

Finland's Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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ABSTRACT

This research paper discuss about the Finland's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and asks whether using the possibility of NATO membership is justified in light of the geopolitical situation of Finland and Sweden after Russia's attack on Ukraine. Literature review and the following methodology chapter helps to understand the different perspectives of the membership process. In the beginning, it was the Gallup Democracy that launched political movements toward membership. In both countries, the majority supported the membership in three months. Finland was the first to activate and Sweden quickly caught on to Finland's process. Turkey's intervention in the membership process after the submission of Finland's and Sweden's membership applications points to the negotiation phase immediately after the submission of the application. NATO membership itself is a historical event in changing Finland from a high-risk country to a lower-risk country since it makes Finland stronger their possible threat, Russia. Analogous security advantages also accrue to Sweden. The main advantage refers when Sweden terminated the conscript draft in 2000 and still has not been able to supplement it. The limitations of writing this research paper include that this specific subject is very challenging to do research due the current situation lives and changes constantly. However, the topic is still examined using a variety of different sources in order to get the correct information and data of this particular subject.

Keywords: *NATO, Defense Alliance, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO accession, Ukraine-Russia War*

INTRODUCTION

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is a political and military alliance of 30 European and North American member countries together. It was first established on 4th of April 1949 by the North Atlantic Treaty, a NATO charter signed in Washington, USA. The main reason for the establishment of NATO was the threat posed by the Soviet Union to the West (Wikipedia contributors, 2022).

In this current year, Finland, along with Sweden, applied for NATO membership in Brussels on 18th of May. In a way, membership is the last of the small steps that Finland has taken since the Second World War as proof of its membership in the so-called Western world. In the final

stage, this step was marked by Russia's brutal offensive war in Ukraine, and the decisive decision in both the Government and Parliament was paved by the Amateur Report on the Change in the Security Environment dated 13 April 2022 (Finnish Government 2022).

Applying for NATO may be considered an obligation for Finland and Sweden. Membership is defended or opposed mainly by referring to our legitimate security interests, but a strong additional argument is the examination of membership in the light of Finland's international obligations and ethical considerations. The pursuit of membership can be considered an ethical obligation when it is emphasized that Finland, as a country committed to defending democracy and human rights, belongs to the community of Western democracies, which protect human lives, individual freedom, open societies, and the rule of law. Because of these commitments, it must counterbalance the threats they face. We need to develop our country as such, promoting processes that enhance our ability to take international responsibility for peace and stability, especially in the Nordic and Baltic region.

NATO membership has been opposed, stating that Finland, as a member, must "choose its side" in disputes between East and West and that our soldiers can be sent to other countries to wage war. This weak argument flashed through the spring of 2022. Finland has already chosen its side as a member of the EU, especially in the ongoing war, by supplying weapons to Ukraine and joining the West in its actions against Russia. Supporting Ukraine's defense has been the only acceptable option, the only right-wing solution. To the extent that we have had a duty to provide this assistance, it is natural to think that we also have a duty to be part a of NATO's membership aspirations as a part of an anti-barbaric force. Fortunately, we no longer cherish the misleading, dangerous, and irresponsible "Finnishized" myth of our country as an imagined, neutral country "between East and West."

Another weak argument is that the alliance increases the risk of aggression against our country. Russia is preparing for harassment, but according to most experts, joining NATO's joint defense will reduce Finland's risk of waging war (Sami Pihlström 2022).



Fig 1: (Map of the current member countries, NATO 2022)

Until now, NATO has been influenced the most by Soviet Union and Russia. In the future, those countries will be Russia and China. The NATO's task is to make its allies even stronger and face tomorrow's challenges together. In the organizations 2030 plan, NATO must be more developed in matters related to security; NATO must strengthen deterrence and defense by recommitting to the 2014 Defense Pledge; NATO is strengthening its resilience; NATO needs to advance its technological edge; NATO is doing more to maintain the rules-based international order (Kenneth Morelius, 2022).

Related to this, the alliance will strengthen its partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. NATO will also look for new partnerships in South America, Africa and Asia and deepen its cooperation with the EU; NATO invests significantly more in training partners and building capacities, from Ukraine to Georgia and from Iraq to Jordan (Rick Rozoff, 2010).

NATO considers the security threats of climate change. This issue will include regular assessments of the effects of climate change on NATO operations, as well as the creation of a methodology to assess the greenhouse emissions of organizations' military operations. NATO's aim is to be carbon neutral by 2050. However, Russia and China are considered to be the biggest threats to NATO's new strategic concept (Luis Simon, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO is a political and military alliance, which includes 28 member countries from Europe and two from North America. NATO was established after World War II on 4th of April 1949 in Washington, but the actual operation started in the 1950s. The headquarters of NATO is located in Brussels, Belgium. English and French are the official languages of the organization. Norwegian Jens Stoltenberg has been NATO's Secretary General since 2014 (Wikipedia contributors, 2022).

