



## FINLAND'S STRATEGIC SHIFT: A NEW CHAPTER WITH NATO MEMBERSHIP

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### *Abstrak*

*Makalah ini membahas potensi akses Finlandia ke NATO, yang menandai perubahan signifikan dari kebijakan non-alignment militer yang telah berlangsung lama. Karena dinamika geopolitik di kawasan Baltik mengalami perubahan besar, pertimbangan Finlandia untuk bergabung dengan NATO membawa implikasi yang luas bagi keamanan regional dan geopolitik global. Finlandia merespons agresivitas Rusia dengan bergabung dengan Pakta Pertahanan Atlantik Utara (NATO) untuk menangkal ancaman keamanan Rusia di wilayah tersebut. Abstrak ini mengeksplorasi konteks historis netralitas Finlandia, lanskap keamanan yang berkembang, dan faktor-faktor yang mendorong negara itu untuk mengevaluasi kembali postur pertahanannya. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian analisis konten kritis dan wawancara mendalam dengan pengamat bidang militer dan pertahanan keamanan, Rahakundini, potensi dampaknya terhadap NATO, respon Rusia, dan implikasi yang lebih luas terhadap keseimbangan kekuatan yang rapuh di Eropa Utara. Keanggotaan NATO yang diusulkan menandakan kalibrasi ulang strategis bagi Finlandia, dengan konsekuensi yang melampaui batas-batas negara, membentuk narasi geopolitik di arena internasional yang terus berkembang.*

**Kata Kunci:** Finlandia; geopolitik; NATO

### **Abstract**

This paper delves into Finland's potential accession to NATO, marking a significant departure from its longstanding policy of military non-alignment. As geopolitical dynamics in the Baltic region undergo profound changes, Finland's consideration of NATO membership carries far-reaching implications for regional security and global geopolitics. Finland responded to Russian aggressiveness by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to counteract Russia's security threats in the region. The abstract explores the historical context of Finland's neutrality, the evolving security landscape, and the factors driving the nation towards reevaluating its defense posture. Using the research method of critical content analysis and in-depth interview with military and defense and security analyst Rahakundini, the potential impact on NATO, Russia's response, and the broader implications for the delicate balance of power in Northern Europe. The proposed NATO membership signals a strategic recalibration for Finland, with ramifications extending beyond national borders, shaping the geopolitical narrative in an ever-evolving international arena.

**Keywords:** Finland; geopolitics; NATO

## **Introduction**

In the ever-evolving landscape of international relations, the Nordic nation of Finland finds itself at the forefront of a strategic reevaluation, contemplating a departure from its historical stance of military non-alignment. This shift is poised to be a pivotal moment in Finland's geopolitical trajectory, as the nation contemplates embarking on a new chapter through potential NATO membership. The decision to reconsider its long-standing policy underscores the dynamic nature of security concerns in the Baltic region and prompts a closer examination of the geopolitical forces at play.

Against the backdrop of heightened global tensions and regional uncertainties, this article delves into the motivations and implications surrounding Finland's contemplation of NATO membership. By exploring the historical context of Finland's neutrality, analyzing the changing security dynamics in Northern Europe, and anticipating the potential ripple effects on the delicate balance of power, this piece aims to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of Finland's strategic shift. As the nation navigates the complexities of aligning itself with a military alliance, the international community watches closely, recognizing the profound impact such a decision could have on the geopolitical chessboard. The following discussion will unravel the intricacies of Finland's strategic recalibration, examining the factors influencing this shift and the broader implications for both regional and global security.

This article reviews the content analysis regarding Finland joining NATO. According to Kauranen & Gray, Finland formally joined NATO, its flag unfurling outside the military bloc's Brussels headquarters, in a historic policy shift brought on by Russia's invasion of Ukraine that drew a threat from Moscow of "countermeasures" (Kauranen & Gray, 2023).

Historically, NATO was a military alliance established by the Western bloc led by the United States. Founded in 1949, it consists of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and several other Western European countries. NATO was established in response to the Eastern Bloc threat from the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The alliance was formed with the aim of fostering cooperation among member states, which includes collective defense cooperation, military cooperation, and maintaining peace and stability in the North Atlantic. Over the years, NATO has

participated in various military operations and peacekeeping missions around the world, to ensure that peace and stability remain in the region (Rogozińska, 2020).

