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## Small States' Grand Stretegies: Finland on its Own

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Bachelor Thesis

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Small States' Grand Strategies:

Finland on its Own



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## 1. Introduction

A state cannot choose its neighbors. And regardless of who their neighbor is, in an anarchic, self-help world, all states must at the very least ensure their survival.<sup>1</sup> This is more challenging for small states against bigger counterparts. Finland has plenty of violent history with Russia, with whom it shares over 1300km of land border and plenty of bloody history. First, the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union have several times attacked its smaller neighbor with varying results.<sup>2</sup>

Finland has repeatedly proven that small states can exercise exceptional strategies. Despite its relatively much smaller population and resources, Finland was able to first claim independence from the Russian Empire in 1917 and then repelled Soviet invasion during World War II. During Finland's time of independence, it always remained extremely cautious of 'the bear in the East'. If it were agitated it could attack, if one would appear too weak, it would have no problem in claiming new territory.

Finland's situation is indeed difficult. President Kekkonen in 1961 summarized the feelings of the situation in which the Finns have been since their independence:

“We must convince the Soviet Union that her security in no circumstances can be threatened through Finland (...) as an outpost of an anti-Soviet coalition Finland would always be the first to be overrun, yet without the power to affect decisions on war and peace. Neutrality, too, was without value, as we had experienced, unless others had confidence in it.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2012), 16, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leidenuniv/detail.action?docID=981630>.

<sup>2</sup> “Russo-Finnish War | Summary, Combatants, & Facts | Britannica,” accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russo-Finnish-War>.

<sup>3</sup> Urho Kekkonen, “Finland's Position in International Politics,” 1961, <https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/8542/TMP.objres.1454.html?sequence=1>

Finland is balancing just outside the great power competition by getting as close as possible to the rest of the Europe and West while remaining ‘neutral enough’ so that the Soviets or Russians would not feel threatened.

Now that Finland is taking a huge turn in its security and foreign policy, previously synonymous, with neutrality by applying for NATO membership, it is important to fully understand Finland’s exceptional security solution, especially as a small state against a much bigger adversary. And how current events now shape the pillars of this security arrangement in a historic way.

Most other small European states exposed to Russia have joined NATO.<sup>4</sup> They did not think they could have a credible defense on their own. By intuition and literature, this should be true for Finland as well. Only by comparing the military expenditure of the Russian and Finnish armed forces, it seems unlikely that Finland could defend against a much more powerful opponent. Finland’s defense budget in 2021 was 5.23bn USD, which is a high point in Finnish history.<sup>5</sup> Russia in 2021 had a defense budget of 3.20tr USD.<sup>6</sup>

It seems unlikely that Finland could arrange a credible defense in such an imbalance of power. How is it that Finland, despite being extremely exposed to the Russian threat, could make it on its own, without military allies? Theory suggests that Finland, or any other small state, should not be able to exercise an effective security strategy in this setting. In fact, small states should not be able to have a grand strategy at all, not least against an overpowered enemy.<sup>7</sup>

This paper will map out the literature on small states’ alliance options and grand strategies. There is a research gap on small states’ security solutions without allies and the research question follows: *How has Finland's security solution made it possible to stay militarily non-allied in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*

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<sup>4</sup> Iivi Zajedova, “The Baltic States’ Security and NATO Enlargement,” *Perspectives*, no. 13 (1999): 79–90.

<sup>5</sup> IISS, *Military Balance* (Routledge, 2021), 99.

<sup>6</sup> IISS, 190.

<sup>7</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Trans. Rex Warner (London, 1954); Williamson Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, ed. James Lacey, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and Williamson Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511974182.001>

To answer this question, this thesis uses qualitative content analysis, in two parts. First by identifying Finland's security solution by studying publications and statements of the Finnish government security committee and relevant security actors, like the Finnish Defense Forces (FDF). Secondly, by studying how Finland's security solution has satisfied the public's security needs from yearly conducted polls.