NATO is committed to protecting its member countries through political, as well as military means. On the other hand, NATO promotes the common values of its members, which are democracy, the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In addition, NATO participates in the planning of civil administration emergency management, helps member and partner countries survive disasters, and invests in promoting research and environmental cooperation. NATO has the necessary resources to manage crisis management and peacekeeping missions. (NATO, 2020)

In the past, World War II had a significant impact on the creation of NATO. Cooperation between the former allies, the Soviet Union, and the Western Allies, broke down soon after the war. As early as 1947, Great Britain and France signed the first agreement on cooperation, which later expanded into a defense agreement between Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. This so-called Brussels Agreement was expanded when USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Italy, and Portugal also signed a defense agreement on 4th April 1949. Thus, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; NATO, started its operations. (Kenneth Morelius, 2022).

The creation of the defense union was significantly influenced by the threat of the Soviet Union at the time of establishment. In 1954, the Soviet Union itself proposed joining to NATO, but it was certainly not accepted. The Federal Republic of Germany joined NATO in 1955. Around the time of Germany's accession, the Warsaw Pact was established (1955-1991).

In 1978, in addition to maintaining security, NATO announced detente as one of its goals. The announcement was preceded by the efforts of the USA and the Soviet Union to ease tensions after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. As a result of the relaxation, e.g., nuclear non-proliferation treaty, SALT negotiations, and the Helsinki OSCE meeting took place in 1975 (Wikipedia contributors, 2022).

When the Berlin Wall fell and Soviet Union collapsed, after the end of the Cold War, NATO's purpose had to be reassessed when its original purpose ceased to exist. Amongst the other things, NATO justified its existence on peacekeeping missions. After the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, Russia still considered NATO membership to be the country's long-term political goal.

Between the years 1994 and 1997, cooperation bodies such as the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Euro-Atlantic Cooperation Council were formed between NATO and its neighbors. Countries participating in the cooperation included Finland, Sweden, Russia, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Bahrain, Qatar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. The expansion of NATO continued when Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined in 1999. NATO's first veritable military operation took place in the Balkans in the 90s, of which the shooting down of four planes violating the no-fly zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994 was the first. In the Kosovo war in 1999, NATO carried out an 11-week long aerial bombardment against Yugoslavia (Kenneth Morelius, 2022).

Article 5 of the NATO Charter was invoked for the first time on September 12, 2001, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States. On 4th October, NATO confirmed that the attacks were an attack under the North Atlantic Treaty. The Allies stood unequivocally in support of the US and confirmed the introduction of Article 5. The NATO countries committed to support the United States by pledging their ports, airports, and airspace for their use. NATO's joint AWACS air surveillance planes and warships belonging to the standby force were also given to counter-terrorism operations (NATO, 2020).

However, Article 5 did not lead to a joint NATO operation, instead the operation to destroy the al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan was launched under the leadership of the United States. NATO's limited role in the operation roused criticism from the European allies who offered their help. NATO carried out eight missions, the first two of which: Operation Eagle Assist and Operation Active Endeavor, in return for charter obligations. Despite this show of solidarity, on February 10, 2003, France and Belgium used their veto power to block the deployment of NATO troops to Turkey prior to the Iraq war. Germany did not use its veto but expressed its support for it. Turkey also did not allow its soil to be used for an attack on Iraq.

On the 19th of June 2003, major changes were made in NATO's leadership structure when the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic was abolished. A new military headquarter, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), was established in Norfolk, Virginia, the United States. The Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) became the

Headquarters of Allied Command Operations (ACO) in this context (Wikipedia Contributors, 2022).

Missions and operating procedures

With the help of negotiations and partnership programs, NATO contributes to preventing conflicts in its member countries and outside them. The organization promotes democratic values and is committed to resolving disputes peacefully. If a diplomatic solution is not found, the organization has the necessary resources to handle crisis management and peacekeeping operations alone or in cooperation with other states and international organizations. NATO also has a third dimension, whose fields of activity include planning emergency management under civilian administration, helping member and partner countries survive disasters, and promoting research and environmental cooperation (NATO, 2022).

Each member country has a permanent delegation at NATO's political headquarters in Brussels. The head of the delegation is an ambassador who represents the government of their member country in the NATO negotiations and decision-making processes. The NATO Council is the organization's most important decision-making body. The Council meets in various configurations, and its chairman is the Secretary General of NATO, who helps the member countries reach an agreement on key issues. All decisions made in NATO committees are unanimous. Hence, NATO's decision expresses the collective opinion of all member countries.

