Naudota teorinė sistema - vaidmenų teorija, o metodologija - kokybinis atvejo tyrimas. Metodo ir teorinės sistemos pasirinkimo tikslas - išplėsti tokios transformacijos paaiškinimą.

Tikslas - ištirti, kaip 2007-2022 m. keitėsi Suomijos vaidmuo saugumo srityje. Naujovė yra ta, kad Suomijos vaidmens saugumo srityje pokyčiams tirti tarptautiniuose santykiuose naudojama vaidmens teorija daugiaplaniam kontekste. Rusijos įtaka, politikų veiksmai, NATO integracija ir Europos saugumo struktūra. Kiekvienas iš jų yra atskira dimensija. NATO integracija ir Europos saugumo struktūra yra susijusi su tvarių dalyvavimu NATO kaip partnerės veikloje nuo XX a. dešimtojo dešimtmečio. Rusijos įtaka priklausė Rusijos užsienio politikos pokyčiams ir didėjančiai militarizmo baimei. Atskleisti politikų veiksmai, susiję su politinio elito požiūriu į Rusijos įtaką, NATO integraciją ir Europos saugumo struktūrą 2007-2022 m. Remiantis dokumentiniais tyrimais, šis darbas kuo labiau prisidės prie konceptualių įžvalgų.

Padaryta išvada, kad Rusijoje susiklosčiusi situacija turėjo įtakos Suomijos įstojimui į NATO, o nemažą dalį įtakos turėjo ir Europos geopolitinės situacijos pokyčiai. Suomijos politika pasikeitė dėl paaštrėjusios saugumo dilemos, balansuojant tarp Suomijos autonomijos ir aljanso korporacijų bei priklausomybės, taip pat dėl Šiaurės šalių solidarumo ir regioninių tarybų poveikio. Įstojimas į NATO atskleidė nacionalinio apsisprendimo, užsienio spaudimo ir susitarimų kaip NATO partnerės veiksmus, kurie pakeitė Suomijos karines ir civilines institucijas ir priartino ją prie aljanso. Siūloma toliau tirti pasirengimą hibridiniam karui ir branduolinės laikysenos, logikos ir platinimo dichotomiją, lemiančią Rusijos doktriną Arkties ratui.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** NATO, Suomija, Rusija, saugumo politika, gynybos politika, užsienio politika.

**In English:**

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Finland was officially a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation member following the ratification process after submitting its membership application on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This was Finland's pathway to NATO. How has Russia influenced Finland's security role transformation to NATO membership? The theoretical framework used was the role theory, and the methodology is the qualitative case study. The aim of choosing the method and the theoretical framework is to widen the explanation for such a transformation.

The goal is to study how Finland's security role has changed between 2007-2022. The novelty is in using the role theory in international relations in a multi-dimensional to study the changes in Finland's security role. The Russian Influence, Policymakers' Actions, and NATO Integration and European Security Structure. Each one is a dimension. NATO Integration and European Security Structure is related to sustainable engagement with NATO as a partner since the 1990s. The Russian Influence belonged to changes in Russia's foreign policy and mounting fears of militarism. Policymakers' Actions related to the political elite's attitude towards the Russian influence, NATO integration and European security structure between 2007 and 2022. Based on desk research, this thesis will contribute as much to conceptual insights as possible.

The conclusion was that the situation created in Russia influenced Finland's joining NATO, with a significant portion of the changes in the European geopolitical situation. Finland's policy shifted due to the worsening security dilemma, balancing Finland's autonomy with alliance corporations and dependency and the impact of Nordic Solidarity and Regional Councils. Joining NATO revealed the factors of national resolve, foreign pressures, and the arrangements as a NATO partner that changed Finland's military and civil institutions and made it closer to the alliance. Further research on hybrid warfare preparedness and the dichotomy of the nuclear posture, logic, and proliferation governing the Russian Doctrine for the Arctic Circle is suggested.

**Keywords:** NATO, Finland, Russia, security policy, defence policy, foreign policy.

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#Vienybė\_Težydi

#Слава\_Україні

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## Introduction

With the recent expansion of NATO and Finland's accession, an unmistakable reorientation of its security policy can be observed. Specific global issues influence this particular decision, especially now that Ukraine is under attack by Russia and Europe is redefining its security structure. In this regard, the external explanations of the causes behind this policy shift are essential in understanding why foreign policy is affected by changing global politics.

The Finish policy of 'Finlandization' has had implications for how the country has positioned its security role in the aftermath of the Cold War. Indeed, because of the 1948 Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, the Cold War influenced neutrality policies within Finland. Hence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Finland was free to join any Western institution, such as the EU.

However, it was cautious about joining NATO because of the hostility it would attract from Russia. This regional outcome with the position of neighbouring Sweden revealed a process that was running deeply, shifting the position from being a military non-alignment country.<sup>1</sup> The shift from neutral during the Cold War to non-military alignment in 1995 in the post-Cold War era happened due to Finland joining the European Union on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995. Baldur Thorhallsson and Thomas Stude Vidal said, "*Adjusted to the security environment by seeking full shelter provided by the EU. Membership of the common security and foreign policy of the Union removed notions of a strict 'neutrality' from Finland's foreign policy*".<sup>2</sup>

In 1995, the EU Membership made Finland's membership in the European Union perceived to enhance the economic and political equilibrium while being militarily non-aligned to avoid Russian aggression. NATO gained pace with Partnership for Peace in 1994, although Finland had been an observer of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council since 1991 and further developed by becoming Enhanced Opportunities Partners in 2014.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Forsberg, Tuomas. "Finland and NATO: Strategic choices and identity conceptions." *The European neutrals and NATO: non-alignment, partnership, membership?* (2018): 97-127.

<sup>2</sup> Baldur Thorhallsson and Thomas Stude Vidal, 'Finland's NATO Membership: Continuous Shelter-Seeking Strategy', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 46, no. 3 (1 September 2023): 194–218.

<sup>3</sup> Strauss, Lon, and Njord Wegge, eds. *Defending NATO's Northern Flank: Power Projection and Military Operations*. Taylor & Francis, 2023. P 236.

The background context is crucial in understanding Finland's security role's evolution and decision to join NATO. The research will explore the intriguing aspect of identifying why Finland joined NATO despite being militarily non-aligned since Finland's European Union membership made the country join the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), whose purpose is to add to the range of instruments already at the European Union's disposal for crisis management and conflict prevention in support of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the capacity to conduct EU-led crisis management operations, including military operations where NATO as a whole is not engaged.<sup>4</sup>

It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets. Later, that was upgraded in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty to become The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) <sup>5</sup>. The subjects of this research could include elements which will help to unravel the puzzle surrounding Finland's foreign and defence policy.

Considering the international political factors of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the policy changed to full NATO membership. The research will employ a qualitative case study methodology, a hallmark of this study. This methodology will be used from 2007 to 2022. It will run through the data related to the decision-making process that led to Finland's NATO membership. According to the Defense Ministry of Finland, the country's cooperation with NATO began in 1994 when it joined the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP).

This relationship was further strengthened in 2014 when Finland participated in the Enhanced Opportunities Partners programme (EOP). According to the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy 2016 it mentioned the EOP importance as the following:

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<sup>4</sup> The European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 'NATO - Official Text: EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP', NATO, 16 December 2002. URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_19544.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm). [Accessed 23 November 2024]

<sup>5</sup> The Diplomatic Service of the European Union. 'The Common Security and Defence Policy | EEAS'. European Union - External Action, 2009. URL : [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy_en). [Accessed 23 November 2024.]

*“A useful instrument for Finland in maintaining and developing its NATO partnership. It is important for Finland to develop regular political dialogue and practical cooperation in the coming years. The latter includes, among other things, pre-approval as a partner to crisis management operations, participation in the initial phases of NATO’s operational, training and exercise planning and cyber-defence cooperation. The continual development of military cooperation with NATO is one of the key elements through which Finland maintains and develops its national defence and the capabilities for defending its territory. Finland continues to extensively participate in NATO exercises and training activities. The participation of partner countries in NATO exercises takes place under the auspices of partnership policy.”<sup>6</sup>*

The area of the study links to how the change in the country's security role affects Finland's security position and what lessons were learned from such a shift. The study aims to fill this gap by comprehensively analysing the factors that led to Finland's decision to join NATO. The last Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy 2020, authored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before joining NATO, focused on the following:

*“Maintaining a national room to manoeuvre and freedom of choice are also integral parts of Finland's foreign, security and defence policy. This retains the option of joining a military alliance and applying for NATO membership. The decisions are always considered in real time, taking account of the changes in the international security environment. Interoperability achieved through cooperation ensures the elimination of any practical impediments arising to a potential membership.”<sup>7</sup>*

This research investigates the reasons behind Finland's policy shift by examining the external factors influencing its decision to join NATO. The study will use the case study to focus on how and why this realignment occurred. Establishing the deterrence approach on broad lines with Russia, which shares more than 1,300 km, is challenging to defend.

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<sup>6</sup> PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE ‘Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy 2016’, 2016. URL: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/1986338/VNKH092016+en.pdf>. P 26. [ Accessed 19 November 2024].

<sup>7</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. ‘Government Report on Finnish and Security Policy 2020’, 29 October 2020. URL: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162515/VN\\_2020\\_32.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162515/VN_2020_32.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) , P 31. [ Accessed 19 November 2024]



## 1) The Research Question:

### **How has Russia influenced Finland's Security Role Transformation to NATO membership between 2007 and 2022?**

To analyse factors influencing the decision-making process of Finnish experts and policymakers' shifting the country's security role into applying for membership in NATO on May 17th, 2022 and joining in since April 4th, 2023. Links with how Finland's security position shifted. To thoroughly understand and analyse particular phenomena in particular contexts for further details. This question is at the heart of the research and guides the investigation into the factors that led to Finland's security role shift. The spectrum of this study is in military, security, foreign policies, and diplomatic aspects, which narrows the research question.

## 2) Research goals and objectives:

The focus will be from 2007-2022, and I will choose this period since it discusses how the European security structure started to elevate. The aim is to widen the understanding of the country identification markers created by policymakers based on national interests, values and ideologies. Analysed all the elements that went through the black box of making decisions. The focal point is the reaction to external factors that contributed to Finland's shift from militarily non-aligned to NATO membership; it will run through the following:

- A- Discovering how Russian foreign policy and actions from 2007 to 2022 influenced the Finnish position, foreign policy and elite decision-making on security matters.
- B- Figuring out the concept Finland applied in evolving security partnerships with NATO in its decision to pursue membership.
- C- This thesis will examine three dimensions and how they influence Finland's security role.

Title: Dimension number 1

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***Russian Influence:***

***Finland's decision to join NATO was mainly influenced by intensified Russian foreign policy changes and mounting militarism fears.***

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**Testable Elements:**

- A) Investigating concrete acts undertaken by the Russians and their relation to Finish political class perception changes.
- B) Analyse the press, the policy documentation, and discussions with policymakers to study changes in the attitudes of the masses with significant policy changes or the legislature's actions.

Title: Dimension number 2

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***Policymakers' Actions :***

***The political elite's attitude towards the Russian influence, NATO integration and European security structure between 2007 and 2022.***

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**Testable Elements:**

- A) The focus is on security policy reorientations in reaction to threats in the neighbourhood between 2007-2022.
- B) The war that began with the Russian invasion of Ukraine with its aggressiveness in 2022. Whether it was a crunching factor in rapidly putting Finland on the path towards NATO membership.

Title: Dimension number 3

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*NATO Integration and European Security Structure :*

*Finland's involvement in NATO's Partnership for Peace onward led to the arrangement of military and civil institutions regionally and internationally in preparation for full membership, easing the transition.*

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**Testable Elements:**

A) The level of military and political integration of Finland and NATO capitals before and after 2014, along with elites' attitudes since NATO was engaged with Finland up to that time.

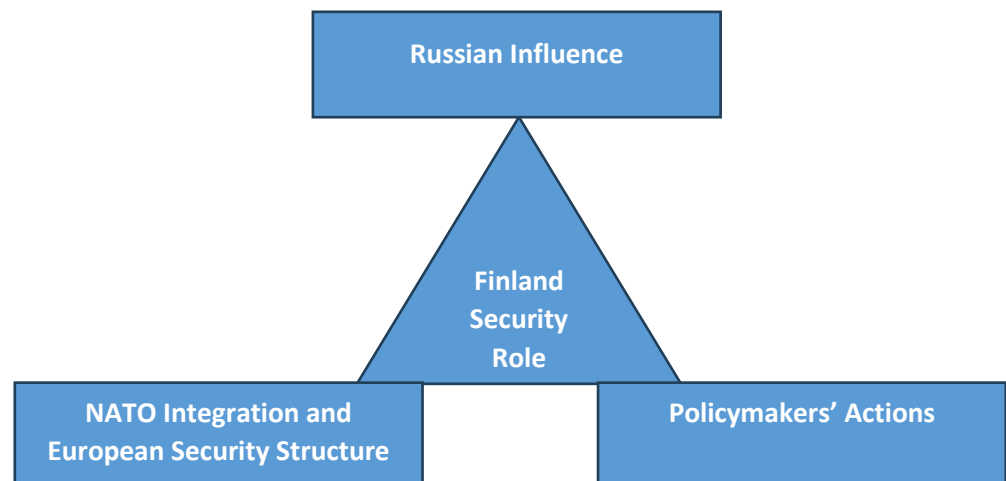
B) It might include an assessment of Finland's defence cooperation with Nordic countries, intended with NATO, other allies, and partners, emphasising pre-NATO joint military training.

3) The Master thesis will be divided into two chapters; each chapter covers 7 years:

**I - Chapter 1 Initial Engagement with NATO (2007-2014):**

A Time of Gradualism And The Crisis in Ukraine

**II - Chapter 2 Heightened Tensions (2015-2022):** From Cautious Cooperation with Russia to Realignment with NATO



*Figure 1: The multi-dimensional impact on Finland's security role. Created by the author.*

## The Literature Review

A comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge and debates on the topic. The review's outcome shows two perspectives: momentum since 2007 and different arguments on how the NATO membership will take shape.

### *Russian Influence*

Studying military doctrine and its impact by scholars signifies that the Russian military has been increasingly assertive under the nationalistic leadership of Vladimir Putin, as evidenced by its August 2008 invasion and occupation of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia. It has been augmented by increased oil and natural gas revenues, which have enabled Russia to devote more financial resources to its military, including its nuclear forces.<sup>8</sup> Brommesson, Ekengren, and Michalski, in their study of *'From Variation to Convergence in Turbulent Times—Foreign and Security Policy Choices among the Nordics 2014–2023'* mentioned how that led in 2014 to face acute security threats in the North-Eastern territories, significantly impacting the Nordic foreign policy elites' perception of their countries' ability to manoeuvre and conduct autonomous foreign policy.<sup>9</sup>

Koivunen, Ojala, and Holmén, in their book *"The Nordic Economic, Social and Political Model: Challenges in the 21st Century"*, acknowledge that in 2016, when the Swedish and Finnish NATO alignment policy, in light of liquid neutrality, saw NATO as a pragmatic approach to enhancing security capability and negotiating more room to manoeuvre.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it imparts an even more immense dimension to the threats faced by Finland, studying how these influenced Finnish policy-makers' risk assessments and decision-making processes. It is deficiently devoted to Russian influence, where analyses are minimal on how Russia's strategic interests and doctrines have been used directly in forming or shaping the security policy in Finland.

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<sup>8</sup> Chapman, *Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook*. P 95.

<sup>9</sup> Brommesson, Ekengren, and Michalski, *'From Variation to Convergence in Turbulent Times—Foreign and Security Policy Choices among the Nordics 2014–2023'* P 17.