I find that Finland's security solution has been a combination of a cost-efficient, large, adaptive and capable defense forces, and a model of comprehensive security where the whole society contributes to increasing its readiness to prevent and survive any crisis. This research shows that this solution has communicated a credible defense capability to the public. The public has up until now been satisfied with the current arrangement – thus, NATO membership has not been necessary. The findings imply that small states can have grand strategies and that up to a limit, they can arrange a credible defense without an alliance, even with limited resources.

This paper helps to understand the current situation, changing security environment and adaptation to these changes, particularly in Finland. Concerning academia, this research gives more insights into small states' grand strategies and complements the alliance literature.

## 2. Literature Review

This section maps out what grand strategy and alliance research suggests for small states. It also reveals which strategies are available for small states to increase their security other than joining an alliance. Lastly, a research gap is identified.

### a. Small states' grand strategies

Grand strategy research is predominantly either implicitly or explicitly written to apply to great powers. First, grand strategy literature is focused on the United States of America (USA). It is also mainly preoccupied with how countries compete with the USA.<sup>8</sup> In general, other great powers pose a threat to the USA and are thus more frequently considered in the literature. Second, small states are less likely to have a substantive impact on the international level on their own, whereas great powers have more substantive resources to disrupt international order or other states' functioning and thus have been more often the subject of research.<sup>9</sup> Thucydides'

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<sup>8</sup> Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1997): 5–53.

<sup>9</sup> Nina Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of "Grand Strategy," *Security Studies* 27, no. 1 (2018): 27–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1360073>.

famous quote “the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept”<sup>10</sup> is often used to dismiss small states’ possibility to stand up for themselves, or to have a grand strategy.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Kennedy argues grand strategy as belonging “naturally” to great powers rather than small or medium-sized states.<sup>12</sup> He then focuses solely on European great powers such as Great Britain and France during their colonial might in his case studies.

Some scholars contend that there should be no reason why small states could not have grand strategies. Silove finds that grand strategy can be “grand plans”, “grand intentions” or “grand behavior”.<sup>13</sup> Common to all concepts is that they mean to encompass a long period of time, use all state resources and spheres of statecraft and relate to high priorities of the state. Silove recognizes that the three definitions should not be exclusively for great powers and that despite their limited systemic effect, small states should be considered able to conduct grand strategies.<sup>14</sup> These criteria help recognize whether Finland exercises something that resembles a grand strategy.

#### b. Internal balancing

Kenneth Waltz suggests states can either opt for internal or external balancing when faced with a threat, - since doing nothing leaves a threat as it is, which could be very risky.<sup>15</sup> Waltz’s research focuses predominantly on external balancing but mentions that internal balancing or “efforts” can mean increasing economic capabilities, military strength or developing clever strategies.<sup>16</sup> The proposition is not defined further nor studied later, which first leaves the matter understudied and second, assumes that most states would prefer external balancing or

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<sup>10</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 402.

<sup>11</sup> Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” 1–2. Murray notes Finland and Switzerland as exceptions. He says Finns had shown the Soviet Union that they would be ready die to last man and woman. This is a vague statement and does not account for strategical choices.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 1991), 6.

<sup>13</sup> Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of “Grand Strategy.”

<sup>14</sup> Silove, 51.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Addison-Wesley Series in Political Science (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> Waltz, 118.

that it would be the only effective solution. This undermines the ability to understand small states' security outside of alliances.

One way for states to increase their security in terms of internal balancing is acquiring deterrence or area-denial capabilities like long-range missiles or missile defense systems.<sup>17</sup> These capabilities do significantly increase states' security by increasing the threshold for any attack, but they often are very expensive and therefore usually not available for small states. If all or most resources would be used for a few expensive weapons systems, the rest of the armed forces would probably be underfunded. This solution could be possible for a small state like Estonia which is part of an alliance and can rely on help from other states.<sup>18</sup> It does not have to invest in all capabilities itself, unlike Finland. Van Hooft et al. gives an insight into small states' deterrence-building effort, including Finland's. However, conventional defense capabilities require consideration too when studying a state's internal balancing efforts.