The organization has very few permanent forces of its own. When the NATO Council endorses an operation, member countries voluntarily send their forces to participate in the operation. These troops return to their home countries after the mission is over. The role of the military leadership is to coordinate and lead these operations. The management consists of headquarters and bases located in member countries. NATO's day-to-day operations, civilian and military structures, and security programs are financed by mutual budgets, to which the governments of the member countries allocate funds according to the agreed funding model (NATO, 2022).

The context of NATO and Finland

Finland's relations with the organization are managed by Finland's especial representation in NATO. Finland has participated in NATO's Partnership for Peace since 1994. Moreover, Finland has been a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) since 1997. In 2014, Finland was invited as an advanced partner to NATO's Extended Opportunities Partnership (EOP). In addition to cooperation with expanded opportunities, Finland has promoted the 30+2 cooperation between NATO, Finland and Sweden.

The central goal of partnership cooperation has been the development of military performance and cooperation capability for the needs of national defense and international crisis management. What's more, Finland has held a regular political dialogue with NATO on security policy themes of mutual interest to strengthen common security. Through the dialogue, Finland has promoted its own foreign, security and defense policy objectives.

Finland has also participated as a partner country in crisis management operations led by NATO. Currently, Finland participates in the NATO-led crisis management operation in Kosovo (KFOR) and Iraq (NMI). By participating in international crisis management

operations, Finland contributes to international stability and security (The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022).

Becoming a member of NATO is a political process based on the Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty. According to it, NATO membership is open to any European country that has the prerequisites to promote the principles of the NATO Treaty and contribute to the security of the region. NATO has set certain political, economic and military requirements for a new member state, as well. The member states of NATO make the decision to invite a new member unanimously (Ministry of Defense, 2022).

After Russia started the war of aggression in Ukraine, the support for NATO rose dramatically in Finland. According to a survey conducted in June 2022, up to 79% of Finnish people support NATO membership. Finally, Finland left the application for NATO membership on 17th May 2022. The NATO countries signed the accession protocol on Finland's NATO membership on July 5, and Finland became an observer member of the organization. Next, the protocol of accession must be ratified in each member state.

Dates conducted	Pollster	Client	Sample size	Support	Oppose	Neutral or DK	Lead
20–26 Jun 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1003	79%	10%	11%	69%
9–10 May 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1002	73%	12%	15%	61%
4–6 May 2022	Taloustutkimus	Yle	1270	76%	12%	11%	64%
7 Apr – 3 May 2022	Taloustutkimus	Advisory Board for Defence Information (Ministry of Defence)	1002	68%	15%	17%	53%
22–27 Apr 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1062	65%	13%	22%	52%
8–13 Apr 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1057	59%	17%	24%	42%
6–11 Apr 2022	Corefiner	MTV	1863	68%	12%	20%	56%
28–30 Mar 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1080	61%	16%	23%	45%
18–23 Mar 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	1062	54%	21%	25%	33%
11–16 Mar 2022	Kantar TNS	Maaseudun Tulevaisuus	1059	61%	16%	23%	45%
4–15 Mar 2022	Taloustutkimus	EVA	2074	60%	19%	21%	41%
9–11 Mar 2022	Taloustutkimus	Yle	1378	62%	16%	19%	46%
28 Feb – 3 Mar 2022	Kantar TNS	Helsingin Sanomat	501	48%	27%	26%	21%
23–25 Feb 2022	Taloustutkimus	Yle	1382	53%	28%	19%	25%

Fig 2: Polls on Finnish membership on NATO in 2022, Wikipedia

Finland's NATO membership will be increasing both, Finland's security in the changed operating environment and the stability and security of the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe. Finland's strong defense and crisis resilience capabilities also strengthen NATO and the alliance's common defense.

As a member of Defense Alliance NATO, Finland participates fully in the organization's joint defense and decision-making and is covered by the security guarantees under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022).

Finland's NATO accession process

The ratification process began with the invitation of Finland and Sweden to become members at the NATO summit in Madrid. Member negotiations were held on 4 July 2022, and the Accession Protocols were signed in Brussels on 5 July 2022 (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Denmark and Canada managed to ratify Finland's and Sweden's NATO memberships on the same day that Finland and Sweden signed the accession protocols. After this, Finland's and Sweden's NATO memberships have been ratified by Norway, Iceland, Estonia, Britain,

Germany, Albania, Poland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, Belgium, North Macedonia, Montenegro, France, Italy and most recently, the United States. Until this day, 23 countries out of 30 NATO member states have ratified the applications of Finland and Sweden. Till now, Turkey is still a big question mark, as it has long complicated the application process in Finland and Sweden (Yle Uutiset, 2022).