<sup>10</sup> Koivunen, Ojala, and Holmén, *The Nordic Economic, Social and Political Model: Challenges in the 21st Century*. P 107-108

### *Policymakers' actions*

On the other hand, Cheng and Lee, in their book about public opinion and national security, expressed that Finland is one of the few cases in the role of public opinion was shifted on how it has changed from being unrelated to foreign policy decision-making to being subordinated to it during the Cold War and finally a determining factor in the post-Cold War era.<sup>11</sup> A question from such a conclusion emerged and was given that polling opinions and how it is conducted do not always reveal the whole picture. That is what Glassner and Fuchshuber examined in their article about NATO and non-alignment in Finland's foreign policy, in which they concluded that although the war in Ukraine since 2022 led to a sharp increase in the salience of the issue of national security, that would disprove the notion of an overnight 180-degree change in Finnish foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> Lean closer to the West and its military alliance. The debate, as Professor Tuomas Forsberg, the Director of Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, went as :

*“There were some changes in the argumentation in the 2000s when Russia was seen as becoming a partner with the West, and NATO’s role seemed to develop in the context of the war against terrorism, but in 2022, the debate had come full circle. The main issue was NATO’s role as a defence alliance vis-à-vis the Russian threat.”*<sup>13</sup>

With the emergence of a new generation of leaders, there is an argument that expresses a more positive perception of NATO membership. Professor Daniel Fittante from Södertörn University, Huddinge, Sweden, mentioned it as :

*“Why so few articulated a position against NATO before Russia’s 2022 invasion, and parliamentary speeches between February and April 2022 manifest clear generation-based distinctions among them.”*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cheng, T. J., and Wei-chin Lee. National Security, Public Opinion and Regime Asymmetry: A Six-Country Study. 2017. p 188.

<sup>12</sup> Glassner, Sebastian, and Annalena Fuchshuber. "BETWEEN NATO AND NON-ALIGNMENT." Journal of International Affairs 75, no. 2 (2023): 45-66.

<sup>13</sup> Forsberg, Tuomas. "Four rounds of the Finnish NATO debate." (2023). p 48.

<sup>14</sup> Fittante, Daniel. 'Generation-Based Position Taking: Unpacking Finland’s Decision to Join NATO', Party Politics 0, no. 0 (2023): 1–11.

For more senior members, the arguments posited were thematic:

*1- non-alignment had worked effectively for over eight decades.*

*2- Finland would risk becoming a war “frontline”.*

*3- Finland had always had to deal with geopolitical matters on its own and in its way.*

For Finnish members of parliament, whose entire adult lives were spent in a fully EU-integrated Finland, support for NATO seemed logical and intuitive.<sup>15</sup> Besides that, the Nordic Review of International Studies study, published in 2023, concluded that the same people had resisted the membership bid earlier but then supported it.<sup>16</sup> All of that encourages more research to see across the aisle into a topic of significant geopolitical importance.

The Role of Policymakers and Decision-Making Processes: even though consensus-oriented policymaking has been given importance in this country, the specific roles of Finnish policymakers in this security role transition or their approaches to this have been little discussed. Further, it does not enter the literature's fold regarding how they affected the NATO decision.

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<sup>15</sup> Fittante, Daniel. "Generation-based position taking: Unpacking Finland's decision to join NATO." *Party Politics* 30, no. 5 (2024): 759-769.

<sup>16</sup> Forsberg, Tuomas. "Four rounds of the Finnish NATO debate." (2023) p 48.

### *NATO Integration and European Security Structure*

Then another question will arise: If the Russian military doctrine and the influence of public opinion were insufficient to join NATO earlier, what pushed Finland to change its position? David Arter answered that differently in his article *‘From Finlandisation and Post-Finlandisation to the End of Finlandisation? Finland’s Road to a NATO Application’* to conclude that in 2022, the decision to seek NATO membership followed a tradition of consensual policy-making in Finland on matters of “high politics”.<sup>17</sup> Based on that, the policymakers in Finland do not always make decisions based on examining threats by themselves or following the polls for public opinion.

In their book about NATO Northern Flank, Lon Strauss and Njord Wegge studied Scandinavian countries and their share of the same fundamental security challenge; they have small defence forces and are geopolitically linked to the strategically important areas of Northern and Western Russia. Any military operation in one country would likely involve the territory of the others.<sup>18</sup> That was confirmed by the NATO Review on *“Hybrid Influence – Lessons from Finland”* that Russia is more prepared than before to use military power to secure its political, economic and security interests – this applies both to Russia’s military capabilities and its readiness to use them. Beyond military power, Russia is increasingly using many other means to pressure others, both in wartime and peacetime. Considering the comprehensiveness of Russia’s actions, it is of the utmost importance for Finland to invest in two things above all else: strengthening its society and international cooperation.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Arter, David. "From Finlandisation and post-Finlandisation to the end of Finlandisation? Finland’s road to a NATO application." *European security* 32, no. 2 (2023): 171-189.

<sup>18</sup> Strauss, Lon, and Njord Wegge, eds. *Defending NATO’s Northern Flank: Power Projection and Military Operations*. Taylor & Francis, 2023. P 214.

<sup>19</sup> Dr Pynnöniemi, Katri, and Sinikukka Dr Saari. ‘NATO Review - Hybrid Influence – Lessons from Finland’. NATO Review, 28 June 2017. URL: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2017/06/28/hybrid-influence-lessons-from-finland/index.html> , [Accessed 21 November 2024].



To this end, Lon Strauss and Njord Wegge studied the Finnish Defense Forces' participation in various multinational exercises within and outside of NATO, including the Arctic Lock and the Arctic Challenge, with Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and, in a lesser role, the US participating. They noticed that the Finnish defence and security policy has been highly integrated with NATO and its allies in the Arctic for years, as reflected in its participation in NATO's Cold Response exercise in 2016 and early 2022.<sup>20</sup> That would prepare the country in case of threats and look enough without prioritising a full membership.

Stude Vidal's article on "*Finland's NATO Membership: Continuous Shelter-Seeking Strategy*" pointed out a growing threshold inside the country apparatus that follows, projecting the country closer to the NATO alliance in a sheltered approach. Finland's ambition to join the EU and progressively build close political and security relations with the West after the fall of the Soviet Union should be understood as a foundation towards NATO membership and as a continuation of its shelter-seeking strategy originating in the Cold War period.<sup>21</sup>

Finland has made preparations for NATO integration through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and aligning military infrastructure, but the review does not critically evaluate any of these elements. Finland's challenges in integrating into NATO's operational frameworks and collective defence mechanisms will be an important theme here. Investigate possible problems integrating Finland's defence policy with that supported by NATO's collective security framework. Getting a multi-dimensional view addressing the issue of Russian influence, NATO integration, and policymakers' action would thus have a substantial bearing on the gaps and give opportunities for more research.

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<sup>20</sup> Strauss and Wegge. P 227.

<sup>21</sup> Stude Vidal, 'Finland's NATO Membership: Continuous Shelter-Seeking Strategy' p 19.

## The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework using the national role conceptions developed by **Professor Kalevi Holsti** was created in **1970** as part of the Role Theory in International Relations combined with definitions for the external environment, using the definitions by **Professor Naomi Bailin Wish** regarding her theoretical implementation of *"Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions"*, **1980**. To identify the conjunctural factors contributing to the transformation and related to security in 15 years, given foreign policy, the research target will apply the qualitative case study methodology against public institutions and elite influence during 15 years of cumulative transformation for NATO between 2007 and 2022.

On the contrary, the theoretical frame discussed in Kalevi Holsti's work on *"National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy"*, published in 1970, is based upon the role that policymakers perceive being played by their nation in international affairs or, at times, the role by which their country ought to be playing in international relations. This framework is of great importance as it helps explain and predict the behaviour of these nations by knowing how the roles are conceptualised.

### A) Applying This Framework it comes from:

**1. National Role Conceptions:** The notion here is that nations do not behave randomly in foreign policy. They have "roles" that include being a "mediator," "protector," or "regional leader." These roles are defined by how policymakers perceive the position and responsibility of their country within the international system. It may look upon itself as a peacemaker or champion for smaller nations.

**2. Identifying the Sources of Roles:** The geographical factor, economy, national values, historical tradition, and leadership are responsible for shaping roles. For example, small countries can be neutral due to location, while a powerful country may be a leader/hegemon.

**3. Role Performance:** Role performance can be considered as what a country does and which policies it implements regarding its various national role conceptions. This includes all diplomatic decisions, military commitments and international cooperation.

**4. Role Adaptation:** A nation adapts or redefines its role based on the changes happening in world politics, economic shifts, or a change of leadership. Understanding this helps explain changes in foreign policy behaviours.

## **B ) Data Collection Methods:**

To use this framework, data may be collected in the following ways:

**1. Policy statements and official documents:** speeches, parliamentary debates, government reports, memorandums, agreements and official statements from the country's leadership - presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers; these often reveal how leaders view their country's role in the world. To track how a country's role has changed and acted based on its perceived role through time.

**2. Media Analysis:** Search for news articles, editorials, and public discussions to analyse how national roles are constructed, debated publicly, and portrayed domestically and internationally. It uses the keywords mentioned in the abstract and how they are relevant to the research subject.

Using Naomi Bailin Wish's definitions of the external environment in her theoretical implementation of *"Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions"* in 1980, the NRC concentrates on how foreign policymakers perceive a country's role in the world. This implies that their perceptions will then influence the foreign policymaker's behaviour regarding interactions with other nations.

### **1 - Know what the components of NRCs are, it works out:**

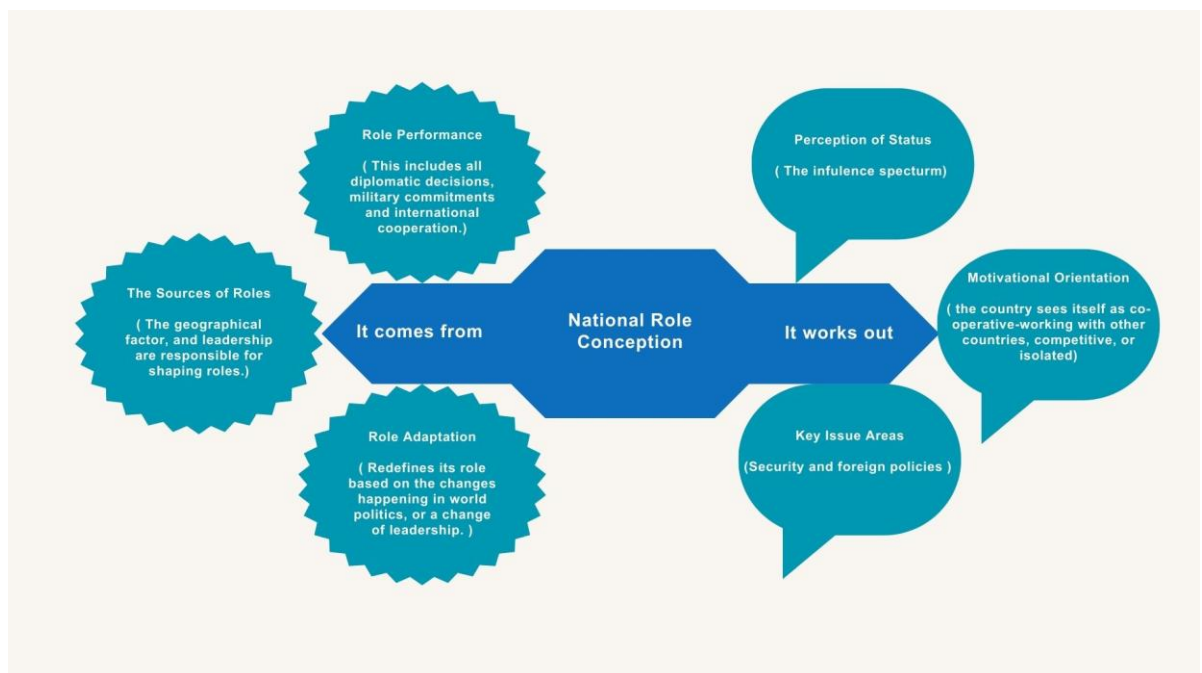
**A) Perception of Status:** How influential the country is globally or regionally.

**B) Motivational Orientation:** Whether the country sees itself as co-operative-working with other countries, competitive, or isolated

**C) Key Issue Areas:** The focus of the country's roles, such as security, economy, or diplomacy.

**2 - Apply NRCs to Analyze Foreign Policy Behavior:** Use the framework to predict/explain country behaviour from that country's self-image. For example, if a country considers itself a "mediator," it will likely pursue diplomatic initiatives.

These approaches aim to discover the role of nations in foreign policy, how they are conceptualised, and how these roles of the country come into reality during the policy-making process. In other words, this provides a more detailed way of studying international relations. Systematically analyse how policymakers' perceptions influence their nation's foreign policy behaviour.



*Figure 2: National Role Conception Theoretical Framework. Data from Kalevi Holsti's article in 1970 as part of the Role Theory in International Relations. Created by the author.*

The status of the state in the international ranking system plays a part in how the state is performed. Policymakers' actions stem from different sources that reflect the perception of status, motivational orientation and key issue areas.

Besides, the definitions for the external environment using the degree of influence and equal-status roles in the external environment will be used, which was part of Professor Naomi Bailin Wish's work from Seton Hall University where she categorised the nation performance roles and is thereby influential **in the following domains:**<sup>22</sup>

- (a) domestic-only its own internal affairs;**
- (b) bilateral-one other state which is not a superpower;**
- (c) dominant bilateral-a superpower;**
- (d) subordinate-a geographic nonorganizational group in a contiguous region** (example: Latin America, Eastern Europe);
- (e) subordinate other-a nonglobal, intergovernmental organisation, contiguous or noncontiguous** (examples: British Commonwealth, NATO);
- (f) global superpower and its bloc, a global organisation, or the entire international system**

**To differentiate from equal-status roles,** the following classification was developed:

- (a) An equal status ally or cooperative partner:** The state cooperates with other actors in an equal partnership or cooperative venture.
- (b) An example for others to follow:** The nation is an example or model for others to follow.
- (c) A dominant ally or cooperative partner:** The state leads, defends, or protects other cooperative actors or allies and thus performs a dominant role.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wish, Naomi Bailin. "Foreign policy makers and their national role conceptions." *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1980): 532-554.

<sup>23</sup> Wish, Naomi Bailin. "Foreign policy makers and their national role conceptions." *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1980): 532-554..