Defensive realism in this case gives similar implications.<sup>19</sup> It means that states rather than maximizing their power, maximize their security. Layne studies this in the context of the USA's grand strategy. Layne argues that power maximization is more assertive and can lead to insecurity due to rivaling interests.<sup>20</sup> Means for power maximization could be accumulating power by balancing alliances. Security maximization is more defense-oriented and focuses on states' own resources. This resonates with Finland's situation and Waltz. Finland has not wanted to agitate Russia and has remained militarily non-allied.

In short, next to joining an alliance, internal balancing is an option for states to increase their security. However, research has focused on bigger states.

### c. Small states and alliances

Joining an alliance gets less attention than the dynamics of an alliance and their effect or the forming of one. Scholars argue that bigger states form alliances based on their preferences or

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Van Hooft, Nora Nijboer, and Tim Sweijjs, "Raising the Costs of Access: Active Denial Strategies by Small and Middle Powers Against Revisionist Aggression" (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2021), <https://hcass.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/02-Raising-the-Costs-of-Access-HCSS-2021-V2.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> John R. Oneal, "The Theory of Collective Action and Burden Sharing in NATO," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (1990): 379–402.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*, 1. publ. 2006, 1. print. Cornell paperbacks, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Layne, "Peace of Illusions," 2007, 6.

if internal efforts are not enough. Small states increase their security by joining sides with the threatening states and bandwagoning, or joining a balancing alliance.<sup>21</sup> As shown below, the variables Stephen Walt uses in his study to predict states joining alliances suggest that Finland, like most other European states bordering Russia, should have joined NATO or bandwagon with Russia by now.<sup>22</sup>

1. Aggregate power: Russian Federation has far more resources at its disposal than Finland, and should be able to inflict great harm if it wanted to.
2. Geographic exposure: Finland shares its 1340 km Eastern land border with Russia, as well as the South-Eastern coastline as a sea border. It is very exposed to a potential military operation from Russia.
3. Offensive capabilities: Russian armed forces possess significant offensive capabilities and are significantly greater than Finland's, obviously in nuclear capability but conventional weapons as well.
4. Offensive intentions: Russian revisionism is taking root again, and after operations in Georgia and Crimea it has been seen that military offense is not excluded as a means to an end in today's Russia.

These variables seem to have correctly predicted the choices of some states – for instance, the Baltic states, but not how Finland remains militarily non-allied.

Similarly, Reiter (1996) does not seem to have much faith in small states on their own:

“A small power is much more dependent on its allies for successful deterrence and/or defense than is a great power. The most a small power can do by itself if threatened by a great power is make its conquest inconvenient or unfruitful, whereas a great power has at least a reasonable chance of fending off an attack by itself”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Dan Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances, and World Wars* (Cornell University Press, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501744761>

<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1987), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801469992>

<sup>23</sup> Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs*, 66–67.

Reiter studies how a small state's decision on establishing an alliance depends on its previous experience with them.<sup>24</sup> A state's failed neutrality (if it was attacked despite neutrality) should steer it to join an alliance. Success when fighting with or without allies should inform the state or its decision-makers as well. In this regard, Finland should be prone to join an alliance since it was attacked during World War II by the Soviet Union even though it was neutral. On the other hand, it could manage fighting mostly on its own, with some assistance from but no official alliance with Germany.

#### d. Conclusion and research question

Firstly, previous studies fail to recognize how small states can have grand strategies. Secondly, they suggest that effective internal balancing, should not be possible for small states. And thirdly, small states should seek security from bigger states through military alliances. These studies seem to correctly have explained the choice of other small states, like the Baltics. However, Finland is not practicing external balancing through an alliance even though most research suggests it should. Following Waltz (1979), Finland must have done either internal balancing or nothing to secure itself. To understand Finland's security solution and to fill some of the research gaps, this thesis asks *How has Finland's security solution made it possible to stay militarily non-allied in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?* Answering the question will not be a mere description of Finland's security strategy, but will show if and how small states can use their limited resources to improve their security.