Fig 3: The situation of ratification, (August 2022)

METHODOLOGY

The Ukraine-Russia war changed the opinions of citizens

If one of the main reasons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine was to keep NATO away from Russia's borders, the decision of Sweden and Finland to abandon their long-known neutrality and apply for NATO membership shows that Russian President Vladimir Putin's offensive plan has suffered a disastrous setback. Finland and neither Sweden will no longer remain "Finlandized," a Cold War term that meant that Finland would never take sides in the competition between the West and the then Soviet Union, which in return would allow Finland to remain sovereign.

Seventy-five years of important Nordic neutrality was lost in an instant, because due to Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, both Nordic countries suddenly felt vulnerable to a possible Russian attack. In fact, Putin's threats to join NATO only increased their vulnerability. Ironically, "Finlandize" may soon take on a new, almost opposite meaning. Even more famously, non-aligned Switzerland has announced its intention to increase cooperation with NATO, although actual membership is unlikely. NATO has suddenly gained a new and greater legitimacy.

The Gallup surveys

The Gallup survey refers to a public opinion on an issue or of the degree of information among the public about a particular thing or information. In Gallup surveys, people need to answer clearly formulated closed questions and the results are reported in percentages. The purpose is

to get a sufficiently comprehensive sample, that the conclusions could be drawn from the opinions of a wider group of people.

Gallup surveys about NATO membership have been conducted in Finland for a long time. The table below contains the data from 2005 to 2022. The Gallup surveys examine the citizens' opinions on NATO accession by asking a question; "In your opinion, should Finland seek the NATO membership?"

Table 1: Gallup surveys between the years 2005 and 2022, Economic research 2022

Date	Yes (%)	Cannot say (%)	No (%)
Autumn 2005	28	9	63
Autumn 2006	26	10	65
Autumn 2007	26	5	69
Autumn 2008	28	12	60
Autumn 2009	28	10	62
Autumn 2010	25	7	68
Autumn 2011	20	10	70
Autumn 2012	18	10	71
Autumn 2013	21	10	70
Autumn 2014	30	10	60
Autumn 2015	27	15	58
Autumn 2016	25	14	61
Autumn 2017	22	17	62
Autumn 2018	20	21	59
Autumn 2019	20	16	64
Autumn 2020	21	25	53
Autumn 2021	24	24	51
February 28, 2022	53	19	28
March 14, 2022	62	21	16
April 27, 2022 (Kantar TNS)	65	22	13
May 6, 2022	76	12	12
June 26, 2022 (HS)	79	10	11

Until the autumn 2021, only 20-30 percent of people supported NATO membership. In 2022, the results changed dramatically. For the first time on February 28, just a few days after the Russian attack, Finland's Gallup majority opinion on NATO membership was "yes" (53%). On April 27, the share of YES answers had risen to 65 percent (Figures: Kantar TNS) and on May 6 to 76 percent. The figure for June 26 (HS) is even higher at 79%. Gallup's results have since had a great impact on political thinking. Only two of the Finnish parties supported NATO membership from the beginning. A large majority of the representatives of the parliament supported NATO's membership application. The president demanded referendum. It is no longer considered necessary.

Sweden considers the process in Finland. In Sweden, support for membership rose significantly compared to 42 percent in January 2022. From there, most people turned to NATO membership. A week after Finland's February Gallup, 51 percent supported participating in the Swedish survey. Only 27% of people opposed it. Their share fell by 10 percent in two months. The traditionally influential Social Democratic Party has opposed membership. The party's attitude changed during the process.

Equality of NATO member countries

Former president the United States, Donald Trump has indicated on several occasions that the defense spending of European countries does not meet NATO's requirement of a two percent share of gross domestic product. According to this, NATO's smallest member countries travel freely on the basis of the collective security created by the larger member countries of the defense alliance, the United States in the lead.

Olson and Zeckhauser (1966), and several other researchers after them, have measured the defense burden by the gross domestic product shares of the defense expenditures of the member countries and in relation to NATO's combined defense expenditures by calculating their rank correlation estimates with the gross domestic product. The defense burden has since been contrasted by a country with the security benefit produced by membership. If the costs are relatively easy to measure, measuring the safety benefit is even more challenging. Security benefits are thought to arise from the fact that the defense alliance protects the industrial infrastructure of the member country, its population and its borders that are not limited to other NATO countries. The benefits of membership have thus been evaluated by relating the member country's gross domestic product share to NATO's combined gross domestic product, the share of NATO's population and the share of its non-NATO borders to NATO's unprotected borders.

The tests produced in the mentioned way have supported the notion of free travel in the 1960s, but not anymore later. However, in their article Economics of Alliances: The Lessons for Collective Action, Sandler and Hartley (2001) report that in 1998 the US defense burden in NATO was 59.85% (North America including Canada was 61.35%), while Europe's share was only 38.65%. While the assessment of NATO's benefit to the United States received a score of 31.06, NATO's benefit to the European member countries was expressed as a score of 43.47. The cost-benefit ratios thus seem to speak strongly in favor of the free-riding hypothesis.