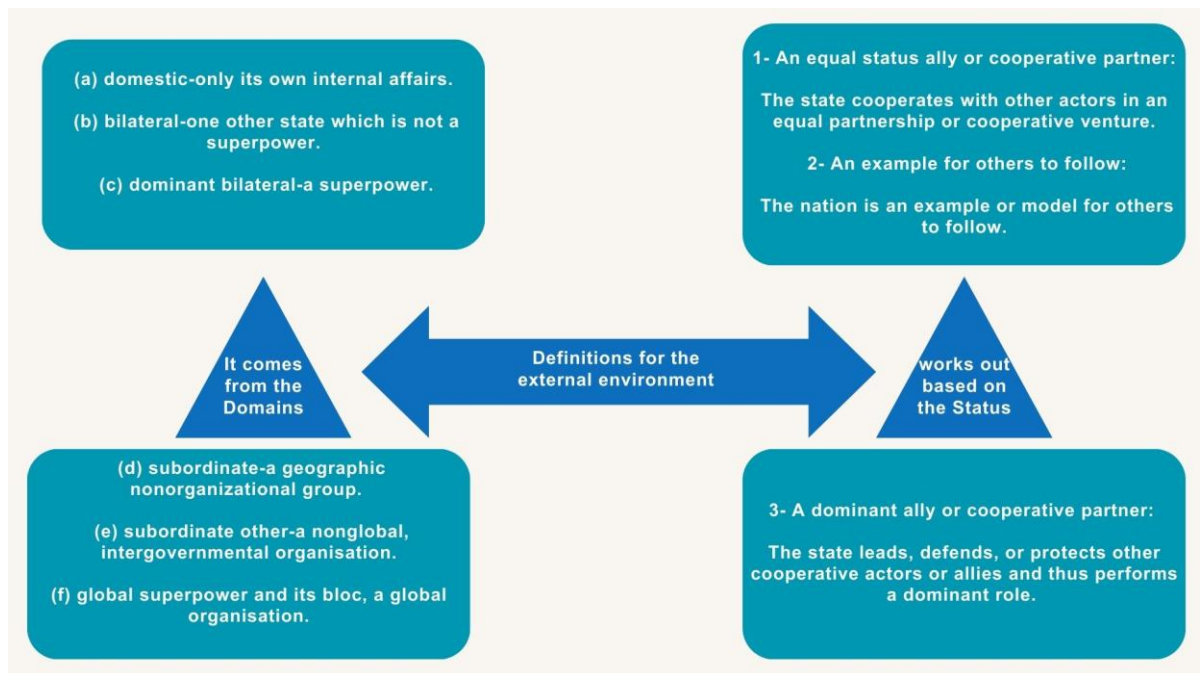


Figure 3: Definitions for the external environment. Data are from Naomi Bailin Wish article in 1980 as part of the Role Theory in International Relations regarding her theoretical implementation of the National Role Conceptions theoretical framework. Created by the author.

## The Qualitative Case Study Methodology

A qualitative case study is a deep study of a case (e.g., individual, group, organisation, or even an event) in its real-life context. Instead of discovering predictors, as quantitative studies do, qualitative case studies focus more on how and why things happen using interviews, observations, and document analysis techniques.

### 1) Purpose of Qualitative Case Study

- To examine natural complexities and situations concerning processes and relationships.
- To thoroughly understand and analyse particular phenomena in particular contexts.
- To generate new theories or provide rich, detailed descriptions.

### 2) Core Components of Case Study Research

- Case Selection: Careful selection of cases following criteria that maximally increase the learning potential.
- Contextual Analysis: Analyze the specific case, considering the environment or context in which the case exists.
- Data Collection: Using numerous methodological approaches like interviews, observations, document analyses, etc.
- Analysis and Inference: Intra- and inter-case pattern analysis to identify themes, causal mechanisms, or explanations.

### 3) Steps in Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

In qualitative case studies, content analysis inspires reading out themes, concepts, and insights from abundant data and visual content. Content analysis systematically studies textual, document, and other materials pertinent to the case. Guided by “*Case Study Research: Principles and Practices by John Gerring*”<sup>24</sup> The following is a simplified stepwise pathway to content analysis that follows Gerring's principles. **Keywords for data will be:**

**NATO, Finland, Russia, security policy, defence policy, foreign policy.**

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<sup>24</sup> Gerring, John. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2017.



*Table 1.1: Steps in Conducting a Qualitative Case Study. Part one. Data are from John Gerring's book, 2017, as part of Case Study Research: Principles and Practices. Created by the author.*

Step 1: Define the objective and scope of the analysis.	Step 2: Selection of Content	Step 3: Coding the Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific statement of the analysis issues (e.g., themes to be identified, trends analysed, or causal mechanisms detected) needs to be included.</li> <li>• Scope in terms of what kind of content (reports, transcripts, images) and time frame.</li> <li>• Define the Research Question and what you are trying to learn from the content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ideal texts, materials, or sources related to the case (e.g., historical documents, interview transcripts, or media reports).</li> <li>• Collect data by interviews, observations, documents, or audio-visuals.</li> <li>• Identifying relevant texts related to the case, such as interview transcripts, policy documents, and media articles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break down the content into smaller units, such as sentences, paragraphs, or images.</li> <li>• Assign "codes" (tags or labels) to each unit based on the topic, theme, or concept studied.</li> <li>• Label (code) relevant phrases, sentences, or paragraphs about the research question.</li> </ul>

*Table 1.2: Steps in Conducting a Qualitative Case Study. Part two. Data are from John Gerring's book, 2017, as part of Case Study Research: Principles and Practices. Created by the author.*

Step 4: Identify themes and patterns	Step 5: Analyse Data	Step 6: Build Case Descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine several sources to triangulate data and ensure accuracy.</li> <li>Methods include analysis of the relevant documents.</li> <li>Identify associations, links, and trends that emerge throughout the data. Observe the nature of the interplay among different themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply qualitative analysis methods such as thematic, narrative, or content analysis.</li> <li>Identify key themes, patterns, relationships, or concepts emerging from the data.</li> <li>Prepare and organise data, including transcribing interviews, converting images or audio into written text, and organising documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a thick, case-specific description of what the case is about.</li> <li>Encompass the most critical issues, relationships, and processes affecting the case.</li> <li>A detailed case-study report about what happened in context, the process and key results.</li> </ul>

*Table 1.3: Steps in Conducting a Qualitative Case Study. Part three. Data are from John Gerring's book, 2017, as part of Case Study Research: Principles and Practices. Created by the author.*

#### **Step 7: Conclude and Reporting Results**

- Identify the essential findings, trends, or causal mechanisms of the analysis.
- Trace those findings back into the research question.
- Examine if any themes oppose or support existing theories.
- There will be quotes, excerpts, or other forms of visual data as evidence for interpretations, charts and tables to report findings.
- Write a report that is clear and structured to summarise the analysis. The report narrates the main themes, relationships, and theoretical insights.

#### 4) What are the limitations?

- 1- Studying steps from inputs to outcomes means tracing actions and looking for a causal bond. It is an intensive workout, and there is a lot of data to be analysed; the author will focus on foreign policy and how the policymaker's conception of the altered perception works in the status of the state. However, the study does not include the influences of public sentiment in Finland concerning their adaptation to perceived threats by Russia and the long-term implications that NATO membership might have for Finland on its relations with neighbouring countries, particularly Russia.
- 2- To uncover all aspects that lead to a shift in foreign policy performance. Applying for NATO membership and getting ratified for Finland is the end of this thesis. Choosing two chapters, each one of them is 7 years where the European security structure changed between 2007 – and 2022 and how the policymakers responded during this timeline. Unfortunately, the author did not conduct interviews with experts and policymakers who could provide insights into the steps of the process, which were not performed.
- 3- I do not have access to all the data that might be needed to combine several sources to triangulate data and ensure accuracy regarding the censorship of Russian sources with language barriers.

#### 5) How to Collect Data:

1. **Documents and Archival Research:** Find written records like government reports, meeting minutes, or historical accounts that show parts of any patterns, relationships, or concepts emerging from the data.
2. **Media Reports:** Use news articles or other media sources to gather evidence about events connected to the research topic.

## 6) Contribution and Value:

To develop the explanation for such a transformation, the theoretical frameworks used for data analysis and the qualitative case study methodology are used for data collection. The novelty is in using the role theory in international relations in a multi-dimensional to study the changes in Finland's security role. The Russian Influence, Policymakers' Actions, and NATO Integration and European Security Structure. Each one is a dimension. This research is looking forward to contributing as many conceptual insights as possible into why and how Finland's security role has changed between 2007 and 2022, addressing the gradual change in the country's foreign policy.

*Table 1.4: Data collection sources. Created by the author.*

The research object for this thesis will be the publications of :		
Scholars and Think Tanks	Policy Papers, statements, and speeches	News websites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles and books.</li> <li>- The Finnish Institute of International Affairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Ministry of Defence.</li> <li>- The Prime Ministry and the Presidency.</li> <li>- The Parliament Committee of Foreign Affairs/Defence.</li> <li>- Memorandums, Speeches and Public statements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media articles.</li> <li>- Interview transcripts.</li> </ul> <p>( related to the subject of this research)</p>
<p>All of these sources will be examined using the keywords. The aim is to include arguments that accumulate and how much influence they hold. Adjust the data collection using the methodology to the dimensions worked. This is how to track the changes and see where they will lead the projection.</p>		

The research objects and keywords will be used as a data-gathering source. This is comprehensive desk research. It meticulously describes how to conduct case studies systematically and aims to pursue rigour in research design, case selection, and analysis. Content analysis in the case study involves selecting material, coding data, and identifying key themes—all techniques that will build a richer understanding of a case and what it means in the bigger picture.

The case study is dedicated to the activities of high-level policymakers and representatives that reveal the leadership's view. It examines how the changes in the European security structure regarding Russian influence went inside Finland between 2007 and 2022. The outcome synthesises how Finland's security role is shifting due to a thorough and rigorous research process. During this thesis, I designed tables, charts and visual aids using the data from different sources, which were cited accordingly.



## Chapter 1

### Initial Engagement with NATO (2007-2014):

#### A Time of Gradualism And The Crisis in Ukraine

From reset with Russia as a situation of Finland's caution, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) until the shift in defence policy. The concept of joining the military alliance started to take momentum as an impact of Russia's revisionist position into its position on the world stage. A devastating conflict in 2008, the Russo-Georgian war for five days, and before it, a firing speech at the Munich security conference in March 2007 was not getting such a dramatic response. Finnish security and defence policy emphasises Finland's desire to cooperate with the European Union's common foreign and security policy, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe (CE) in enhancing European security architectures.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Russian Influence*

On the one hand, and at that time and during the Munich Speech of 2007, one of the takeaways is that for Russians, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) remains a symbol of the Cold War and the fact that it not only continues to exist but is also expanding to include, first, former Warsaw Pact states, and, more recently, former Soviet Republics, is a cause for concern. The NATO–Russia Council (NRC) provides an institutionalised framework for cooperation and joint efforts. While the NRC offers the two parties a forum to address issues between them, the NRC has not always been available when Russia and NATO have needed it. Even when the NRC was available, progress on important issues between Russia and the alliance did not always occur.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Chapman, *Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook*.

<sup>26</sup> Pacer and Valerie, *Russian Foreign Policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008-2012* (Routledge series on Russian and East European studies, 2016). P 62.



The debate about The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) in 1990 and its adapted version in 1999 was highly sensed during Putin's Munich speech. In the same year, in another case, Putin opposed the idea of a US missile defence system with bases in the Czech Republic and Poland. In a press conference, he mentioned that: *"What is happening in Europe that is so negative that we need to fill eastern Europe with new forms of weapons?" he asked. "What has happened that has worsened the situation in Europe and demands such actions? Nothing."*<sup>27</sup> This opens the door to changing Russia's position on the CFE treaty.

Putin subsequently decreed on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007, that Moscow would suspend its participation in the treaty after a 150-day waiting period starting from midnight of December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007, "suspending" its implementation of the CFE Treaty<sup>28</sup>. It was sending a shock wave into the European security structure. Russia kept itself in the grey zone in a treaty that does not contain a provision for suspension, only withdrawal. That ends with completing the procedure for the Russian Federation's withdrawal on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>29</sup>

The CFE treaty of 1990, Negotiated during the final years of the Cold War, the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty is often referred to as the *"cornerstone of European security."*<sup>30</sup> The treaty, signed on November 19, 1990, eliminated the Soviet Union's overwhelming quantitative advantage in conventional weapons in Europe by setting equal limits on the number of tanks, armoured combat vehicles (ACVs), heavy artillery, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters that NATO and the Warsaw Pact could deploy between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains.

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<sup>27</sup> World news, 'Putin Denounces US Plan for Missile Shield', The Guardian, 27 May 2007. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/may/24/russia.iantraynor>, [Accessed 28 December 2024].

<sup>28</sup> Europe, Radio Free, and Radio Liberty. "Russia Suspends Participation In CFE Treaty." 12 December 2007 URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079256.html>, [Accessed 28 December 2024].

<sup>29</sup> Russia (2023) 'Foreign Ministry statement on the completion of the procedure for the Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)', Moscow, 7 November 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1913546/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1913546/) [Accessed 28 December 2024].

<sup>30</sup> Kimball, Daryl. 'The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty at a Glance', Arms Control Association, November 2023. URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/conventional-armed-forces-europe-cfe-treaty-and-adapted-cfe-treaty-glance> [Accessed 28 December 2024].

The CFE members signed an adaptation agreement in 1999 to update the treaty's structure to reflect the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and an expanding NATO alliance. The revised agreement jettisons the bloc-to-bloc and zonal limits of the original treaty and replaces them with a system of national and territorial ceilings. The adapted treaty will enter into force when all 30 states-parties, including the United States and its NATO partners, have ratified the agreement. However, only Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine have ratified, and Ukraine has yet to deposit its instrument of ratification. As a result, the original treaty of 1990 remains in effect.<sup>31</sup>

Vladimir Putin, on the other hand, has proven to be a master at limited war. In the footsteps of his Tsarist and Soviet predecessors, the Russian leader has pursued a series of limited wars in the post-Soviet space, using his proclaimed aim of halting the expansion of NATO up to Russia's borders as the strategic pretext to Finlandize the non-NATO European periphery. Whether it be Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia or Azerbaijan, Russian goals remain the same; weaken their national identities through prolonged territorial division, using force when necessary.<sup>32</sup> In foreign policy, Medvedev is seen as '*a genuine liberal who thinks that foreign policy is determined by domestic policy and should be subservient to it*'. At the same time, being a realist, Putin is more focused on '*structural factors and the international system which determines how states behave*', including how the external world can impact internal politics.<sup>33</sup>

Regardless of who the president of the country was, be it Putin or Medvedev, the goal of Russian foreign policymakers was to see Russia be a great power; thus, any foreign and security policy decisions taken during the first three presidential terms of the new millennium need to be considered within the framework of achieving great power status.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kimball, Daryl. 'The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty at a Glance', Arms Control Association, November 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Glen E. Howard, Matthew. Czekaj, and Philip M. Breedlove, Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine (The Jamestown Foundation, 2018). P 15

<sup>33</sup> Pacer, Valerie. Russian foreign policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008-2012. Routledge, 2016. P 6.

<sup>34</sup> Pacer and Valerie.

The 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania, and as part of the NATO-Russia Council, was overshadowed by projections of NATO expansion into Georgia and Ukraine. One of the aspects discussed between US President George W Bush and the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, was in his last month for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term before Medvedev.

In April 2008, a source told Russia's *Kommersant* newspaper how Putin described Ukraine to George Bush at a NATO meeting in Bucharest: *"You don't understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us."* Such rhetoric led to fears that after its army's foray into South Ossetia in August, Russia would turn its attention to Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, which has a predominantly ethnic Russian population and is home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet.<sup>35</sup> The level of tension in Russian-Ukrainian relations rose to the limit. The Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Yuri Baluevsky, threatened Ukraine military measures in the event of its entry into NATO.<sup>36</sup> In the Summit Declaration, NATO members *'agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO'* but did not extend the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to the countries, thus offering a commitment without a timeline.<sup>37</sup>

To evaluate the impact of the Russo-Georgian war the Finnish Cabinet concluded in 2009 that Russian Armed Forces had its finger on the trigger and was ready and capable of quickly launching a military operation in Russia's neighbourhood. According to the Cabinet, the military actions proved that Russia had units well trained for local conditions with good situational awareness and capable of information and network- centric warfare.

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<sup>35</sup> Marson, James. 'Putin to the West: Hands off Ukraine'. TIME, 25 May 2009.

<https://time.com/archive/6946776/putin-to-the-west-hands-off-ukraine/>. [ Accessed 26 December 2024].

<sup>36</sup> Kommersant Newspaper. 'Ukraine will defend itself from Russia'. Kommersant Newspaper, 14 April 2008. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/882165?query=%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0>. [ Accessed 26 December 2024].