Since its formation in 1949, NATO membership has undergone significant development. Initially, the scope of membership was limited to Western European and North American countries. But after the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO began to expand its membership by inviting Eastern European countries (NATO Eastward Expansion) that were previously part of the Soviet Bloc and the Warsaw Pact (Averre, 1998; Marten, 2018; Nikolin, 1998). Until now, the number of NATO member countries has reached 30 countries and places it as the largest and strongest military alliance in the world (Bustami, 2023).

However, while NATO has seen significant expansion since the end of the Cold War, a number of countries are still struggling to gain membership status in the alliance. One of the countries interested in joining the alliance is Finland. Geographically, Finland is one of the Nordic countries located in Northern Europe and has a strong interest in maintaining regional stability and security. As a neutral foreign policy country and a non-member of NATO, Finland has shown a strong interest and commitment to join NATO. Finland's presence in NATO is expected to strengthen collective defense and national security and enhance closer political and military cooperation with other member states (Bustami, 2023).

Military alliances are considered one of the effective defense policy tools in dealing with the situation of international security uncertainty which is also one of the important tools to enhance international stability and security amid the escalation of protracted geopolitical conflicts (Starr & Siverson, 1990). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is one of the most important military alliances for maintaining international stability and security and is considered the main pillar of the international security system (Forster & Wallace, 2001).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine will raise a dilemma and the importance of territorial sovereignty, create a paradox in the function of defense organizations/pacts, and cause the impact of a humanitarian crisis through waves of refugees. But Russia claims that the decision of Vladimir Putin's government to invade Ukraine militarily on February 24, 2022, caused many responses from all corners of the world. Almost all countries, from the United States to Indonesia, have condemned this violation of Ukraine's territorial

sovereignty. The Chinese government through Foreign Minister Wang Yi also expressed the need to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity (Dharmaputra, 2022).

According to Susetio et al. (2023), The Russian-Ukrainian war is not over yet. In almost the entire territory of Ukraine, both are still involved in armed conflict. Russia invaded Ukraine as part of its self-defense policy enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, this invasion was not accompanied by any valid evidence or reason; the charter explicitly stipulated that Russia should not interfere with Ukraine's sovereignty as part of international relations.

Considered a great danger to regional stability and security in Northern Europe, Russian military aggression in the region is considered a great danger. The threat of Russian military deployment and mobilization in the region threatens the security of all Nordic countries, including Finland. , itIt is feared that the Russian invasion of Ukraine will extend to Northern Europe because the military power of the Nordic member states is weaker than that of Russia, based on several factors, primarily the perceived military imbalance between Russia and the Nordic countries. Despite efforts to bolster their defenses, the Nordic countries are seen as militarily weaker compared to Russia. This vulnerability is heightened by the geopolitical tensions and the aggressive posturing of Russia in the region (Jónsson, 2024). Finland joining NATO is considered a strategy to stop the Russian military threat in the region (Arter, 2023).

However, Finland's efforts to obtain NATO membership status faced challenges from one of the member countries, especially Turkey. Finland's move to join NATO was strongly opposed by Turkey due to skepticism towards Finland's membership in NATO. One of them is the concern that Finland's acceptance into NATO could increase tensions with Russia as the presence of the military alliance on Russia's borders could potentially trigger unwanted responses. The worst consequence of excessive military presence could increase tensions and trigger an arms race in the Baltic region and Baltic Sea. Moreover, Turkey is a NATO member state that has complex relations with Russia, especially regarding regional issues such as Syria and Ukraine. In addition, Finland's membership in NATO could jeopardize Turkey's strategic interests in the region because it is considered a threat to regional security and stability. Furthermore, Turkey is also concerned that the addition of new members has the potential to cause friction over

diverse views of regional issues with implications for NATO's strategic decisions (Neset, 2023).

Turkey plays a vital role in the context of NATO membership as it has a veto power that allows it to reject new membership applications. Turkey's stance in rejecting Finland's membership caused internal debate among fellow member states. Turkey's move to block Finland's membership has created a negative perception given Turkey's attitudes and views that are often contradictory and counterproductive to most NATO member states. In fact, a number of member states questioned Turkey's existence in NATO, which is considered to violate the values and objectives of NATO (Emma Ashford & Matthew Kroenig, 2023). Turkey eventually allowed Finland's membership in NATO. On March 30, 2023, Turkey's parliament ratified Finland's application, making it the last NATO member to do so. This decision cleared the final hurdle for Finland to join NATO, and it officially became the 31st member of the alliance on April 4, 2023. This marked a significant shift in Turkey's stance, which had previously caused internal debates and concerns among other NATO members regarding its reliability as an ally (Deutsche Welle, 2023).