Defense expenditure of NATO member countries

In 2014, the NATO countries agreed at the Wales summit that defense spending would be increased to two percent of GDP in ten years. The perception of the European NATO countries' free riding on the US defense budget can be supported by the attached figure (Picture 5). According to it, there are large differences in the gross domestic product shares of NATO member countries' defense expenditures. In addition to the United States, a third of the NATO countries met the 2% criterion: Bulgaria 3.25%, Greece 2.28%, Britain 2.14%, Estonia 2.14%, Romania 2.04%, Lithuania 2.03%, Latvia 2.01%, and Poland 2.00%. The figure for France was 1.84%. Germany's share in 2017 was as low as 1.22% and has since only risen to 1.38% in 2019. According to publicly available information, a level of 1.5% has been on display, but no political consensus has been found for it in Germany. In 2017, in addition to the United States, only Greece, Estonia, the United Kingdom, Romania and Poland had exceeded the 2% limit.

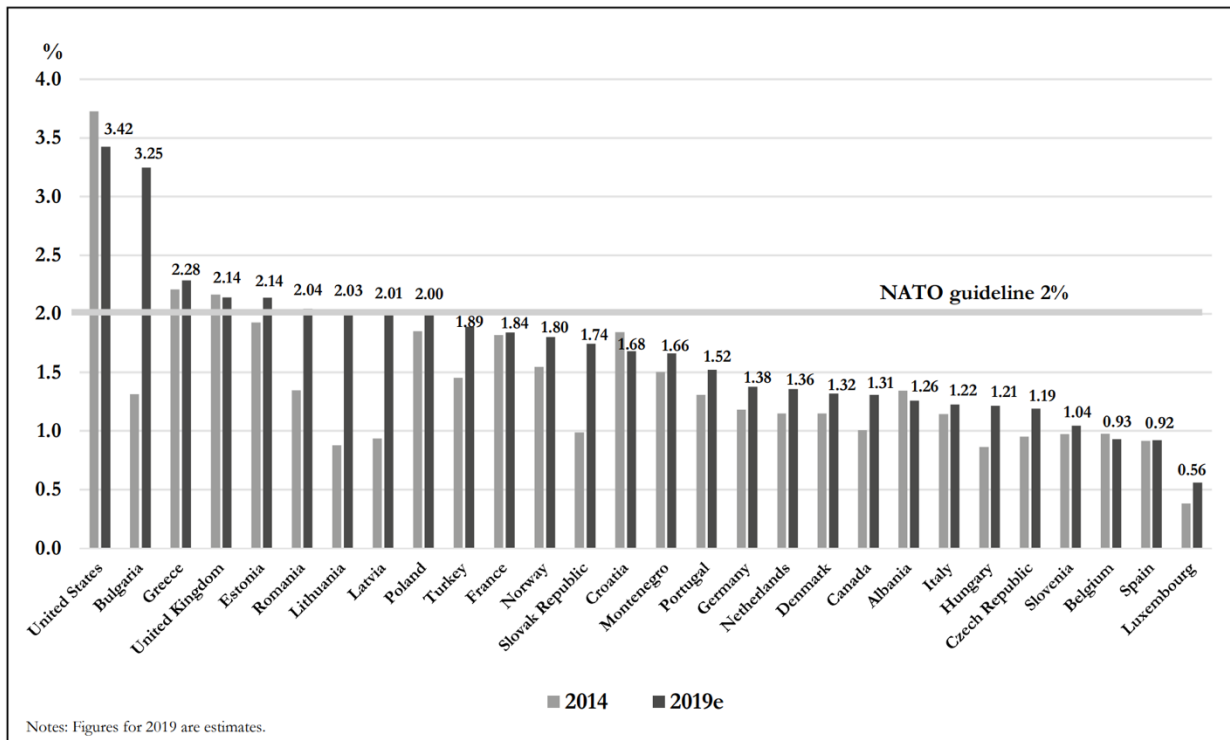


Fig 4: The ratio of NATO defense spending to GDP, NATO 2019)

On the other hand, Heljä Ossa and Tommi Koivula (2019) have pointed out that the comparison should also take into account the extent to which countries use their defense spending to renew equipment. At the Wales Summit in 2014, it was agreed that at least 20% should be used for fleet renewal and maintenance. Apart from training, NATO can only benefit from equipment procurement. Ossa and Koivula also report that, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the United States spends only 5.6% of defense spending on European security. This number would be close to \$38.3 billion of 2019 defense spending. In the same year, European NATO countries spent a total of 288.9 billion dollars on their defense. It is mainly thought of for defending one's own territory, of course.