<sup>37</sup> Pacer, Valerie. Russian foreign policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008-2012. Routledge, 2016.

The Cabinet also warned that Russia had demonstrated its willingness to use military force when defending its national interests. The aftermath of the crisis was presumed to cause long-term tensions in Europe, including fissures in a worsened EU-Russia relationship.<sup>38</sup> The Kremlin used its military, first and foremost, to achieve foreign policy goals.<sup>39</sup>

### *Policymakers' Actions*

As Dr Risto Penttilä, a former Member of the Finnish Parliament, former adviser on international security affairs to the Ministry of Defence in Finland, said in a seminar titled “*NATO Today and Tomorrow*,” in 2007, arranged by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at that time:

*“The more informed people are about the Alliance, the less they tend to oppose Finnish close relationship with or membership in NATO. The upcoming Finnish NATO reports hopefully achieve exactly this: inform and enrich popular debate and demystify the Alliance .”*<sup>40</sup>

Finland's policymakers started to review their country's position cautiously. Since the parliamentary elections in Finland happen every four years, the outcome might change the government coalition. The documents issued in the election year will be published the year after. The following table shows that:

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<sup>38</sup> Edström, Håkan, Dennis Gyllensporre, and Jacob Westberg. Military strategy of small states: responding to external shocks of the 21st century. (Routledge, 2019). P 122.

<sup>39</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy (Routledge, 2018). P 176.

<sup>40</sup> Finnish Institute of International Affairs. ‘Nato Today and Tomorrow.’ FIIA, 8 November 2007. URL : <https://fiia.fi/en/tapahtumat/nato-today-and-tomorrow>. [ Accessed 17 December 2024].

*Table 2.1: Government Strategy Document 2007 and 2009 for Finland. Data are from the Prime Ministry publication. Created by the author.*

Kind of Document	Country NATO Position
The Government Strategy Document for 2007 – published in April 2008*	<i>Finland participates fully in the Common Security and Defence Policy and crisis management cooperation of the EU, develops the Partnership for Peace with NATO, and retains the possibility of applying for the membership of NATO.<sup>41</sup></i>
The Finnish Security and Defence Policy for 2009	<i>Related to this Report the Ministry for Foreign Affairs prepared a Report on the Effects of Finland's possible NATO membership (12/2007) as well as a report on the mutual assistance obligation in the Treaty on European Union(4/2008).  The Parliamentary Monitoring Group, appointed by the Prime Minister's Office, made its Report (8/2008) available to the Government as this Report was being finalised<sup>42</sup>.</i>

The changes in the external environment governmental evaluation in Finland for the impact of the Russo-Georgian War, which was conducted in 2009, were translated into the following positions in the Finnish Security and Defence Policy for 2012 as the following:

<sup>41</sup> Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Cabinet. 'Government Strategy Document 2007', 1 April 2008. [https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/622954/J0408\\_Government+Strategy+Document+2007.pdf/bee545c-9815-4aec-bac6-9d773cee9288?version=1.0](https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/622954/J0408_Government+Strategy+Document+2007.pdf/bee545c-9815-4aec-bac6-9d773cee9288?version=1.0) P 85. [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

<sup>42</sup> Prime Minister's Office. 'Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009 : Government Report'. (Prime Minister's Office : Distribution : Helsinki University Print Bookstore, 2009). 5 February 2009, URL: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156933/Finland\\_English-2009.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156933/Finland_English-2009.pdf). P 11. [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

*Table 2.2: The Finnish Security and Defence Policy for 2012. Data from the keynotes of the 2012 Government Report.<sup>43</sup> Created by the author.*

Page numbers	Aspects related to NATO and Finland Partnership	Finland position
43-45	Multinational capability development cooperation: EU's Pooling & Sharing and NATO's Smart Defence	As a Member State of the EU and a NATO partner Finland participates in both of them. Consequently, defence cooperation does not imply military alliance or any changes in Finland's fundamental security policy solutions.
61-62	NATO missile defence system; In the Chicago Summit (2012), it was declared that the NATO missile defence system has reached interim capability.	Focus on reform of NATO's partnership policy, at the same time, the fundamental distinction between membership and partnership will prevail, in other words, only NATO member States will participate in collective defence and decision-making.
68-70	Nordic Defence Cooperation, NORDEFECO: The development of Nordic defence cooperation was launched in 2008 by the joint initiative of the chiefs of defence of Finland, Norway and Sweden.	Nordic Defence Cooperation NORDEFECO is an example of a well-functioning regional collaborative arrangement.

<sup>43</sup> PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. 'Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2012 Government Report', 2013. URL: [https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/07/FIN\\_Finnish\\_Security\\_Defence\\_Policy\\_2012\\_Government\\_Report.pdf](https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/07/FIN_Finnish_Security_Defence_Policy_2012_Government_Report.pdf). [ Accessed 15 April 2024].

	In 2009, Thorvald Stoltenberg, the former foreign minister of Norway, gave significant impetus to cooperation in Nordic foreign and security policy.	Capabilities development between the Nordic countries also complements the capabilities cooperation done under the auspices of NATO and the EU.
79	Applying for NATO membership	Finland is not a member of a military alliance, but cooperates with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and maintains the option of applying for NATO membership.
80	Cooperation with NATO; Finland considers it important that operational partners be allowed to participate in the planning and preparation phases of new operations.	Participating in NATO's Planning and Review Process (PARP) and the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC), and by developing its capacity to participate in the activities supplementing the NATO Response Force (NRF).

### *NATO Integration and European Security Structure*

Between 2007 and 2008 onward, Finland suffered from an economic crisis, and spending dropped and stagnated. The Russian intervention in Georgia was perceived as a strategic shock by the Finnish government. The Russian use of military power in its relation with a neighbouring country was unexpected. The events also profoundly affected Finland's defence policy, leading to the Finnish authorities demanding countermeasures.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Edström, Gyllensporre, and Westberg, *Military Strategy of Small States , Responding to External Shocks of the 21st Century*. P 128.

While Vladimir Putin returned to power in 2012, holding an increase in military spending. The following charts, based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database <sup>45</sup>, are going to represent the following:

### 1- Military expenditure by country, in billions of US\$ at current prices and exchange rates, 2007-2014.

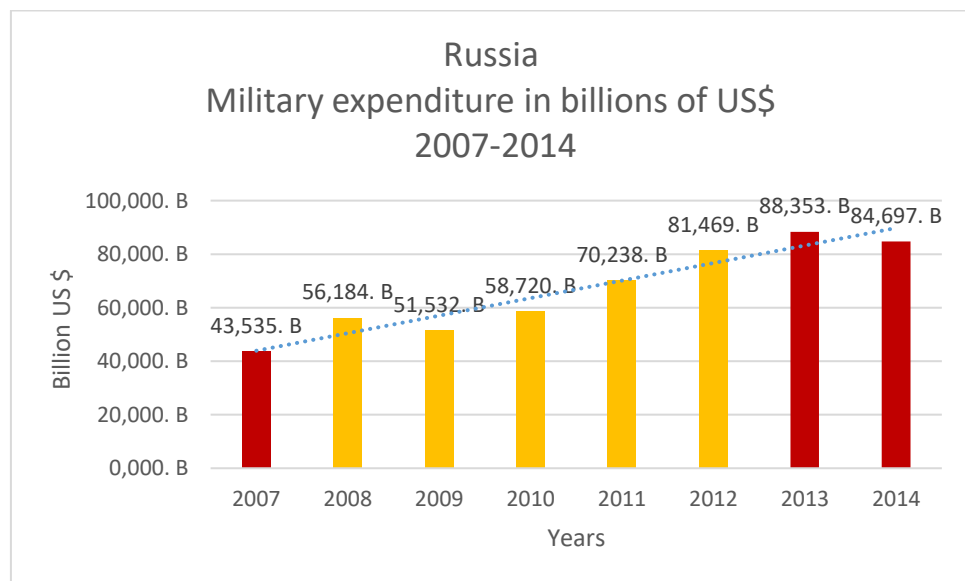
*Chart 2.1: Military expenditure in billions of US dollars, Finland, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. Created by the author.*



<sup>45</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 'SIPRI Military Expenditure Database'. SIPRI Milex, 2023. URL: <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri>. [Accessed 15 December 2024].

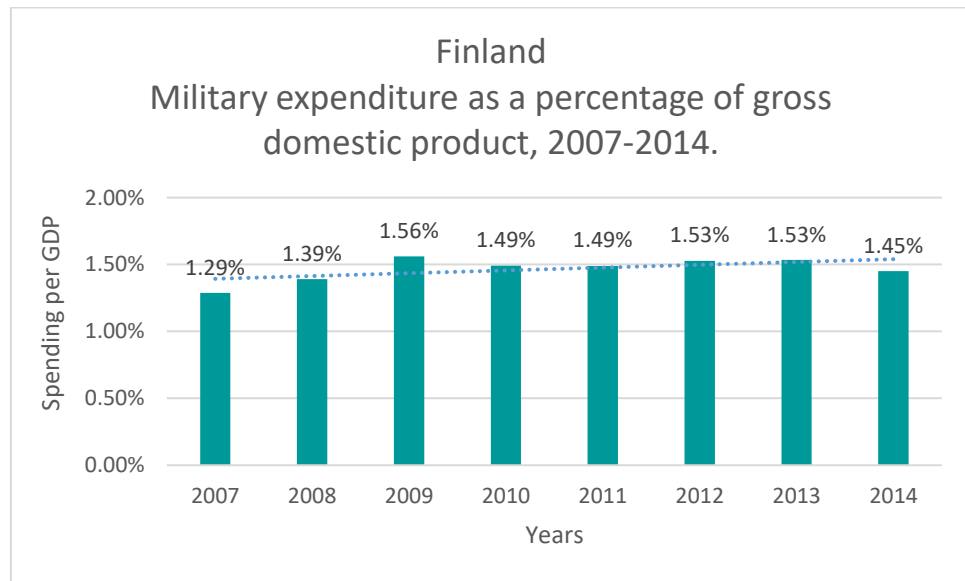


*Chart 2.2: Military expenditure in billions of US dollars, Russia, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The red represents Vladimir Putin's presidency in the 2nd and 3rd terms, until May 2008 and after May 2012. The yellow is for the Medvedev presidency, which started in May 2008 and ended in May 2012. Created by the author.*

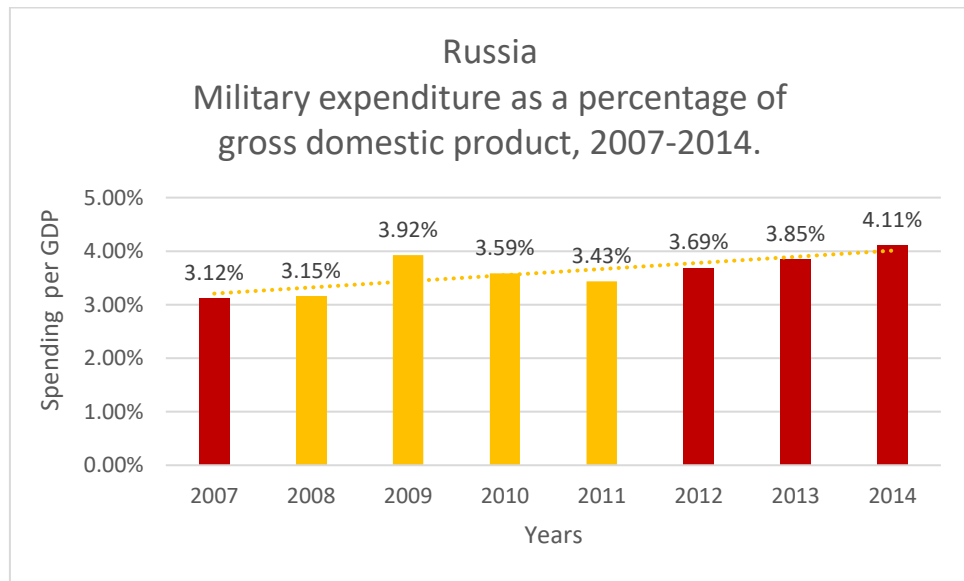


## 2- Military expenditure by country as a percentage of gross domestic product, 2007-2014.

*Chart 2.3: Military expenditure per GDP, Finland, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. Created by the author.*

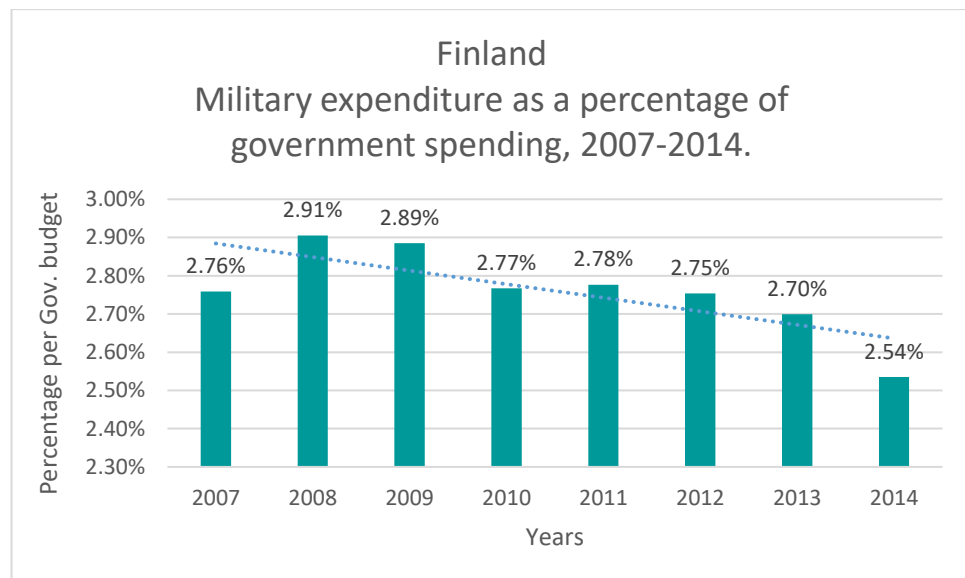


*Chart 2.4: Military expenditure per GDP, Russia, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The red represents Vladimir Putin's presidency in the 2nd and 3rd terms, until May 2008 and after May 2012. The yellow is for the Medvedev presidency, which started in May 2008 and ended in May 2012. Created by the author.*

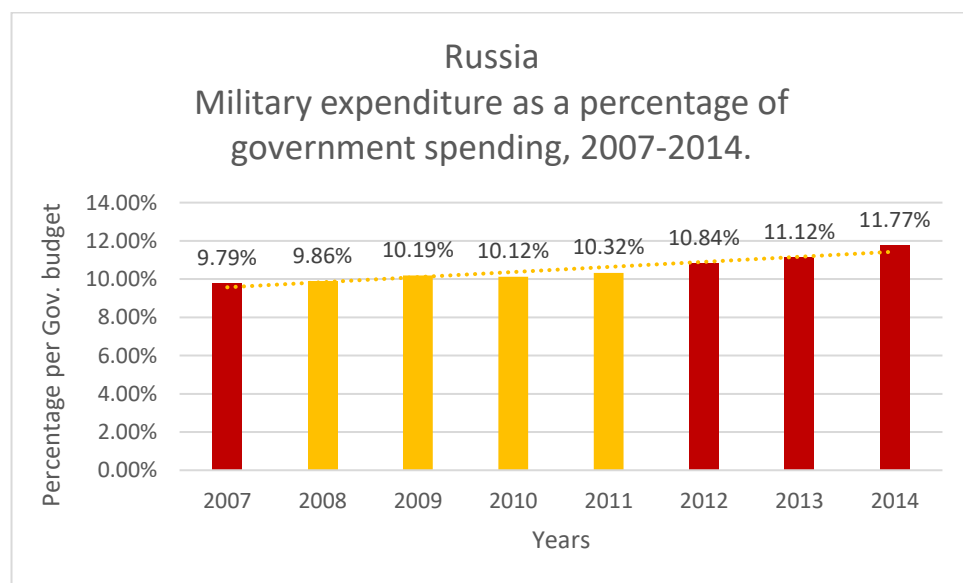


**3- Military expenditure by country as a percentage of government spending from the budget, 2007-2014.** Data for general government expenditures are from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook and include spending by all levels of government: central/federal, state/provincial/regional, municipal, and local authorities.