### 3. Methodology

Answering the research question requires understanding first what has been Finland's security solution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and second if it has made it possible for Finland to remain militarily non-allied. This is achieved through qualitative case analysis.

#### a. Research question and supporting theories

For the first part, I use theories of internal balancing and defense and deterrence building to understand Finland's security solution.<sup>25</sup> In terms of internal balancing, this study finds out Finland's specific strategies for arranging credible and effective defense on its own. As suggested by Waltz (1979) increasing one's economic capabilities, military strength or

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<sup>24</sup> Dan Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances, and World Wars* (Cornell University Press, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501744761>.

<sup>25</sup> Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, 16.

developing clever strategies.<sup>26</sup> In other words, what exactly has Finland done in terms of internal balancing to increase its prospects of surviving an attack by Russia? For internal balancing to be effective, it should be adjusted for the current level of threat. This will be assessed by looking into how Finland has adapted its security solution to changing security environment.

For the second part, I use what Glenn Snyder calls satisfaction to security.<sup>27</sup> Snyder suggests that states form or join alliances to bolster their security only if they are dissatisfied with the amount of security they have. This theory suggests that since Finland has not joined an alliance, it has been satisfied with its security. I will look into how the public and decision-makers have been satisfied with Finland's security and if it has made it possible for Finland to remain militarily non-allied. In Finland, the citizens' change in support of NATO has preceded that of the politicians. This is why it is more interesting to study public opinion.<sup>28</sup>

## b. Hypotheses

Investigating Finland's security solution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century could lead to two possible outcomes:

*H1: Finland has remained militarily non-allied but has had no credible security solution.*

This hypothesis follows most literature on small states and it suggests that Finland has prioritized non-alliance strategy and good relations with Russia but has not succeeded in internal balancing and has weak prospects to defend against an attack. No support for internal balancing or grand strategy for small states can be found. In this scenario, the public remains opposing to NATO due to either fear of the response from Russia or due to perceiving Russia as a low threat. They would consider Finland's prospect of defending against Russia to be low.

*H2: Finland has remained militarily non-allied and has a credible security solution.*

Following internal balancing theory this hypothesis tells that Finland has aimed to maintain a good relationship with Russia by non-alliance and has such a security solution where the

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<sup>26</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 118.

<sup>27</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 461–95, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183>

<sup>28</sup> "Suomen odotettu Nato-ratkaisu on osoitus kansalaisten tilannetajusta ja poliittisen johdon kyvystä päättäväisyyteen [Finland's expected NATO decision shows citizen's situational awareness and determination of the decision-makers]," *Helsingin Sanomat*, May 12, 2022, <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000008809170.html>.

prospect of defending against Russia is good. Credible defense has accommodated military non-alliance and the public is satisfied with their security. Broader implications are that small states could practice effective internal balancing and can have grand strategies.

### c. Research design

This paper is a qualitative case analysis of an exceptional small state, Finland. Finland is an exceptional case, since like most of the theories mentioned above suggest, due to high threat exposure and as suggested by the literature mentioned above, Finland has hardly any other alternative than to join NATO or submit to Russia. Its resources should not be enough to form a credible defense against an adversary like Russia. Exceptional case studies help to test previous theories and broaden understanding of causal mechanisms.<sup>29</sup> This paper then contributes to understanding internal balancing theories in other than great power context.

The research question is answered qualitatively by analyzing national defense strategies and public opinion on national security. I first explore Finland's security solution. Then I will show how the public has been content with this arrangement.