It is also worth noting that in comparisons of defense expenditures, it should be taken into account that labor costs and prices in different countries can be very different. The technological lead is also an important factor influencing performance, and in this respect the United States leadership has been undisputed. Yet, the Russian leadership has recently presented the news that the country has missiles flying at 5 times the speed of sound, which can penetrate all defenses, for example. The United States, on the other hand, has expressed its interest in the development of space weaponry.

The effects of Finland's NATO accession with Sweden

As a new NATO member countries, Finland and Sweden bring tangible geostrategic advantages to the alliance, not just symbolic weight. For example, Finland has a 1300-kilometer-long border with Russia and a well-equipped modern army. It maintains the universal conscription and has a well-manned, trained reserve that can be called up quickly. Finland also spends more than 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense and has dedicated military resources to the Arctic region, as it famously demonstrated against the Soviet Union in the

1939 Winter War. Its location on the shores of the Baltic Sea and diplomatic experience with Russia can also be considered as an advantage.

On the other hand, Sweden has a strong military and world-class defense industry, as well as military experience operating in the Arctic region as well. It can also help control the entrance to the Baltic Sea. This will not only make it harder for the Russian navy to access the high seas, but also help NATO more successfully defend vulnerable Eastern Europe, which would likely be on Putin's next hit list if he succeeds in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia's attack on Ukraine has revitalized the NATO alliance and given it a new purpose and unity, which is contrary to Putin's original intentions. More specifically, NATO has just launched a new, more powerful strategic operation, the first since 2010, in response to renewed Russian aggression, identifying it as the alliance's primary adversary. The earlier days after the Cold War, when Russia was supposed to be NATO's "peace partner" are now gone for good.

At the NATO summit in Madrid, where membership invitations were distributed to Sweden and Finland, NATO leaders agreed to increase the number of high-alert alliance forces from 40,000 to 300,000, which is a highly significant increase. However, the majority of these rapid response forces will be located in NATO's home states. The members have not announced exactly which of their forces will commit to the NATO command. Even so, for the first time, the United States is permanently stationing troops on NATO's eastern borders with the headquarters of the US 5th Army Corps in Poland and increasing rotational brigades in Romania, increasing the rotation to the Baltic region, increasing the number of fighter jets in Rota, Spain and two other F-35 jet squadrons in the United Kingdom. What's more, for the first time NATO has designated China, Russia's announced partner, as a strategic "challenger."

Ultimately, at the NATO's Madrid summit Finland and Sweden were invited to join the emerging alliance and at the same time four Asian countries, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea were invited in order to demonstrate NATO's growing focus on Asia. Simultaneously, Russia continued its attack of aggression on Ukraine. Many Asian countries fear that if Russia succeeds in conquering Ukraine, it will encourage a more cautious China to show similar aggression against its neighbors, especially Taiwan. The Philippines and Vietnam, among other Asian powers, also remained non-aligned. In the confused mix was North Korea, a pariah nuclear-armed state that has often attracted negative attention in the United States.

On the other hand, NATO's requirement that all 30 member countries unanimously accept the membership application of Sweden and Finland gave Turkey an unwanted influence on the whole process of defending Europe from aggressive Russian irredentism and expansion. This fact is especially true since in recent years Turkey has sometimes acted more like a member of the reformed Warsaw Pact than a member of NATO. Perhaps this situation should give NATO reason to think about its future membership and expulsion policy.

Benefits and drawbacks of NATO membership

The largest security advantage related to NATO membership arises from Article 5, which obliges the allies to defend each other. While NATO's decisions require consensus, and while allied member states must choose how to assist another member state in case of a threat or military attack, mutual responsibility is considered a cornerstone of the NATO defense

alliance. With three member states possessing nuclear weapons, the safety net includes a nuclear umbrella, which is no small advantage. Indirectly, no NATO member country has been the target of a military attack during NATO's existence.

However, no member country may limit its role as a consumer of security, as everyone is expected to participate in security production. Though the value of mutual support as an international public good is limited. According to Olson and Zeckhauser (1966), it is known that members of a defense alliance have an incentive to freely use the security created by other members, and the alliance does not promote defense optimally in the alliance's Nash equilibrium.

In terms of maintaining the security of the Baltic countries, the membership of Finland and Sweden seems valuable to NATO simply because it makes the Baltic Sea an internal sea of NATO. This fact is one of the consequences of the membership and is obviously understood in Finland, Sweden and NATO, as well.

One of the problems is to anticipate and prepare the country for possible Russian countermeasures during the membership process. Revenge costs are not imaginary. According to Russian statistics, 11 million non-Russians live in Russia, whose average income is less than 400 euros per month. Border control is under pressure against large organized migration flows of non-Russians living in Russia, as happened in Poland and Lithuania in the fall of 2021. Possible attacks include cyber attacks on energy, electricity, and water lines that threaten the functioning of society. Disinformation aiming to cause social unrest is to be expected. Military operations on the ground, in the air or at the sea have not been ruled out either.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Highlights of the membership process with Sweden

The membership process began on April 13, when the government issued a statement about the changed national security. The matter was discussed in the parliament, and it was evaluated in the different committees of the parliament with the help of independent experts. A large majority of MPs expressed their support for membership, although the President and Prime Minister did not initially express their personal views, allowing MPs to make an independent decision.