*Chart 2.5: Military expenditure per government spending, Finland, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. Created by the author.*



*Chart 2.6: Military expenditure per government spending, Russia, 2007-2014. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) database. The red represents Vladimir Putin's presidency in the 2nd and 3rd terms, until May 2008 and after May 2012. The yellow is for the Medvedev presidency, which started in May 2008 and ended in May 2012. Created by the author.*



Following Putin's return to his third presidential term in 2012, Russian diplomacy became more coercive, relying increasingly on sanctions and the threat of military force to achieve foreign policy aims.<sup>46</sup> The year 2014, The Ukrainian political crisis—defined by the change in status for Crimea and the armed confrontation in the Donbas—is the most serious and dangerous challenge for European security since the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the subsequent ethnopolitical conflicts in the Balkans.<sup>47</sup> And the worst dispute since the Cold War in the Russia-West relationship.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy* (Routledge, 2018). P 123.

<sup>47</sup> Markedonov, Sergey. "Russia, the West and Ukraine: A View from Moscow." *Russian Analytical Digest* 162 (10 February 2015): 2–5.

<sup>48</sup> Pacer, Valerie. *Russian foreign policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008-2012*. Routledge. P 165.

That was reported in the Finland Cabinet meetings. Finland had suffered from an economic crisis, and the Armed Forces reforms had to be implemented with a decreasing defence budget. Accordingly, Finland was not expecting to face an armed attack from Russia alone. The Cabinet explicitly suggested that Finland participate in ‘supplementary activities of the NATO Response Force’ and in NATO’s Civil Emergency Planning.<sup>49</sup>

The impact of the financial crisis on the Finns policymakers led afterwards to cut the spending on defence and reoriented the Armed forces, which incentives looking for partners to fill the security gap; this is where the Nordic Cooperation Council became appealing to work alongside the Nordic countries. The multinational capability development cooperation of the EU’s Pooling & Sharing and NATO’s Smart Defence became a short-lived political symbol that did not affect the defence structure.<sup>50</sup> Reaching the 2014 NATO summit meant guaranteeing the continued capacity of military forces, which needed a unifying vision and mission. A concept that sets the tone for a framework of cooperation. At that time, the Germany-led Framework for Nations Concepts (FNC) emerged to fulfil the following aspects:

*First, the United States will stick to its announcement that it will only provide 50 per cent of each of NATO’s capabilities in the future, the Europeans will have to provide the rest; second, no European state is in a position anymore to carry out military operations alone; and third, most European armed forces will continue shrinking as the effects of the financial crisis on public budgets remain over the coming years.*<sup>51</sup>

The Crimea crisis and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 made Finland more cautious. There is a potential for a more militarised Russia to disturb the political and security environment in the Nordic-Baltic region. The political parties in Finland split over joining NATO.

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<sup>49</sup> Edström, Håkan, Dennis Gyllensporre, and Jacob Westberg. Military strategy of small states: responding to external shocks of the 21st century. Routledge, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Major, Claudia, and Christian Mölling. The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's contribution to a capable European defence. No. 52/2014. SWP Comments, December 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Major, Claudia, and Christian Mölling. The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's contribution to a capable European defence. No. 52/2014. SWP Comments, December 2014. P 1.

The centre-right supported the decision, and the centre-left went against it. According to President Sauli Niinistö, the commander in chief of Finland's armed forces, it was ruled out that a popular referendum would be needed before the Eduskunta – Parliament - is asked to ratify legal changes in the country's constitutionally neutral status.<sup>52</sup>

### *The multi-dimensional impact on Finland's security role*

Considering all of this within the broader context of this chapter, not just the shifts in foreign policy, the fear of Russian military expenditure with militarism was sensed among policymakers in Finland. It made them look a closer look at the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (May 7, 2008 – May 7, 2012) and the 3rd term of Vladimir Putin (May 7th, 2012- May 7th, 2018); a gradual transition occurred in a set of minor changes. Finland's involvement in NATO's Partnership for Peace onward Regional Council with Nordic countries in 2008-2009 led to the arrangement of military and civil institutions regionally and internationally in preparation for full membership, easing the transition. That is linked to two dimensions: the Russian influence on NATO integration and the European security structure.

The Finnish government commissioned a study on the effect of NATO membership on Finnish foreign and security policy.<sup>53</sup> At that time, it decided to advance its partnership with NATO at the 2014 Warsaw Summit. Finland has joined NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) alongside The Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII)<sup>54</sup> to strengthen regional security and improve collaboration in security cooperation.

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<sup>52</sup> Defense News and Yle. 'Finland Will Require Referendum to Decide NATO Membership - Atlantic Council'. Atlantic Council, 6 June 2014. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/finland-will-require-referendum-to-decide-nato-membership/>. [ Accessed 14 December 2024].

<sup>53</sup> Basagni, Laura. 'NATO's Enhanced Opportunities Partners'. German Marshall Fund of the United States. URL: <https://www.gmfus.org/news/natos-enhanced-opportunities-partners>. [ Accessed 16 November 2024].

<sup>54</sup> NATO articles, 'Partnership Interoperability Initiative', NATO - Topic, 7 March 2024. URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132726.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132726.htm). [ Accessed 17 December 2024].

The issue of becoming part of the NATO alliance in Finland's policymaking between 2007-2014. It is related to the legacy of the Post-Cold War era, during the late 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. In Finland's political discourse, the analysis of the EU in the reports from 2009 and 2013 mirrors the gradually more pessimistic assessments of the US policy during this period.<sup>55</sup> It does not have a positive impact or a good image in the eyes of the policymakers and the public.

First, NATO engaged in bombing Belgrade and getting into the Kosovo-Serbia war in the late 1990s. It was a time when the split occurred among Finland's policymakers, including the president, the prime minister, and the minister of foreign affairs. It was a time when the country joined the EU in 1995 and found itself in a difficult position to take sides.

Although most Finns supported NATO strikes, there was a renaissance of neutrality thinking. As a result of the crisis, the support for Finland's membership in NATO dropped significantly. According to Erkki Pennanen, a columnist for *Helsingin Sanomat*, the Kosovo crisis means decreasing support for the option of joining NATO because *"the Finns have now come to see the 'New NATO' as a warlike and offensive military alliance, working under the US leadership and its huge military machine."*<sup>56</sup>

Second, taking an active role in the *"War On Terror"* by getting into Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s. During the presidency of Tarja Kaarina Halonen, from March 1, 2000, until March 1, 2012, *"Use of military force without the UN Security Council's specific authorisation is not acceptable"*. That was stated in the meeting of the President of the Republic and the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, which considered the war that was launched in Iraq. Finland laments that the US and its allies have begun military action against Iraq.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Edström, Håkan, Dennis Gyllensporre, and Jacob Westberg. *Military strategy of small states: responding to external shocks of the 21st century*. Routledge, 2019. P 128.

<sup>56</sup> TUOMAS FORSBERG, 'Finland and the Kosovo Crisis', *Northern Dimensions*, 2000, 41–49,

<sup>57</sup> Press Releases. 'The President of the Republic of Finland'. The presidency of Tarja Kaarina Halonen, 20 March 2003. URL:

<https://www.presidentti.fi/halonen/public/defaulta55b.html?contentid=174131&nodeid=41416&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].



Finland's development cooperation funds and humanitarian assistance allocated to Afghanistan amounted to around EUR 398 million for Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup>

Third, the military intervention in Libya in the 2010s. Finland decided to stay aloof from the Western operation in Libya.<sup>59</sup> The Foreign Minister then was Alexander Stubb, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted that Libya was on the brink of civil war. The country's security situation has deteriorated further, and the violence has escalated.<sup>60</sup> In return, Finland increases humanitarian assistance to people suffering from the Libyan crisis.<sup>61</sup>

It signalled that the alliance was outstretching away from Europe, getting more of an offensive alliance than a defensive one. This series of actions put a hold on applying for full membership. Finland's concern is on the European security structure, not to be an occupying force somewhere else. The question was how to find other chapters that work with NATO. Finland has projected itself as part of the West and has chosen more pragmatic approaches.

At this stage, Nordic Defence Cooperation, NORDEFCO, became a starting point in 2009, suggesting more implementations for NATO reform. It was a period when the NATO alliance seemed to lose its compass. With its impact on Ukraine and Georgia in the late 2000s and early 2010s, the open-door policy gave a sense that policies and decisions were jumping through a cliff. Russian actions were recorded as rising tensions, mainly when Putin returned to the Presidency in 2012. The political consensus was not appealing, and only a minority of the parliament related to the centre-right encouraged full membership. All that ran through a time of gradualism until the Crimea Crisis in 2014.

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<sup>58</sup> Mustasilta, Katariina, Tyyne Karjalainen, Timo R. Stewart, and Mathilda Salo. 'Finland in Afghanistan 2001–2021: From Stabilization to Advancing Foreign and Security Policy Relations'. FIIA - Finnish Institute of International Affairs FIIA Report (June 2023). URL: <https://fiia.fi/en/publication/finland-in-afghanistan-2001-2021>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

<sup>59</sup> News. 'Nordic Countries Understanding of Finland's Position on Libya'. Yle, 5 April 2011. URL: <https://yle.fi/a/3-5337897>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

<sup>60</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs - press release. 'Chaotic Situation in Libya'. Finnish Government, 23 February 2011. URL: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/chaotic-situation-in-libya>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

<sup>61</sup> Finnish Government. 'Finland Increases Humanitarian Assistance to People Suffering from the Libyan Crisis - Egypt'. ReliefWeb, 11 April 2011. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/egypt/finland-increases-humanitarian-assistance-people-suffering-libyan-crisis>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

### *Summary*

Putin's Munich speech in March 2007, the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, and the Central Europe Missile defence system were all played in a lower volume of significant shifts. In this case, Russia, which saw itself throughout as defending its identity as an upholder of the status quo, became the offensive revisionist power with painful results.<sup>62</sup> The Finnish government had analysed the revisionist ambitions of Russia's foreign policy before 2014. Still, the authorities seem to have been unable to foresee that Russia was preparing to use the Armed Forces to seize a part of the territory of another European state.<sup>63</sup>

It began a different discourse that saw NATO as a military alliance and European security structure in a different prism, among many other aspects. It was a way of balancing autonomy and alliance cooperation on Finland's role. The attention given to the transition by the management process of Finland's crisis illustrates how national defence should be prioritised. The country moved ahead after 2014, balancing national autonomy and alliance. It continued its efforts to integrate with the military and civil institutions regionally and internationally with NATO and cooperate closely with Nordic countries. The next chapter will walk through all of that. **Based on chapter 1 and using the theoretical framework and definitions for the external environment, the summary will be:**

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<sup>62</sup> Tsygankov, Andrei P., ed. Routledge handbook of Russian foreign policy. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Edström, Gyllensporre, and Westberg. P 159.

Table 2.3: The theoretical framework in Chapter 1 . Created by the author.

National Role Conception between 2007-2014	
It comes from	It works out
<p><b><i>The Sources of Roles:</i></b></p> <p>Northern Europe.</p>	<p><b><i>Perception of Status:</i></b></p> <p>Putin's Munich speech in March 2007, The rise of Russia's military spending, the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, and the Central Europe Missile.</p>
<p><b><i>Role Performance:</i></b></p> <p>1- Nordic Defence Cooperation, NORDEFCO.</p> <p>2- NATO alliance.</p>	<p><b><i>Motivational Orientation:</i></b></p> <p>1- Cooperative-working with other countries to expand crisis management capacity.</p> <p>2- Participate in the activities supplementing the NATO Response Force (NRF).</p>
<p><b><i>Role Adaptation:</i></b></p> <p>The Nordic countries complement the capabilities of cooperation, are closer to the country's geographical proximity, and are approachable with the guidance of NATO and the EU.</p>	<p><b><i>Key Issue Areas:</i></b></p> <p>Security and foreign policies.</p>

Table 2.4: Definitions for the external environment in Chapter 1 . Created by the author.

Definitions for the external environment between 2007-2014	
It comes from the Domains.	Works out based on the Status
<i>Subordinate-a geographic nonorganizational group:</i> Nordic countries	An equal status ally or cooperative partner.
<i>Subordinate other-a nonglobal, intergovernmental organisations:</i> NATO	
<i>Global superpower and its bloc:</i> European Security Structure, and NATO-Russia Council.	



## Chapter 2

### Heightened Tensions (2015-2022):

#### From Cautious Cooperation with Russia to Realignment with NATO

From Russia's Military Modernization, Arctic Moves, and Nordic-NATO Defense Cooperation and Engagement. Finnish foreign and security policies in the Arctic region have traditionally relied on three basic assumptions. First, Finland has sought to ensure the primacy of non-military issues. Second, and relatedly, Finland has tried to ensure that Arctic issues are dealt with multilaterally, notably in the Arctic Council. These foreign policy priorities have rested on a third assumption regarding defence policy. The core principle of Finnish defence and security policy is ensuring a strong territorial defence of the whole country.<sup>64</sup>

#### *Russian Influence*

The second leading factor driving the changing Arctic strategic situation is Russia's Arctic military build-up and aggression in Ukraine since 2014. Russia's modernisation of its Arctic-based and military capabilities and increased positioning of nuclear forces in the Kola Peninsula, such as submarines, constitutes a significant challenge for Finnish and Swedish military planning and operations. The response by NATO and the US, such as the US decision to re-establish the US Second Fleet with an operational area in the Northern Atlantic, may increase military activity in the Arctic and the possibility of an arms race.<sup>65</sup> Russia's position in these years was focused on reestablishing and maintaining relations with the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

Additionally, improved relations would reinforce Russia's status as a major actor in the BSR. Finland has a unique, longstanding and durable relationship with Russia, and this bilateral association has endured despite Moscow's annexation of Crimea.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Strauss, Lon, and Njord Wegge, eds. *Defending NATO's Northern Flank: Power Projection and Military Operations*. Taylor & Francis, 2023. P 226.

<sup>65</sup> Strauss and Wegge. P 230.

<sup>66</sup> Howard, Czekaj, and Breedlove, *Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine*. P 132.

The following table shows how different steps have been taken in Finland to change its position regarding the rising tensions with Russia and its impact on the European security structure as the following:

*Table 3.1: Action steps taken by Finland due to rising tensions with Russia. Data are from a 2017 analysis by The Finnish Institute of International Affairs briefing paper 277 <sup>67</sup>. Created by the author.*

Action step from Finland	The goal behind it
1-- References to non-alignment have disappeared from President Sauli Niinistö's speeches – the foremost articulations of the Finnish security policy line.	The transformation has not only been legal but has also been political, reflecting the change that has taken place in the ways of thinking.
2-- In NATO's 2014 summit in Wales, Finland joined the Enhanced Opportunities Partners(EOP), signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Host Nation Support (HNS). <sup>68</sup>	NATO exercises are of the utmost importance and are a concrete means of enhancing national defence.
3-- Activate the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) <sup>69</sup>	To bolster defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and increase operational readiness of member state's armed forces.
4-- Finland signed a framework agreement with the United Kingdom in 2016 and joined the British-led Joint Expeditionary Framework (JEF) in 2017. <sup>70</sup>	A collection of units that train and exercise together. It also provides a forum for discussing defence and security issues between allies.