Turkey's defense policy changes in support of Finland's membership in NATO have a significant impact on shaping Turkey's perception and image before other NATO member states. This is because in recent decades a number of member states have been suspicious and skeptical of Turkey's membership in NATO due to a number of controversial policies that are inconsistent with NATO's defense policy line (Bongiovanni, 2018; Cordesman, 2019; Erdurmaz, 2019; Jamilah et al., 2020). Practically, Turkey is faced with a crisis of confidence due to the low level of compliance and the decline of Turkey's credibility as a strategic NATO ally. As a result, Turkey's reputation as a NATO member is challenged along with various domestic problems and internal conflicts involving Turkey and NATO (Bandow, 2022).

According to Nokkala (2022), Collectively, Finland became the 31st member of NATO. Finland is one of the Nordic member states located in Northern Europe and directly adjacent to Russia. Therefore, the Russian-Ukrainian geopolitical conflict raises concerns about security threats in the region as the conflict continues and Russia's growing military aggression in the region. As a result, Finland decided to join NATO as

a tactical measure to overcome the unstable situation, including in the global economic sphere.

Schneider (2006) argues that it is a natural behavior for international markets to react negatively to war. This is due to the behavior and basic concept of the economy that meets needs in the safest way. In other words, the nature of economics is to avoid uncertainty. Physical wars have had far-reaching effects on international markets and economies for thousands of years (Schneider & Troeger, 2006).

More specifically, Guénette, et al (2022) in his book entitled *Implications of the War in Ukraine for the Global Economy* concluded that the hostilities between the two countries spread to various other countries, even outside the region and caused various criticisms for Russia. This led to various problems, especially the trade embargo imposed on Russia. These trade sanctions end up hurting not only Russia but also all countries that depend on Russia's natural resources, such as Western and Northern European countries. However, in his book Guénette asserts that economic sanctions are necessary even at the expense of international economic interests, in order to restore peace in mainland Europe (Guénette et al., n.d.).

A bit out of the real economic calculation, Thies (2020) said that there were many recording errors when post-war losses were accumulated. Research agencies and local researchers only count on the limit of assets and other tangible goods. However, according to Thies, if the international economy is driven by people, then people themselves should be included in the calculation. Thus, Thies emphasizes that the calculation of post-war losses can reach an infinite value if it takes into account the valuation or potential economic activity that may be generated by humans who died as a result of war (Thies & Baum, 2020).

From the background explanation above, it is interesting to see or explore further the potential accession of Finland to NATO, marking a significant departure from the old policy of military non-alignment. As geopolitical dynamics in the Baltic region undergo profound changes, Finland's consideration of NATO membership carries far-reaching implications for regional security and global geopolitics.



## *Methods*

The research team chose to use a qualitative research approach in this journal article. Firstly, due to the limitation of the research team to collect data by conducting field studies. Then, the authors consider that qualitative research can allow the research team to interpret data that has been clarified in advance and is official.

In qualitative research, the explicit and complex meanings or symbols of the data are prioritized to be extracted, located, interpreted, explained, and communicated. On the other hand, literature study is a rigorous and systematic bibliographic research that involves obtaining bibliographic resources relevant to the research objectives, collecting information using literature methodology, and organizing and analyzing the results (Auliya et al., 2020).

Therefore, it can be emphasized that qualitative research techniques using a literature study approach are data collection methods focused on finding written materials, such as notes, books, papers or articles, journals, and so on (Sundari et al., 2022). This report examines Finland's strategic shift, a new chapter in NATO membership. Therefore, the best method to achieve this research objective is to combine qualitative research with a literature review.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with Connie Rahakundini, an Indonesian defense analyst, and Ade Muhammad, a lecturer at the Defense University of the Republic of Indonesia. In-depth interviews are a qualitative research technique that aims to gain a deep understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of subjects on a particular topic. Typically, these interviews are conducted face-to-face between the researcher and the respondent, enabling rich information exchange and interaction. In-depth interviews can be utilized in various research fields, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and communication studies (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

In addition to conducting in-depth interviews with relevant interviewees, we also performed critical content analysis. Critical content analysis is a methodological approach used in qualitative research to analyze texts critically, with a focus on understanding power dynamics, social structures, and ideologies embedded within the content. This approach delves beyond surface-level interpretation to reveal underlying meanings,

assumptions, and values present in the text. The aim of critical content analysis is to deconstruct texts to uncover implicit biases, cultural norms, and discourses that influence societal perceptions and behaviors (Fairclough, 2013).