The President and Prime Minister announced on May 12 that they support the membership application. On May 15, the decision on membership applications was initiated by the foreign and security policy ministerial committee, chaired by the President along with key ministers. At the same time, the countries took an active part in the preparation of sanctions against Russia. Turkey, which had previously informed Finland of its support for Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, announced on May 15 that it would oppose their application.

The dominant view was that Finland's and Sweden's membership would gain broad support among NATO member countries. Finland and Sweden would be NATO's advantage, as their membership would strengthen the security of the Baltic Sea. It was argued that it was highly desirable to leave the application at the same time; both to share the pressure of expected Russian retaliation during the process and local responsibility for stabilizing the region during

membership. As an alternative, it was proposed that Finland and Sweden could form a joint defense alliance outside of NATO. However, of course, such a solution could not be in the interest of the United States, because such an option offers no contribution to the defense of the Baltic countries. It was also understood that if Finland withdraws without submitting its application, its NATO option would be gone forever. Thus, Finland would be a permanent satellite of Russia.

The historic vote of the Parliament was held on May 17, 2022. Out of its 200 members, 188 voted in favor and 8 against. Three members were not present. The following day, 18th of June, the membership application was submitted to NATO along with Sweden's application. The North Atlantic Council with NATO ambassadors could not yet invite Finland and Sweden because Turkey had expressed its opposition. At the meeting in Madrid on June 28, Turkey finally expressed its support for the application after tough negotiations. Turkey was somewhat concerned about terrorism and trade in defense equipment and saw the membership process as an opportunity to express its national interests. Finland, Sweden, and Turkey then agreed on a "document of mutual understanding" on these matters, which allowed NATO to accept Finland and Sweden as observer members. The accession document was signed at the NATO Council on July 5. Next, in the accession process, all NATO countries must ratify the accession protocol of Finland and Sweden in accordance with their own national procedures, thus bring it into force accordingly.

National security and asymmetry of information

Geopolitics and considerations of interests have returned to Europe. Kanniainen (2018), noted that Finland is a risky country in terms of national security. This risk rating cannot be obtained from market data. In addition to geopolitics, the state of national security is also influenced by defense policy and defense agreements among other players in the field. In that article, I considered the game between a defending country and a threatening country under asymmetric information. The threatening country is uncertain about the fighting strength of the defending country. According to Schelling's (1960), owing to deterrence the defending country finds it best in combined equilibrium to invest too much in its defense capability. This proposal provides a theoretical explanation for the empirical facts of the documented construction of their defense. Finland is recently investing two percent of its annual gross domestic product in the defense budget for fighter jets and the navy. Taking these factors into account, the membership of Finland and Sweden would be an advantage for NATO.

Goes without saying that Sweden has a strong air force, navy, and defense industry. However, Sweden waived the military draft in 2000. As I understand it, the United States has given Sweden security guarantees unofficially, and Russia presumably understands this. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 has led to attempts in Sweden to rebuild the military, but this is very slow. Finland and Sweden significantly strengthened and activated their defense cooperation, although they did not extend it to a mutual military alliance.

Possible reactions of Russia

Russia is not at peace with itself or the world around it. Over the past 15 years, Russia has become a disaffected power, questioning the post-Cold War arrangements in Europe and even the norms and principles of the 1975 Helsinki Declaration and the 1990 Paris Charter. Russia considers itself an underdog in Europe. The Russian elite widely agrees that Russia is not just

one country between the European countries. This fact separates Russia from other countries and leads to a revisionist view, in which Russia demands renegotiations of European security structures and even the recognition of the division of interests, in other words the right of veto, to prevent developments that harm Russia's interests. Owing to historical experiences, this issue is not acceptable for Finland. Russia sees as a threat especially the expansion of NATO, which is supported by the United States and whose goal is to bring American military bases and troops closer to the Russian border in order to dam Russia.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union never fully accepted Finland's policy of neutrality, today's Russia has not questioned Finland's integration into Western structures. In general, like the former Soviet Union, Russia is also skeptical of all gray zone arrangements, such as neutrality, non-alignment, and so on, and especially closer cooperation with NATO, which Russia considers its adversary. Any NATO expansion would be a political defeat for Moscow, as it points out in the latest update to its national security strategy, published in December 2020. It states that the further expansion of NATO and the relocation of its military infrastructure closer to Russia's border areas is a threat to Russia's national security. When Finland joins NATO, a long common border would emphasize the geopolitical change even more (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019).