<sup>67</sup> Pesu, Matti. 'What Non-Alignment? | FIIA – Finnish Institute of International Affairs'. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 16 November 2017. URL: <https://www.fiaa.fi/en/publication/finlands-security-and-defence-policy-stems-from-partnerships?read#viite1>. [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

<sup>68</sup> THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND AND HEADQUARTERS, SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION AS WELL AS SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED POWERS EUROPE. 'Memorandum of Understanding on Host Nation Support (HNS)', 2014. URL: [https://www.defmin.fi/files/2898/HNS\\_MOU\\_FINLAND.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/2898/HNS_MOU_FINLAND.pdf). [ Accessed 23 November 2024].

<sup>69</sup> Council decision (CFSP) 2017/2315. 'Permanent Structured Cooperation PESCO'. European Union, 1 December 2017. <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/about/>. [ Accessed 23 November 2024].

<sup>70</sup> Knighton, Rosie. 'What Is the Joint Expeditionary Force?', 6 August 2024. URL: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10074/>. [ Accessed 23 November 2024].

5-- Framework Agreement with Germany to participate in the German-led Framework Nation Concept initiative (FNC). <sup>71</sup>	To help participating states close capability gaps. The concept was developed in 2013 and expanded in 2017.
6-- Working on the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) <sup>72</sup> , which become the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) <sup>73</sup> .	Advancing The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki, Finland, joined the transatlantic cooperation on cyber defence. <sup>74</sup> Standing with the EU to funnelling more resources.

The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) reported on February 8th, 2022, a political analysis of Russian-Finnish relations rapprochement with NATO. It was highlighted that this could shatter relations between Russia and Finland. It came as the following:

*“So far, for Finland pros of keeping neutral status are better than the cons. For Helsinki, neutrality is fundamentally pragmatic as it allows constructive dialogue with Moscow. The Democratic Party of Finland (which is the largest party in the Parliament of Finland) and the Finns Party are opposed to Finland joining NATO. Besides, public opinion in Finland doesn't favor the non-aligned Nordic state joining NATO. More than 50% of Finns oppose NATO membership. However, there are pro-NATO parties in Finland as well: Swedish People's Party of Finland and the National Coalition Party. If the right-wing Finns Party does well in Finland's election, NATO debates in the country can be revived.”<sup>75</sup>*

<sup>71</sup> Glatz, Rainer L., and Martin Zapfe. "NATO's Framework Nation Concept." CSS Analyses in Security Policy 218, December 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Cancian, Mark F., and Lisa Sawyer Samp. "The European Reassurance Initiative." Center for Strategic and International Studies (2016).

<sup>73</sup> Laïci, Tania. European Deterrence Initiative: the transatlantic security guarantee. EPRS, European Parliamentary Research Service, Members' Research Service, July 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Laïci, Tania. European Deterrence Initiative: the transatlantic security guarantee. EPRS, European Parliamentary Research Service, Members' Research Service, July 2018, P 6.

<sup>75</sup> Gleb Dovgilenko, 'Developments in Russian-Finnish relations and their prospects', Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, 8 February 2022.



It was also spotted in one of the few articles published by the University of Saint Petersburg State University. The arguments are about the decline of consensual policy-making in Finland published in 2021. It concluded that partisan politics has replaced the Cold War era consensus politics in contemporary Finland.<sup>76</sup> A concern about Finland's foreign policy emerged.

### *Policymakers' Actions*

With such a record of actions, Finland witnessed a steady increase in actions taken after 2014, including the aftermath of the Crimea Crisis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland, in a brief analysis of international developments, stated that the European security environment was in a state of flux, with frozen and open conflicts increasing due to Russia's interventions against military non-aligned neighbours. The Defence Committee of the Parliament (eduskunta in Finland) did not entirely approve of the Cabinet's idea of avoidance. Instead, the Committee clarified that Finland has no option or desire to isolate itself from its strategic environment.<sup>77</sup>

In 2016, the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy warned about the worsening security dilemma regarding Russia's provocations and the Crisis in Ukraine:

*“The security of Europe and the Baltic Sea region has deteriorated. Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and created the crisis in eastern Ukraine. A vicious circle has evolved, resulting in increased tension and military activity in the Baltic Sea region. In recent years, Russia has also increased its military footprint and activity in the Arctic, where the situation, so far, has remained relatively stable. Russia uses a wide range of military and non-military instruments in advancing its interests. The security policy environment of Finland, a member of the western community, has transformed. A more tense security situation in Europe and the Baltic Sea region will directly impact Finland. The use or threat of military force against Finland cannot be excluded.”*<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> D. A. Lanko, 'Finlandization, Neutrality, or Kekkosllovakia? Paasikivi–Kekkonen's Line in Finnish Discourses 30 Years after the End of the Cold War', *Journal of International Analytics* 12, no. 3 (2021). P 13.

<sup>77</sup> Edström, Håkan, Dennis Gyllensporre, and Jacob Westberg. *Military strategy of small states: responding to external shocks of the 21st century*. Routledge, 2019. P 155 - 156.

<sup>78</sup> PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, 'Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy 2016'. P 11.

Taking more risks, integrating more, and starting to upgrade its position. It represents how the approach for crisis management has been tuned down, and further integration with NATO is framed as the next step in acting within the European security structure. In 2017, the number of members of the British-led Joint Expeditionary Framework (JEF) membership became nine as Finland and Sweden joined.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the German-led Framework Nation Concept initiative for Finland included countries in 2017 that connected Northern Europe with Central-Eastern ones to develop army forces.

In any scenario of collective defence, Germany could thus well become the indispensable framework nation for most of its smaller FNC partners and NATO as a whole.<sup>80</sup> For Non-NATO members: It affords at least some insights into the central processes of NATO's force planning and development – and thus, potentially, easier linkup during crises or missions – without having to be an alliance member or enter politically sensitive ties with “Brussels”.<sup>81</sup> Both frameworks were joined in 2017; Finland and Sweden made these decisions in solidarity regarding sharing their views about Russia.

Dr Risto Penttilä, a respected figure in Finland and one of the few who started the motion to change the security role of Finland in 2007 to be military allied with NATO, had an interview one month before the Russian war in Ukraine in January 2022. Given his background as an expert in international relations and security, the Finnish Parliament and the Ministry of Defence in Finland. He was asked about Finland's relations with NATO and what he saw the situation after the president of Finland answered:

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<sup>79</sup> The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). ‘History of the JEF’. URL: <https://jefnations.org/about-the-jef/history-of-the-jef/>. [ Accessed 24 November 2024].

<sup>80</sup> Glatz and Zapfe, ‘NATO's Framework Nations Concept’. P 2.

<sup>81</sup> Glatz and Zapfe. P 4.

*Transcript 3.1: An Interview with Risto Penttilä. Data are from Merion West, a magazine of politics and culture that publishes critical commentary and in-depth interviews from across the political spectrum and globally.<sup>82</sup> Created by the author.*

***How is Finland viewing the situation in Ukraine?*** <sup>83</sup>

*“I think everyone’s worried. And that goes for most of Europe. At the same time, what’s noteworthy is that a very lively discussion about Finland’s potential membership in NATO has started. I am actually one of the culprits for this discussion in December. In a TV interview, I said that if the crisis in Ukraine becomes a major war, then Finland will be in a situation where it is asked or expected to make a decision concerning joining NATO because then the old arguments about maintaining stability and keeping good relations with Russia no longer hold.*

*So that discussion started in December, and then President of the Republic gave a New Year’s speech in which he reiterated Finland’s old position, which is that joining NATO is entirely up to Finland; Russia—or anyone else—cannot dictate whether Finland should join or not. And this was interpreted in Finland and elsewhere as quite a strong message to Moscow: If you start shaking the foundations of European security, you might actually see Finland and Sweden joining NATO, which, of course, would be entirely against the interests of Moscow at the moment.”*

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<sup>82</sup> Erich J. Prince, ‘About | Merion West’, Merion West, 2016, <https://merionwest.com/about-merion-west/>. [Accessed 7 January 2025].

<sup>83</sup> Mattila, Henri. ‘Finland, Russia, and the NATO Question: An Interview with Risto Penttilä’. Merion West, 16 January 2022. URL: <https://merionwest.com/2022/01/16/finland-russia-and-the-nato-question-an-interview-with-risto-penttila/>. [Accessed 4 January 2025].

### *NATO Integration and European Security Structure*

Reassurance is one key to building up deterrence and providing a security guarantee. One of the elements of that is what the U.S. Department of State issued as the checklist or “*Fact sheet*” of U.S. Security Cooperation<sup>84</sup>. Many aspects of Finland and the Finns' integration with the European security structure are mentioned. One of them was the numerous military procurements in active government-to-government sales cases with Finland from the USA under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS)<sup>85</sup>. The US Department of Defence approved the system and notified the US Congress.

On October 7th, 2017, the Department of Defence in the USA and the Ministry of Defence of Finland signed a Statement of Intent, bringing Finland closer to the NATO apparatus regarding personnel, operations, and cooperation.<sup>86</sup> It was followed by another one in 2018 when the US, Finland, and Sweden signed an additional Trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI)<sup>87</sup>, to expand trilateral dialogue on defence policy and promote security in the Baltic Sea region by reinforcing transatlantic linkages. That represents how building mutual trust with NATO members took place over an extended period.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> term and 4<sup>th</sup> terms for Vladimir Putin (May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024) encountered different coalitions ruling Finland, and the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö (2012–2024)<sup>88</sup>. President Sauli was the former leader of the centre-right National Coalition Party.

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<sup>84</sup> Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. ‘U.S. Security Cooperation With Finland’. United States Department of State, 11 April 2023. URL: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-finland/>. [Accessed 17 December 2024].

<sup>85</sup> Defense Security Cooperation Agency. ‘US-Finland Security Cooperation - Database’. Department of Defense - Pentagon. URL: [https://www.dsca.mil/tags/finland#\\_blank](https://www.dsca.mil/tags/finland#_blank). [Accessed 17 December 2024].

<sup>86</sup> US Department of Defence and Finland Ministry of Defence, ‘Statement of Intent 2017’, 7 October 2017.

<sup>87</sup> Defense.info. ‘Finnish, Swedish, US Trilateral Agreement’. Defense.info, 13 May 2018. URL: <https://defense.info/highlight-of-the-week/finnish-swedish-us-trilateral-agreement/>. [Accessed 17 December 2024].

<sup>88</sup> Archived website from the presidential terms. ‘Home - Tasavallan Presidentti Sauli Niinistö’. President of the Republic of Finland, 1 March 2024. URL: <https://www.presidentti.fi/niinisto/en/>. [Accessed 2 December 2024].

Since Finland's EU accession in 1995, the possibility of NATO membership has also been discussed. Until February 2022, popular support had stagnated at around 20 per cent. Only two parties in the Finnish parliament supported membership: the National Coalition Party and the Swedish People's Party (the party of the Swedish-speaking minority).<sup>89</sup>

Under his presidency, Finland witnessed rapid changes in multiple dimensions. Finland's decision to strengthen its partnership with NATO alliance with some of its members and Nordic cooperation was mainly influenced by intensified Russian foreign policy changes and mounting militarism fears. Russia's actions since 2014 have made the security dilemma worse.

In 2020, the Government Report on Finnish Security Policy acknowledged that as the following:

*“Russia has weakened the security of our neighbouring areas and Europe by illegally annexing Crimea and by keeping up the conflict it started in Eastern Ukraine. Russian operations in areas like Georgia, Ukraine and Syria show that the country has lowered its threshold to use military force. Because of Russian actions, the security policy situation has become more tense, and the EU-Russia relations have deteriorated. Russia is still aiming at a sphere-of-influence-based security regime in Europe.”*<sup>90</sup>

In 2020, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland reported firmly its position, which they hesitated before, by mentioning:

*“For Finland, it is important that the EU stands united in issues related to Russia. In response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, Finland pursues the EU's joint non-recognition policy and implements sanctions against Russia.”*<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ålander, Minna 'Finland Wants to Use the "NATO Option"', Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 27 April 2022, URL: <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/finland-wants-to-use-the-nato-option>. [Accessed 17 December 2024].

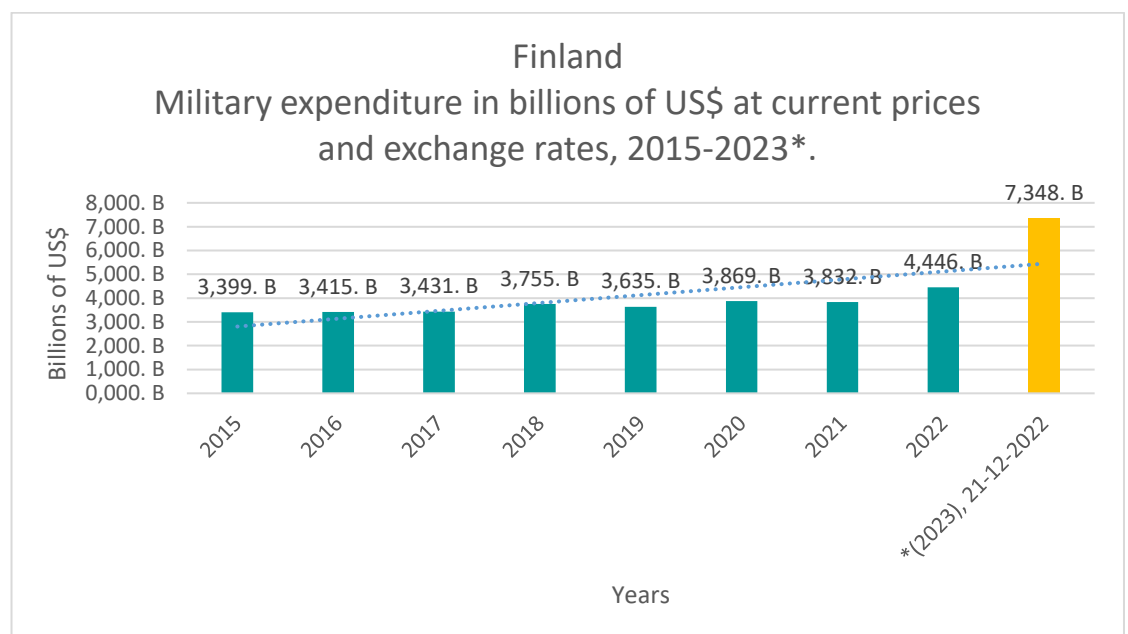
<sup>90</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 'Government Report on Finnish and Security Policy 2020'.

<sup>91</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 'Government Report on Finnish and Security Policy 2020'.