### d. Data collection

I study Finland's security solution from key publications of the security actors, like the FDF, and ministry of defense security briefings where they are outlined. 'Military Balance' by the IISS and the FDF educational material, like videos, give an insight into specifics of weapons systems and doctrine. Relevant new legislations will be assessed since they show responsiveness to changing security environment. The capability of the FDF is assessed by studying key defense and deterrence competencies. This evaluation is not exhaustive given the scope of this study, but I list key deterrence and defense capabilities to show whether the FDF could arrange a credible defense against the threats of that time. To assess how satisfied the public is with Finland's security, I analyze public polls, which are conducted yearly. These sources give a sufficient insight into how Finland has arranged its security and how credible the public and decision-makers find it. In total, I studied 17 publications and other sources like videos, websites and polls.

Data will be collected from the time after the Georgian conflict in 2008. As part four will show, the 2000s is the most puzzling period in Finnish history of non-alliance since its time of independence. Especially years after the war of Georgia in 2008 Crimean annexation in 2014

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<sup>29</sup> Dimitar Toshkov, *Research Design in Political Science*, Political Analysis (Palgrave, 2016), 285–304.

and the Eastern Ukraine conflict after that. Russia was not becoming the peaceful, friendly European state it seemed like after the years of the Soviet Union's collapse.

#### e. Limitations

Case studies of exceptional states should not be generalized to all similar cases and not all small states could do similar solutions as Finland.<sup>30</sup> The Baltics, for example, were in a very different reality when they applied for NATO. They had just become independent from the Soviet Union and had hardly any defense forces, nor resources to commit to a credible defense building on their own.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, a theory should not be rejected because it failed to predict a single case. Rather, case studies, especially on exceptional cases, should in this case offer insight into understudied small states' strategies. Indeed, since small states' security strategies are so little studied, fully relying on previous research and theories can be misleading.

### 4. Historical background

In the aforementioned declaration by President Kekkonen, the "experience" to which he refers is the Soviet invasion of Finland during the Second World War.<sup>32</sup> At the beginning of World War II, Finland was a neutral state, but the Soviets feared for an allied attack through Finland and launched an invasion. Finland defended itself up to a surprising point but had to sign the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance<sup>33</sup> as a condition to end the war in 1944. This treaty was the basis of enforced neutrality during the Cold War. The Soviet Union kept Finland as a neutral ground, which was second best to occupying the territory.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, Finland decided to continue with the strategy of military non-alliance despite the neutrality treaty having ended. Finland joined the European Union and got closer to the West in many other areas too, but did not seek NATO membership. The state leaders as well as the population continued to believe that this strategy of military non-alliance would be the safest for Finland. Now the narrative was that the Russian Federation was on a path to becoming a peaceful democratic European state and NATO would not be necessary.

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<sup>30</sup> Toshkov, 304–7.

<sup>31</sup> Vaidotas Urbelis, "Defense Policies of the Baltic States: From the Concept of Neutrality Towards," *NATO*, 2013, <https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/01-03/vaidotas.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Kekkonen, "Finland's Position in International Politics."

<sup>33</sup> Keijo Korhonen, "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and Finland : Some Aspects of International Politics," *Cooperation and Conflict* 8, no. 3/4 (1973): 183–88.

Joining NATO still has been a red line for Russia and Finns have believed it, fearing retaliation or worsening relations.<sup>34</sup> The approach of ‘friendly neighborly relations’ over being on the frontline of the great power struggle was preferred. This has been referred to as ‘Finlandization’.<sup>35</sup>

The age of Finlandization seems to be coming to an end. This was realized by president Niinistö: "Masks have been taken off" he says after Russia started its invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Since February, the public opinion in Finland steadily has turned to favor joining NATO and the opinions of the politicians follow increasing support.<sup>36</sup> Russia is no more perceived as a trustworthy partner. The age of Finlandization is coming to an end as the Finns seek to join NATO, despite or due to threats by Russia. How did Finland make it so far without a powerful alliance?

Finland is the focus of this case study since it shows a differing and unexpected response to dealing with a more powerful opponent. It has a long history of balancing as close as possible to the West while remaining out of NATO.