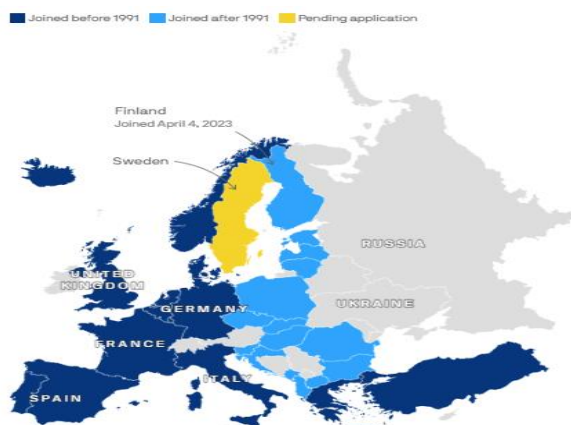
## Discussion and Result

### *Finland, a New NATO Membership*

Regarding affiliations during World War II, Finland and Sweden stayed neutral for many years. Finland, a former component of the Russian Empire that collapsed in 1917, was ruled by the Soviet Union during the Cold War as part of an agreement known as "Finlandization." The nation was granted the freedom to create its own internal policies and economic systems in exchange for its neutrality if these did not conflict with the Soviet Union.

In late February 2022, everything changed as Russia invaded Ukraine. This was not going to be the swift three-day decapitation strike in Kyiv that many had assumed it would be, as quickly became apparent. Europe was going to have to reevaluate its relationship with Russia from the ground up.

Finland, which borders Russia by 810 miles, was one of those nations. Neo-imperialism is Putin's aim, and Finland shouldn't be the next country to fall under its spell. A survey conducted by *Finnish broadcaster YLE* in 2018 found that public support for Finland's membership in NATO increased from one-third to nearly 80% in 2022 (Simmons Shah, 2023).





Source: NATO; Map

On May 17, 2022, Finland applied for membership in NATO and became the 31st member of NATO. At NATO Headquarters on July 5, the member nations of NATO signed the Accession Protocol pertaining to Finland's membership, thereby extending an invitation to Finland to join the Alliance. Next, each member nation must ratify Finland's participation in NATO.

Joining NATO will enhance stability and security in the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe, as well as bolster Finland's security in the evolving security landscape. Finland's robust defense capabilities and crisis-avoidance resilience will bolster NATO and the Alliance's collective defense.

Being a member of NATO entitles Finland to the security assurances contained in Article 5 of the Treaty since it will participate in the organization's collective defense and decision-making. Finland's acknowledgment may be a win for both sides conjointly Finland benefits from NATO membership, and NATO benefits from Finland's military presence. According to Rachel Rizzo, Finland has long been among NATO's closest non-ally partners. However, the threat of an attack suggested it was no longer adequate. It became evident that to ensure regional integrity, they needed to link with NATO, as NATO disincentives are effective (The Atlantic Council's, 2023).

As NATO countries continue to support Ukraine, the action also includes important recommendations for the struggle against Russia. "The estimated and actual length of the border between Russia and NATO has practically increased," (Lagadec, 2023), mentioning that the Baltic Ocean will become "a NATO lake" if Sweden joins, assisting the alliance in arming the region.

Currently, Finland allocates 2% of its gross domestic product to military purposes, as all NATO members pledge to do, but several haven't done so in the past. Additionally, the nation's conscription-based savings total 900,000 (Center, Wilson, 2023).

"They have prepared and built a large armed force over numerous a long time and keep up that tall amount of availability. Finland is additionally a nation with a greatly tall level of flexibility, of readiness all through the complete society," (Stoltenberg, 2023).

### *Strengthen Finland's Security*

Sanna Marin, a Prime Minister of Finland, said that promoting the rules-based world order, human rights and peace are the cornerstones of Finland's foreign policy. In this changed security environment, membership of NATO would strengthen Finland's opportunities to advance these objectives as well as Finland's international position. And above all, by joining NATO Finland would strengthen its own security (Hanne Salonen & Enduskunta, 2022).

The choice to join NATO will have an impact on Finland's security. The main result of Finland joining NATO will be that it will be protected by the security assurances included in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and will be a component of the alliance's collective defense. Because Finland's defense will be based on the capabilities of the entire Alliance, collective defense planning, and the political clout of NATO member nations, its deterrent effect will be far stronger than it is now.