From strategic shock, policymakers shifted to threats from Russia due to the accelerated process of NATO membership. At some point, all of these preparations for a significant crisis in Finland's Foreign and defence policy paid off when a turning point came up, and the policymakers rose to the occasion with determination. The charts are based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute(SIPRI) database.<sup>92</sup> That influenced the approved budget for the year 2023 by Parliaments and policymakers in Finland <sup>93</sup> and Russia <sup>94</sup>; the charts are going to include that represent the following:

### 1- Military expenditure by country, in billions of US\$ at current prices and exchange rates, 2015-2023\*.

*Chart 3.1: Military expenditure in billions of US dollars, Finland, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The yellow represents the approved budget for 2023. Created by the author.*

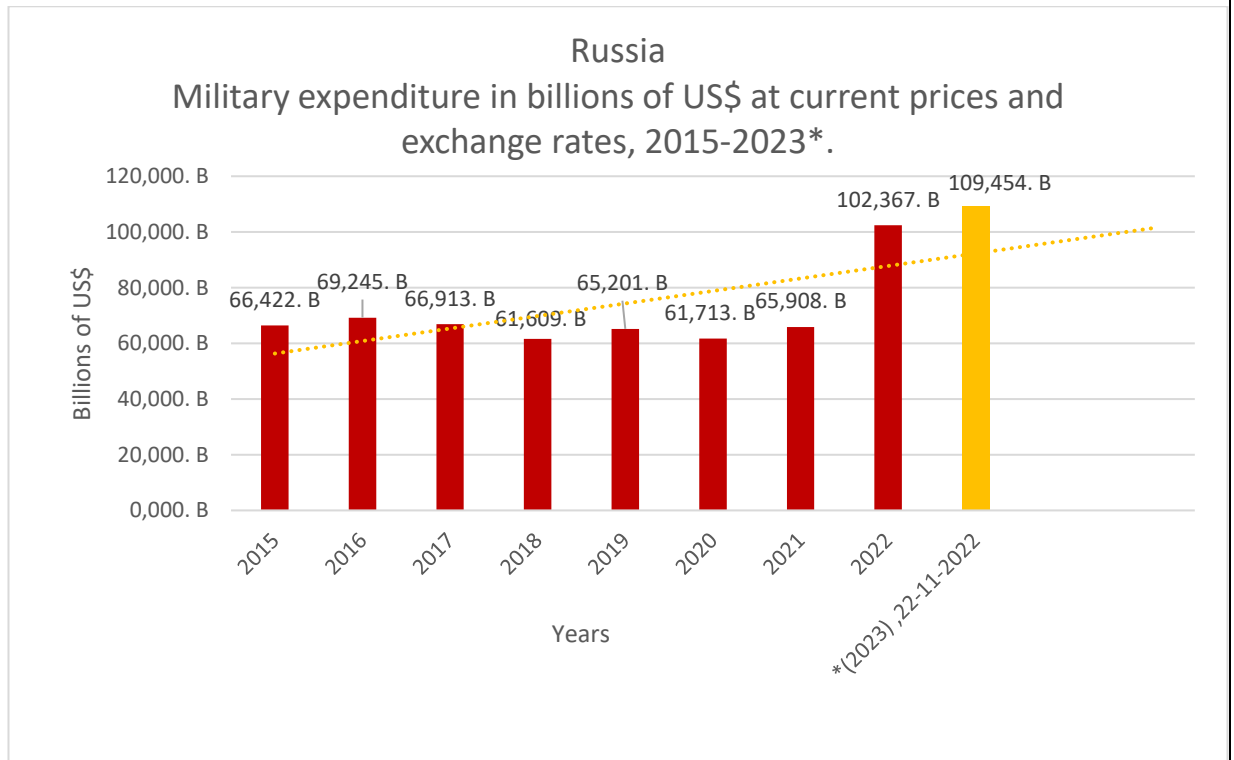


<sup>92</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 'SIPRI Military Expenditure Database'.

<sup>93</sup> Eduskunta - press release. 'Parliament Approved the State Budget for 2023 in Its Single Reading', 21 December 2022. URL: <https://www.eduskunta.fi/EN/tiedotteet/Pages/Parliament-approved-the-state-budget-for-2023-in-its-single-reading.aspx>. [ Accessed 16 December 2024].

<sup>94</sup> THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. 'Russia's Parliament Approves Budget with a Record Amount Devoted to Defense Spending'. AP News, 22 November 2022. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-budget-duma-economy-ukraine-07e66c23e1f47097de2348325f39dd6f>. [ Accessed 16 December 2024].

Chart 3.2: Military expenditure in billions of US dollars, Russia, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The **red** represents the spending of **Vladimir Putin's 3rd and 4th term** of the presidency, and the **yellow** represents **the approved budget for 2023**. Created by the author.



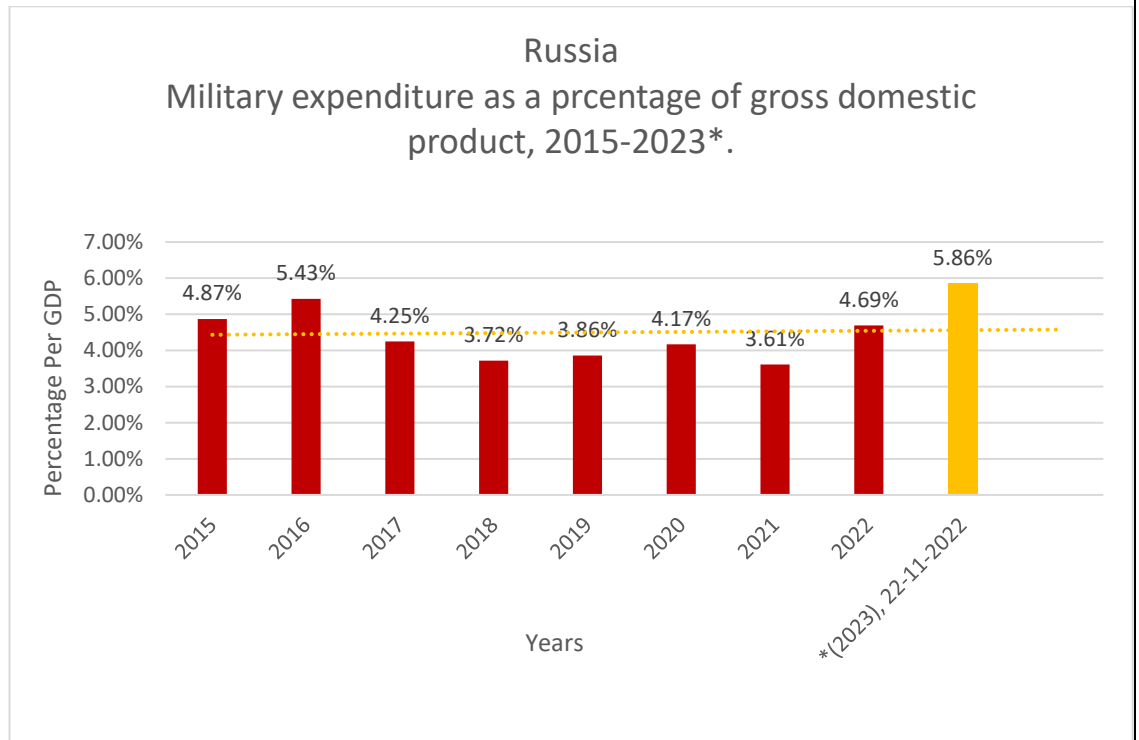
## 2- Military expenditure by country as a percentage of gross domestic product, 2015-2023\*.

*Chart 3.3: Military expenditure per GDP, Finland, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The yellow represents the approved budget for 2023. Created by the author.*





Chart 3.4: Military expenditure per GDP, Russia, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The **red** represents the spending of **Vladimir Putin's 3rd and 4th term** of the presidency, and the **yellow** represents **the approved budget for 2023**. Created by the author.



**3- Military expenditures by country as a percentage of government spending from the budget, 2015-2023\*.** Data for general government expenditures are from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook and include spending by all levels of government: central/federal, state/provincial/regional, municipal, and local authorities.

*Chart 3.5: Military expenditure per government spending, Finland, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The yellow represents the approved budget for 2023. Created by the author.*

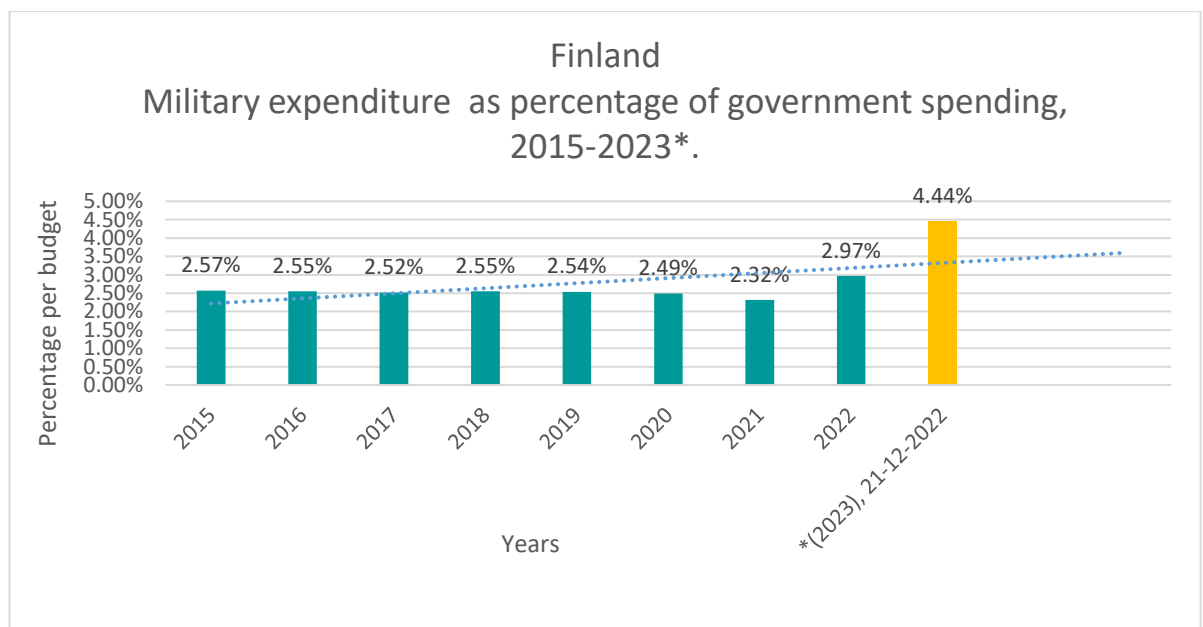
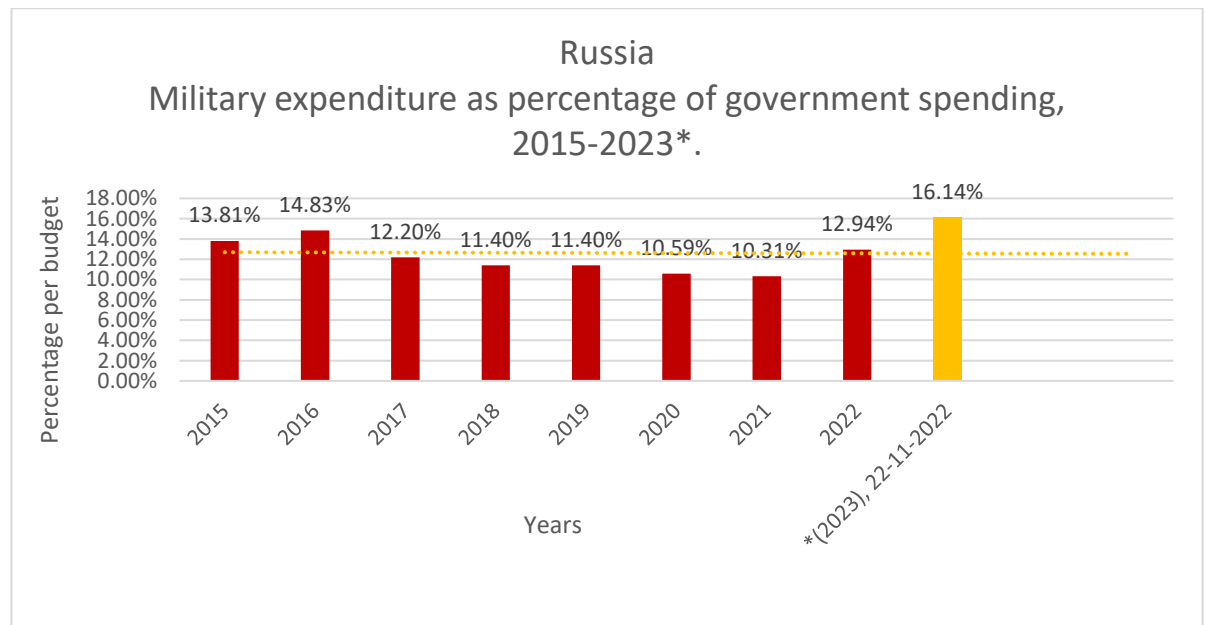


Chart 3.5: Military expenditure per government spending, Russia, 2015-2023. Data are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ( SIPRI) database. The **red** represents the spending of **Vladimir Putin's 3rd and 4th term** of the presidency, and the **yellow** represents **the approved budget for 2023**. Created by the author.



The decision to join did not come as a result of a referendum on NATO, although a citizens' initiative demanding a referendum on a Finnish application to join NATO has passed the required 50,000 signatures for consideration by parliament.<sup>95</sup> That was a shift from President Sauli Niinisto's position, who announced in 2017 at a panel debate on Monday ahead of elections on January 28<sup>th</sup> that year as he was running for his second term at the presidential election, mentioning *“Joining NATO Would Require Referendum.”* he added, *“I am convinced that (membership) decision would require legitimacy, a wide acceptability ... I would warn against making decisions where a significant part of citizens would get deep wounds,”*<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> News. 'Finnish Nato Referendum Goes on Parliamentary Agenda'. Yle, 27 February 2022. URL : <https://yle.fi/a/3-12335563>. [ Accessed 21 November 2024].

<sup>96</sup> Reuters. 'Finnish President Says Joining NATO Would Require Referendum'. Voice of America, 30 October 2017. URL: <https://www.voanews.com/a/finnish-president-says-joining-nato-would-require-referendum/4092866.html>. [ Accessed 21 November 2024].

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in Geneva, Switzerland, a summit in Geneva was conducted between the United States and Russia. President Joe Biden met with President Vladimir Putin. In December 2021, it put forward two draft treaties: the first is the '*Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees*'<sup>97</sup>; and the second is the '*Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*'.<sup>98</sup> In one of the articles from the second agreement mentioned the following:

*Article 6 : All member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization commit themselves to refrain from any further enlargement of NATO, including the accession of Ukraine as well as other States.*<sup>99</sup>

Russia was threatening to reduce the room for maneuver that is so important for Finland, and the country needed to signal without delay that Russia has no say in its policy choices.<sup>100</sup> On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, in the New Year's speech, President of Finland Sauli Niinistö mentioned:

*"And let it be stated once again: Finland's room to manoeuvre and freedom of choice also include the possibility of military alignment and of applying for NATO membership, should we ourselves so decide. NATO's business is the so-called Open Door policy, the continuance of which has been repeatedly confirmed to Finland, also publicly."*<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 'Treaty between The United States of America and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees - Министерство Иностранных Дел Российской Федерации', 2021. URL: [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en). [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

<sup>98</sup> Alberque, William. 'Russia's New Draft Treaties: Like 2009, but Worse'. the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 22 January 2022. <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2022/01/russias-new-draft-treaties-like-2009-but-worse/>. [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

<sup>99</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 'Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of The Russian Federation and Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - Министерство Иностранных Дел Российской Федерации', 2021. URL: [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/rso/nato/1790803/?lang=en](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790803/?lang=en). [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

<sup>100</sup> Strauss and Wegge, DEFENDING NATO'S NORTHERN FLANK POWER PROJECTION AND MILITARY OPERATIONS. P 234.

<sup>101</sup> The Presidency of Finland. 'President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö's New Year's Speech on 1 January 2022', 1 January 2022. <https://www.presidentti.fi/niinisto/en/speeches/president-of-the-republic-of-finland-sauli-niinistos-new-years-speech-on-1-january-2022/>. [ Accessed 18 November 2024].

### *The multi-dimensional impact on Finland's security role*

The situation created in Russia reached a point of no return when it issued the “*Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*” in December of 2021, demanding in Article 6 of it that no further NATO enlargement. The country has already passed miles into gradual integration, and the conditions that Russia asked for were interrupted by policymakers as Finland would lose its agency on this matter, joining NATO as a full member in this context. More than 80 years have passed since the Winter War of 1939, and the struggle to maintain the sovereignty of Finns, which should not be a comprise for its policy of non-military alliance. It was made from simple volunteerism of not joining NATO to a necessity, and the Russian War in Ukraine was just a confirmation of that consensus.