What Russia fears, is that with Finland as a NATO member it sees NATO and the USA bringing strategic weapons systems close to its strategically important locations like St. Petersburg and the Murmansk railroad track. The track which is Russia’s most important logistics route to its Murmansk and Kola bases, where its strategic missile forces are based, and it could be difficult to secure with Finland being part of NATO.<sup>37</sup> Also, Russia would be in trouble in the narrow Gulf of Finland. Its nuclear submarines could be more easily detected and ensuring logistics would be more challenging.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Finland Nato: Russia Threatens to Retaliate over Membership Move - BBC News,” accessed May 26, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61420185>

<sup>35</sup> “Finland and Finlandization | History Today,” accessed May 23, 2022, <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/finland-and-finlandization>

<sup>36</sup> “Yle Poll: Support for Nato Membership Soars to 76%,” News, May 9, 2022, <https://yle.fi/news/3-12437506>

<sup>37</sup> “Rajan takana [behind the border],” Yle Uutiset, May 26, 2022, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-12434544>

<sup>38</sup> “Tämän vuoksi Nato haluaa Suomen [This is why NATO wants Finland],” Helsingin Sanomat, May 9, 2022, <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000008791353.html>

Finland is a partner for peace with NATO and has a policy of ‘option to join’ if necessary.<sup>39</sup> Finland’s extensive cooperation with its international partners like the USA, other Nordic countries and being a NATO peace partner indicates that Finland leans towards the West in its security policy. Cooperation and common exercise within the NORDEFECO and with the USA and NATO show that Finns have been ready to do nearly anything *but* join NATO.

This arrangement has been satisfying for both Russia and Finland: Russia has been seen as a relatively low threat and an important trade partner, Russia has seen that Finland is not committed to foreign troops stationed on its soil. This arrangement has now been brought to an end by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

## 5. Analysis

Security Council publications state that Finland’s security solution is a model of comprehensive security, where the FDF has the main responsibility to defend Finland’s territory and its population.<sup>40</sup> This section describes and explores both FDF capabilities and comprehensive security. It is followed by an evaluation of how the security actors and legislation have responded to the changing security environment. I then look into how the public has perceived and been satisfied with Finland’s security solution.

### a. Finnish Defense Forces

The FDF has adapted to the reality of neighboring a hostile Russia and aims to fulfill the requirements of the Finnish parliament to defend the border and secure population in any scenario. The FDF’s choices of doctrine and capabilities are based on the assumption that no one else will come to Finland’s aid. Finland cannot just hold the line until its allies arrive or diplomacy prevails. However, considering its limited resources, FDF must train its troops well to compensate for the missing capabilities, like missile defense, which could provide better protection for troops and civilians.

The backbone of the FDF is the conscript military with up to 285 000 soldiers in full mobilization strength, and up to 900 000 trained reserve soldiers. Around 12 000 hired

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<sup>39</sup> “NATO’s Partnership for Peace Programme,” Puolustusvoimat, accessed May 26, 2022, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/international-activities/natos-partnership-for-peace-programme>

<sup>40</sup> “About Us - Finnish Defense Forces,” Puolustusvoimat, accessed May 25, 2022, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/about-us>; “Comprehensive Security – Turvallisuuskomitea,” accessed May 23, 2022, <https://turvallisuuskomitea.fi/en/comprehensive-security/>

personnel serve the FDF during peacetime, of which a third are civilians.<sup>41</sup> Considering Finland's relatively small population, its military is significantly large.

All adult males get drafted and complete either military or civil service. Females can enter voluntary service. The service period is either 165, 255 or 347 days, depending on training and task. After completing training former conscripts remain in the reserve until age 60. Around 21,000 conscripts are trained yearly, which is around two-thirds of the age group. Women are applying in increasing numbers: 1675 women applied in 2021.<sup>42</sup> Having completed training, conscripts are fully able to function in independent groups as a crew member, non-commissioned officer (NCO) or officer (in reserve). Reserve training is progressive and aims to improve individual and group skills and at a minimum upholds soldiers' skills.

In terms of equipment, all possible capabilities of the FDF cannot be listed due to the scope of this study, but the most relevant capabilities are focused on. Especially those which show significant deterrence or defense capability.