Continued cooperation with NATO, the expanded partnership for peace, the right, and possibility to apply for NATO membership, as well as deepening military integration with Sweden and intensive political and military-technical cooperation with the United States are developments that Moscow follows closely, but it usually comments on at a lower than governmental level. But Russia would react to Finland's and Sweden's NATO membership; the geopolitical shift would be so great that Moscow could not ignore it. The relations between Finland and Russia would suffer considerably and the political reaction would be harsh and probably also "personal," like when the Turkish air force shot down a Russian fighter jet during the Syrian conflict. Russia's unexpected and unprovoked violation of the border system in northern Finland at the end of 2015 is an example of Russia's tendency to create problems, take advantage of them and offer to control them without solving them. Russia's reactions could also include increasing the pressure on the borders with the Baltic countries.

In most cases, the Soviet Union's, and Russia's attitude toward successive rounds of NATO expansion has followed the same formula: first, opposition, a very strict one that has been supported by means of political and economic pressure, then tacit acceptance, and finally a return to the previously prevailing diplomatic and economic state of affairs (*status quo ante*). The most notable cases that fit this formula have been Turkey (1952), the Federal Republic of Germany (1955), the extension of NATO to the territory of the former German Democratic Republic (1990), Poland (1999) and the Baltic countries (2004) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019).

The reasons why Russia started the war against Ukraine

There can be many opinions on whether Russia's security concerns are justified, but it is a bold fact that throughout history Russia has been attacked by enemies from the West on the Northern European plain (Poland in 1605, Sweden in 1708, France in 1812, and the Germans in both World War I and World War II). France and Britain also attacked Russia in the Crimean War in the Black Sea between 1853 and 1856. Russia's argument is that NATO has expanded towards Russia since the Cold War, which has caused a security problem.

Anyhow, the Russians have forgotten that today there is a difference from those historical attacks: Russia is a nuclear power with more than 6,000 nuclear warheads. In reality, no enemy can attack Russia. NATO's military budget (US: \$685 billion, other NATO countries: \$300 billion) is several times larger than Russia's defense budget (\$61 billion). The population and gross domestic product of NATO countries are much larger than in Russia. Still, it is true that no country or alliance can threaten the country with nuclear weapons.

From Russia's point of view, Ukraine does not exist as an independent state. The people of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine are said to belong together. Even worse, the Ukrainian people are considered inferior and should be ruled by Russia, and it is argued that Ukraine has no right to be separate from Russia. According to Russia, the Ukrainian language should not exist. The attack as a "military operation" is justified because modern day Ukraine is allegedly ruled by the Nazis. From a European perspective, there is a more plausible explanation for Russia's attacks on Ukraine and their claims that Europe's security architecture needs to be reshaped: Russia's trauma from the collapse of the Soviet Union and its loss as a superpower. The current Russian leadership hopes to regain its place in the history of lost restoration.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude this paper, Finland has filled the first application for NATO membership on 17th of May 2022 along with Sweden and they are currently in the middle of the ratification process. The ratification process began with the invitation of Finland and Sweden to become members at the NATO summit in Madrid. Member negotiations were held on 4 July 2022, and the Accession Protocols were signed in Brussels on 5 July 2022. To this day, 23 of 30 NATO member countries have accepted Finland's and Sweden's application so far. Membership comes officially into effect only when all member countries have accepted the accession and the ratification process is ended.

NATO, which is led by the United States, has reacted correctly to Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine by facilitating Sweden's and Finland's NATO applications. Such steps to strengthen NATO are the best way to deter Russian aggression, maintain the broader peace, and thus help prevent a potential nuclear catastrophe. As in nature, international politics abhors a vacuum. Thus, those who instead see NATO aggression do not remember the lessons of Munich in 1938 and are, at best, unintelligent apologists for Moscow, which, by attacking Ukraine, has probably violated a fundamental rule of modern international law: Article 2, section 4 of the United Nations Charter expressly declares: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State."

As a NATO member, Finland will have opportunities for better access to information, and Finland would be definitively accepted as part of the common political goals of the alliance.

When it comes to the recommendation's part, I support that the alternative and complementary ways to strengthen national security are investing in the defense expenditures and being a member of the defense alliance NATO. In defense investments, a socially efficient allocation means that the security effect of the last unit invested in defense is equal to the social welfare effect of the last monetary unit invested in social welfare. Membership of defense alliance creates an additional welfare advantage in terms of mutual defense as an international public

good. As a member country, Finland will also fully participate in all planning, preparation, and decision-making of the NATO alliance. In this case, Finland will be able to exert a significant influence on issues concerning its own external security. The above can also be summarized as follows: Finland would finally integrate into the Western community of values.

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