According to Rahakundini (2023):

“With Finland as a NATO member, the threshold for using military force in the Baltic Sea region will rise, which will enhance the stability of the region in the long term. NATO is a stabilizing actor in the Baltic Sea region. Also, this is a momentum that NATO and the US have been waiting for because Finland has the right strength to become an alliance”

When Finland joins NATO, all the Nordic countries will be NATO members. This means that the Nordic countries can advocate together for issues important to them within the Alliance. Finland may become the 31<sup>st</sup> member of NATO on April 4, 2023, dramatically changing the security landscape in Europe. Finland's membership more than doubles the alliance's border with Russia.

Finland, along with Sweden, applied for NATO membership "hand in hand" after Russia invaded Ukraine last year. The two Nordic neighbors had hoped to become members at the same time, but Hungary and Turkey have stalled Sweden's application. It's unclear when it may move forward.

At that time, Finland's President Sauli Niinistö said his country sought NATO membership because Russia's invasion proved that the Kremlin does not respect officially non-aligned countries. Europe, the world, is more divided, and there's not very much

room for nonalignment between and Finland's would "be a strong and capable ally, committed to the security of the alliance." (Lemola et al., 2023).

### *Benefits of Finland joining NATO*

The nation is now safeguarded by Article Five of the alliance, which provides for the mutual defense of its members. As NATO nations continue to back Ukraine, the action has strategic ramifications for the battle against Russia. The Baltic Sea will become "a NATO lake" if Sweden enters, enabling the alliance to better arm the Baltic region. The boundary between Russia and the NATO alliance has essentially doubled in size and length. They have spent many years building and training a sizable army, and they continue to be highly prepared. Finland boasts a remarkably high degree of readiness and resilience across its whole population.

According to Forsberg et al. (2022), Finland's integration into NATO represents a significant bolstering of the Alliance's collective security and defense capabilities. The country stands out for its robust and comprehensive defense infrastructure, which is characterized by several key strengths.

Firstly, Finland's adaptability in military mobilization is unmatched due to its large conscription-based reserves. The nation can call upon 900,000 trained reservists, with 280,000 of them ready for deployment in wartime scenarios. This capacity allows Finland to rapidly scale its military presence in response to threats, providing a substantial reinforcement to NATO's collective defense posture.

Furthermore, Finland's Civilian Total Defense system exemplifies the country's preparedness for crises. This national security strategy ensures that essential supplies, such as food and fuel, are stored in strategic depots, and urban areas are equipped with bomb shelters capable of supporting the population for at least six months. Such measures guarantee societal resilience and operational continuity in the face of conflict or disaster.

In terms of military integration and training, Finland's Defense Forces are well-coordinated with national agencies, including the Border Guard. This ensures a unified and effective response to security threats. The rigorous training programs, including compulsory refresher courses for reservists and specialized academies for officers, maintain high readiness and operational effectiveness among the troops.

Strategically, Finland's geographical location and focus on the Arctic region provide NATO with significant advantages. The country's capabilities in Arctic and winter warfare are crucial for operations in northern Europe and the broader Baltic Sea region. Finland's participation strengthens NATO's deterrence and defense posture on the Eastern Flank, contributing to the security of Baltic states and beyond.

The Civilian Total Defense system that Finland established was a direct result of fending off the Soviet Union's full-scale invasion during the 1940s. The Covid-19 epidemic allowed for the utilization of these tactical reserves, proving their value. Resilience is a state of mind combined with capabilities; Finland's readiness culture provides a template that NATO members might follow to face challenges in the twenty-first century.

Second, Finland is a technologically advanced country with access to a variety of industrial-grade IT skills, such as cyber security and 5G telephony. NATO will add a significant supplier of 5G infrastructure (Nokia), one of only three major providers; the other two are Ericsson in Sweden and Huawei in China, as well as cutting-edge innovative satellite technology (ICEYE) with Finland's membership (Forsberg et al., 2022). The Finnish model for security involves close cooperation between the public and commercial sectors through a variety of public-private partnerships that capitalize on each other's relative advantages, including funding and speed of doing business. Furthermore, Finland's society is resistant to cyberattacks by global standards; it is presently ranked eleventh in the Cyber Security Index. Proliferating intelligence and capacities in telecommunication technologies present compelling prospects for inter-member procurement within NATO.