The consequences of the escalating tensions after 2014 in Ukraine have driven the country to scale up its defensive capabilities and partnerships. However, the 2% spending on defence per GDP was not accomplished. A question might emerge: why does the government need to reach that percentage if it is not a member of NATO yet and faced the aftermath of a financial crisis in 2008 and the pandemic in 2020? It is a story of years of resilience for a country to preserve the agency of Finland. Statehood found its way, and probably, it was looking for the final push out of the post-Cold War era. What the parliament approved at the end of 2022 marked the country's decision into a position to be among NATO's top defence spenders; according to one security expert, Finland's current level of defence spending is secure, but its future depends on the national economy's performance.<sup>102</sup>

All of the monuments that were established reached the final push. In its New Year's Speech on January 1, 2022, Finland rejected Russia's suggestion on a treaty draft in December 2021, demanding no more NATO enlargement under Article 6.

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<sup>102</sup> Yle News. ‘Finland Ranks among Nato’s Top Defence Spenders’. Yle, 8 July 2024. <https://yle.fi/a/74-20098630>. [ Accessed 19 November 2024].

That was considered “a huge change” from Russia, as President Sauli took the agency from Finland to join NATO. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Russian War in Ukraine was ignited in a full-scale invasion targeting the Central and Southeast of Ukraine, heading toward the capital Kyiv. That makes the decision that is related to policymakers' actions, the “*Russian invasion of Ukraine*”, proper to a certain extent, and data shows it was not the only factor for joining NATO. As you reach this point of reading, this thesis aims to outline Finland's background with NATO integration, policymakers' actions, and Russian influence.

In a press conference with former Prime Minister of the UK Boris Johnson on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö —after signing an advanced security pact with the UK—told a news conference in Helsinki that, in a message to Russia, he said, “*You caused this—look at the mirror.*”<sup>103</sup> Here is part of the transcript from that conference:<sup>104</sup>

*Transcript 3.2: Press conference with former Prime Minister of the UK Boris Johnson on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö. Data from The Independent TV channel on YouTube.<sup>105</sup> Created by the author.*

A- At minute 14:45: “*First question is to you, president, you said that joining NATO is not against anyone and that this is not a zero-sum game, but through joining NATO, there is now going to be a military ring around Russia that runs from the Arctic through the Baltics through central Europe all the way to Turkey, does that not pose quite a lot of danger given the world view of Vladimir Putin who doesn't see things in not as a zero-sum game because you have an 800-mile border with Vladimir Putin and the Russian government?*”

<sup>103</sup> Sky News (Director). ‘UK Agrees Mutual Security Deals with Finland and Sweden’. YouTube, 11 May 2022. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-61408700>. [Accessed 2 December 2024].

<sup>104</sup> Independent TV. ‘Boris Johnson Holds a Press Conference with Finnish President Sauli Niinistö’. YouTube, 11 May 2022. URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_XpKfttCC4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_XpKfttCC4). [Accessed 14 December 2024].

<sup>105</sup> Independent TV.

- B- The answer was at minute 15:54: *“First of all, we have to keep in mind that Finland is already an enhanced partner in NATO. There's no doubt in anybody's mind that Finland is part of the West, like we have learned to call it, so the change would not be that radical when we think about security. We think how to defend our country, and if we want to maximise our security, that means to maximise defense of our country. And when I say that it's not away from anybody, well, nobody can hurt because somebody wants to protect herself. So, in my thinking, this is quite simple: actually, we increase our security, and we do not take it away from anybody. It is not a zero-sum game.”*
- C- At minute 20:57: *“Nick Ferrari LBC radio, yeah, thank you, Mr. President. If you were to join NATO, do you fear it could be seen as a provocative gesture by Vladimir Putin and Mr. President? If not, why not?”*
- D- The answer was at minute 21:44: *“Yes. You have to keep in mind that this is not the first time we are discussing about NATO and not the first time we will discuss about NATO with Russia. They have made it very clear earlier years that if you join NATO they will do whatever they have explained some contra steps, but they are that is us for us to guess. But now, I got to get a bit deeper the situation changed so far even Russia has said that having militarily non-aligned Finland and Sweden that will stabilize politics that's what they have been talking. But then in the end of last year they stated that Finland and Sweden can't join NATO they demanded that NATO doesn't take new members. Actually they changed their own picture by that because we have with Sweden being non-aligned militarily from our own will, but by stating that Russia actually expressed that you don't have your own will here and that is a huge change that made us think. And what happened in the 24<sup>th</sup> February which continues the huge warfare Russia is having in Ukraine surely that changed also the picture they are ready to attack the neighboring country, so when you ask whether what they how they see a possible Finish joining, well, if that would be the case that we join ,well , my response would be that you caused this, look at the mirror.”*

The Government Report on Finland's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 notes:

*"Through NATO membership, Finland would be part of NATO's collective defence and would be covered by the security guarantees enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The deterrent effect of Finland's defence would be considerably stronger than it is at present. If Finland, as a NATO member country, became a target of military force, it would defend itself with the support of its allies according to plans prepared and rehearsed in advance. As a member of NATO, Finland would participate in making decisions on security policy issues that are of key importance to Finland. A combination of a strong national defence capability and NATO membership would be a credible security solution. Finland's defence capability and resilience would strengthen NATO's collective defence throughout the territory of the Alliance."*<sup>106</sup>

In this timeline between 2015-2022, cautiousness and high tensions were mounting. From 2015 onward, the NATO alliance and the hybrid war on Ukraine started to pull NATO into Europe, what Russia did into annexing another part of a country, occupying 20% of Georgia, and firing up times every once in a while. It faced a different outlook during the 2010s and early 2020s.

First, NATO's role between Kosovo and Serbia transformed into a limited peace-keeping mission. The Kosovo Force (KFOR) is a NATO-led international peacekeeping force and military of Kosovo; Finland joined its efforts in 1999. A gradual shift to the country's role and support the UN-led and coordinated UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) civilian crisis management operation and other international organisations.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Finland Ministry's of Defence. 'Finland's Membership in NATO'. Puolustusministeriö. URL: [https://www.defmin.fi/en/areas\\_of\\_expertise/finland\\_s\\_membership\\_in\\_nato](https://www.defmin.fi/en/areas_of_expertise/finland_s_membership_in_nato). [Accessed 1 December 2024].

<sup>107</sup> KFOR. 'Finland Has Deployed Troops to KFOR since 1999'. The Kosovo Force - Chronicles, February 2022. URL: <https://kfor.nato.int/kfor/media-center/archive/chronicles/chronicle-2022/february/finland-has-deployed-troops-to-kfor-since-1999>. [Accessed 30 December 2024].



Finland took part in the NATO Response Force (NRF) <sup>108</sup> in 2006; the Alliance has a highly ready and technologically advanced multinational force comprising land, air, maritime, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) components that it can deploy quickly wherever needed.

Second, There was a wave of revisionists that acknowledged not everything NATO did in its active role in the “*War On Terror*” in Iraq and Afghanistan was right. Gradual pulling of NATO troops out of conflict zones is starting. The overstretching of NATO as a military alliance outside Europe began to decline. Afghanistan was the biggest recipient of Finland’s development cooperation funds throughout the second half of the 2010s. In August 2021, Finland suspended its extensive activities in Afghanistan in chaotic circumstances as the international community left the country following the US decision to withdraw its forces and the Taliban’s seizure of power.<sup>109</sup>

For Iraq, Finland decided in 2016 to strengthen the training mission in Iraq for the Kurdish security forces as part of the fight against the Islamic State group in northern Iraq.<sup>110</sup> According to the Finnish Army, Finland will re-organise its crisis management operations in Iraq starting in 2020. On Monday, the Army said that the move to revamp operations followed the restructuring of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) – the military offensive against the Islamic State led by the US.<sup>111</sup> It withdrew the majority of its troops stationed in Iraq due to the pandemic.<sup>112</sup>

Third, what happened in Ukraine after 2014 made the alliance more defensive, rebirthing it. Russia is crystal clear considered a threat and not to be trusted. Finland participates in bilateral and multilateral military exercises with the United States, EU, and NATO Allies. It holds another impact or a good image in the eyes of the policymaker's grasp of attention.

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<sup>108</sup> NATO. ‘NATO Response Force’. NATO - Topic, 27 July 2023. URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49755.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49755.htm?selectedLocale=en). [ Accessed 17 December 2024].

<sup>109</sup> Mustasilta et al., ‘Finland in Afghanistan 2001–2021: From Stabilization to Advancing Foreign and Security Policy Relations’.

<sup>110</sup> Global. ‘Finland To Strengthen Training Mission in Iraq’. Defense News, 21 April 2016. URL: <https://www.defensenews.com/global/2016/04/21/finland-to-strengthen-training-mission-in-iraq/>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

<sup>111</sup> News, ‘Finland to Re-Deploy Crisis Management Troops in Iraq’. Yle, 25 February 2019. URL: <https://yle.fi/a/3-11133941>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

<sup>112</sup> News. ‘Finland Draws down Troops in Iraq over Coronavirus Concerns’. YLE, 28 March 2020. URL: <https://yle.fi/a/3-11281089>. [ Accessed 30 December 2024].

### *Summary*

The NATO option was kept aside, and it was not meant to be away. A Nordic country like Finland, which holds a geographic location with the longest borderline with Russia in Northern Europe, is starting to see its role becoming closer to NATO. The turning point with Russian demands of no further NATO expansion with what has been seen since 2007 onward makes the room ready for change; December 2021 and February 24th, 2022 were the final alarm bells to go out from post-Cold War consensus.

To sum up, it was the looming threats and tensions that were mounted gradually until the Russian war in Ukraine got the tip of the iceberg. Since Russia invaded Ukraine with its aggressiveness in 2022, this acted as a crunching factor in putting Finland rapidly on the path towards NATO membership. The intention of doing so in the future, as all the Finnish governments did before, was nullified for real-time consequences. The picture of the Republic of Finland dealing with Russia after its war in Ukraine halted previous policy positions. It concretized a decision to be on a different side of the equation that ruled the European security structure—standing with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in facing the atrocity. **Based on chapter 2 and using the theoretical framework and definitions for the external environment , the summary will be :**

Table 3.2: The theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Created by the author.

National Role Conception between 2015-2022	
It comes from	It works out
<p><i>The Sources of Roles:</i></p> <p>Northern Europe and the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö</p>	<p><i>Perception of Status:</i></p> <p>Vladimir Putin after 2012, The rise of Russia's military spending, the aftermath of the Crimea crisis, and the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022.</p>
<p><i>Role Performance:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- The Swedish and Finnish NATO alignment policy highlights liquid neutrality and the NATO alliance.</li> <li>2- Bringing Finland closer to the NATO apparatus regarding personnel, operations, and cooperation.</li> <li>3- German-led and the UK-led frameworks.</li> <li>4- Working on the European security structures initiatives.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Motivational Orientation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Cooperative-working with other countries to integrate more with NATO.</li> <li>2- Being closer to the European security structure.</li> <li>3- Applying for NATO membership in May 2022.</li> </ol>
<p><i>Role Adaptation:</i></p> <p>Joined the Enhanced Opportunities Partners (EOP), signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Host Nation Support (HNS).</p>	<p><i>Key Issue Areas:</i></p> <p>Security and foreign policies.</p>

Table 3.3: Definitions for the external environment in Chapter 2. Created by the author.

Definitions for the external environment between 2015-2022	
It comes from the Domains.	Works out based on the Status
<p><i>Subordinate-a geographic nonorganizational group:</i></p> <p>Nordic countries and NATO members.</p>	<p>1- An equal-status ally or cooperative partner.</p> <p>2- A dominant ally of the United States, the UK, and Germany.</p>
<p><i>Subordinate other-a nonglobal, intergovernmental organisations:</i></p> <p>NATO</p>	
<p><i>Global superpower and its bloc:</i></p> <p>The USA and European Security Structure.</p>	



## Conclusions and Further Research

**The key to role theory in international relations is seeing it as multi-dimensional.** A thorough understanding of the scope and subject of Russian influence, actions by policymakers, NATO integration, and the European Security Structure that was implemented to study the shift of Finland's security role. Applying the national role conceptions developed by Kalevi Holsti and Naomi Bailin Wishas as part of the theory. The conclusion was that the situation created in Russia influenced Finland's joining NATO. Crisis management, the way that the consensus is developed and changes are steered into the country's role, among many aspects, is a filthy experience that draws out lessons.

The levels of changes in military spending, security, foreign policies, and diplomatic aspects, alongside a significant portion of the changes in the European geopolitical situation. The policymakers in Finland decided to keep the country agency on this matter, joining NATO as a full member in this context. The shift of Finland's policy from simple volunteerism to the expansion of NATO reveals the factors of national resolve and foreign pressures. Arguments of great importance and lessons learned would be crafted as the following:

- 1. The Security Dilemma Is Made Worse By the Actions of Russia:** Since about 2014, actions taken by Russia, especially militarily, have undermined its goals. It may have softened its policies overtly, but the unintentional result was that Finland pushed towards NATO, which Russia has tried to avoid for a long time. Before 2014, Putin's Munich speech in March 2007, the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, and the Central Europe Missile defence system were played in a lower volume of significant shifts.
- 2. Balancing Finland's Autonomy with Alliance Corporations and Dependency:** The attention given to the transition by the management process of Finland's crisis illustrates how national defence should be prioritised even in a system of collective security. The state's decision to prioritise spending on conscription and domestic defence capability is still a significant lesson today.

3. **Nordic Solidarity and Regional Councils:** Finland's joining NATO emphasises the need to cooperate with the Baltic Region first and foremost with Sweden, Norway, and the Baltic countries. Those connections were the first step before joining NATO as a full member.
4. **The Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022 was the final nail in the coffin:** The end of the non-military alliance policy, which Finland adopted in joining the EU on January 1, 1995. It came after monitoring the European security structure since 2007, the rise of military spending, and the readiness of the Russian Armed forces. It gradually shifted the perspective from crisis management between 2007-2014 to further NATO integration steps between 2015-2022.

The Russian influence dimension mentioned “*intensified Russian changes*” that took different forms. Under Vladimir Putin’s presidency, military spending and readiness have increased significantly. Finland's foreign policy documents, cabinet discussions, and policymakers' actions shifted the role from a non-military ally toward an ally that joined NATO. History teaches us that there is a need to be more pragmatic and proactive as circumstances shift concerning security. As tensions and risk-taking escalated over 15 years, the question of NATO membership shifted from 'how' to 'when'. The speed of accession to full NATO membership<sup>113</sup> took less than a year.

Despite the number of times, the country has stated that it has not done that, the data mentioned in this thesis confirms the NATO integration and European Security Structure dimension and represents how much hesitation policymakers took. As Minna Ålander, a German Institute for International and Security Affairs scholar, said in one of her publications, “*the threat posed by Russia to the European security order, NATO is returning to its original function as a defence alliance, which is in Finland’s interest.*”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> NATO articles, ‘Relations with Finland’, NATO - Topic, 4 October 2024. URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics\\_49594.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics_49594.htm). [ Accessed 17 December 2024].

<sup>114</sup> Ålander, Minna ‘Finland Wants to Use the “NATO Option”’, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 27 April 2022.

**Further research** is suggested on **hybrid warfare preparedness**, which includes early responses to hybrid risks, including cyber and misinformation threats since it sets an example for other states facing the threat of Russian forces. Moreover, working on updated materials is recommended, related to **the dichotomy of the nuclear posture, logic, and proliferation governing the Russian Doctrine for the Arctic Circle** since this part of the geography now has the whole of Northern Europe as members in NATO to deal with as well as North America.

**The End**



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