Third, Finland improves NATO's ability to defend itself. Finland will be a major strategic asset to the Alliance because its artillery forces are the biggest and best equipped in all Western Europe. With almost 1,500 artillery pieces, the Finnish artillery possesses more artillery firepower than the armed forces of Poland, Germany, Norway, and Sweden put together now. These pieces include 700 Howitzer guns, 700 heavy mortars, and 100 rocket launcher systems (Moyer, 2023).

With an abundance of artillery pieces that still rule the modern battlefield, NATO's strategic military options for capability training are provided by the largest artillery

training location in Europe, Rovajärvi, located in Northern Finland, as well as other training areas.

Enlarging NATO naturally gives the Alliance additional territory to protect, which may weaken its defensive posture. Nonetheless, Finland will contribute positively to security rather than negatively and is able to finance its defense. Finland provides strong defenses for the Alliance in its northeastern flank as a member of NATO, particularly given its proximity to St. Petersburg, the Baltic Sea, and the Arctic near Russia's Kola Peninsula.

### ***Russian Federation Response to Finland Joined NATO***

Finland's accession to the NATO military alliance was a dangerous historic mistake that would weaken security in the wider region, increase the risk of conflict, and force Moscow to take countermeasures.

Finland formally joined NATO on April 4, 2023, its flag unfurling outside the military bloc's Brussels headquarters, in a historic policy shift away from non-alignment that was brought about by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia and Finland share a 1,300-km (800-mile) border, and Moscow has already said it will beef up military divisions stationed in its west and northwest. Even in St. Petersburg, only about 150 km (93 miles) from the Finnish border, Russians would now view Finland as a hostile state.

According to Jack (2022), Putin said that Russia wishes to let you know that it has no issues with Finland or Sweden, two new members of NATO, as well as any other expansion plans. Thus, in this sense, Russia is not directly threatened by these countries' expansion.

In Russian opinion, there is absolutely no doubt that Finland is making problems for itself by joining (NATO) because Russia used to consider it a brotherly country of the capitalist world, the closest to in spirit, in relations, in mutually beneficial economic relations. But now Russia may consider it as a state that is unfriendly to them (Osborn & Cordell, 2023).

Also, Muhammad (2023), responded that Moscow would strengthen its military capacity in its western and northwestern regions. In case of forces of other NATO members deployed on Finland's territory, Russia will take additional steps to ensure

Russia's military security. This is a historical mistake that will weaken regional security in the European region and can also trigger widespread conflict, considering that Finland was a non-aligned country before

Now that NATO missiles are very close to Russia; it wouldn't be a surprise if they are deployed to Finland in the future. But a former Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev made a plain warning that if Finland or Sweden join NATO, Russia would deploy nuclear weapons close to the Baltic States and Scandinavia, and it would not be possible to talk any more about the Baltic non-nuclear status.

The military confrontation between NATO and Russia will deteriorate, and the possibility of a nuclear conflict between NATO and Russia is on the rise, which will make it more difficult to ensure the security for all European countries.

NATO front-loaded its deterrent against Russia by granting Finland NATO membership, and Russia front-loaded its deterrent by deploying nuclear weapons in Belarus, so the two sides' strategies are quite consistent.

## **Conclusion**

Finland's consideration of joining NATO and possible move in that direction mark a turning point in the country's geopolitical history. The decision to reevaluate its long-standing military non-alignment position highlights how the security environment in the Baltic area and throughout the world is changing. It is becoming clear that Finland's pursuit of NATO membership represents a significant global realignment as well as a local realignment as this strategic recalibration takes place.

Beyond its boundaries, Finland's strategic change has an impact on the fragile balance of power in Northern Europe and the relationships between Russia, NATO, and its neighbors. The decision presents challenges and concerns that need to be carefully navigated, even as it offers the possibility of improved security cooperation and collective defense.

In addition, the possibility of Finland joining NATO raises concerns about how well the alliance can absorb a country with a distinctive history of neutrality and how flexible it can be to changing geopolitical conditions. The world is watching closely because it



knows that Finland's move might redefine the parameters of regional security, reshape alliances, and provide a model for other countries considering similar changes.

Finland is at a turning point in its strategic narrative as it strikes a balance between adhering to its historical values and the need to change to meet the demands of the modern security environment. Over time, the consequences of this choice will become apparent, reshaping the geopolitical environment in ways that extend well beyond the boundaries of Finland. The effects of this strategic change will continue to interest academics, decision-makers, and observers as Finland navigates the complicated world of international relations.

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