As shown in the literature review, all possible weapons systems are simply not reasonable for small states with their limited resources. This calls for innovative and cost-efficient solutions which can complement where there is a lack of equipment. For example, missile defense in Finland mostly focuses on passive methods instead of expensive missile defense systems.<sup>43</sup> The passive method aims to reduce the effect of a ballistic missile strike by dispersed and mobile troops, early warning and camouflage. The enemy is left to exhaust its resources. It is a cost-efficient way to compensate for the missing capabilities. This passive method, like most others, relies on troops' skills in self-protection. This example is illustrative of FDF doctrine in all branches and similar solutions will be assessed after the capabilities' evaluation.

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<sup>41</sup> "About Us - Finnish Defense Forces."

<sup>42</sup> "Ennätysmäärä Naisia Haki Vapaaehtoiseen Asepalvelukseen [Record Amount of Women Applied for Voluntary Armed Service]," accessed May 6, 2022, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/-/1950813/ennatysmaara-naisia-haki-vapaaehtoiseen-asepalvelukseen>; "Varusmiespalvelus Ja -Koulutus [Conscript Service and Training]," accessed May 6, 2022, <https://intti.fi/palveluksessa>

<sup>43</sup> "Ohjusjärjestelmät ja -puolustus [Missile systems and defense]," Puolustusvoimat, November 29, 2017, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/-/ohjusjarjestelmat-ja-puolust-1>

### *Defense capabilities*

FDF has one of the best indirect fire, or artillery capabilities in Europe.<sup>44</sup> Approximately 1500 pieces of heavy mortars, field cannons, multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) and self-propelled howitzers (SPH) combined with competent forward observation is a mighty asset.<sup>45</sup> Most of the artillery is of the 155mm NATO standard which has better effect and range. Finland is increasingly investing in longer range and mobile solutions like the Korean K9 155mm SPH, long-range MLRS and AMOS mobile mortar system.<sup>46</sup> Forward observers in every infantry unit and reconnaissance squad target the enemy. UAV capabilities like long-range Ranger and medium-range Orbiter 2B systems are used on the operative and strategic level for forward observation and area surveillance.<sup>47</sup> Indirect fire is concentrated from multiple different units to maximize the effect. To decrease the risk of counter artillery attacks, firing units move away or change positions as soon as the firing task is complete.

In 2015 100 modern Leopard 2A6 main battle tanks (MBT) were acquired from the Netherlands to replace the older model 2A4.<sup>48</sup> With the 2A4 model still in use, Finland then has 200 MBTs. It is more than Austria and Denmark combined, which both have nearly twice times the population of Finland.<sup>49</sup> MBTs are a crucial part of modern warfare, and Finland uses them especially in mobile counterattack operations.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> IISS, *Military Balance*.

<sup>45</sup> “Millä perusteilla Suomi on kenttätykistön suurvalta? [On what basis is Finland a great power of field artillery?],” Reserviläinen, accessed May 14, 2022, [https://www.reservilainen.fi/uutiset/milla\\_perusteilla\\_suomi\\_on\\_kenttatykiston\\_suurvalta](https://www.reservilainen.fi/uutiset/milla_perusteilla_suomi_on_kenttatykiston_suurvalta)

<sup>46</sup> “Finland to Purchase 10 Additional K9 155mm Self-Propelled Howitzers from South Korea | Defense News November 2021 Global Security Army Industry | Defense Security Global News Industry Army Year 2021 | Archive News Year,” 9, accessed May 13, 2022, [https://www.armyrecognition.com/defense\\_news\\_november\\_2021\\_global\\_security\\_army\\_industry/finland\\_to\\_purchase\\_10\\_additional\\_k9\\_155mm\\_self-propelled\\_howitzers\\_from\\_south\\_korea.html](https://www.armyrecognition.com/defense_news_november_2021_global_security_army_industry/finland_to_purchase_10_additional_k9_155mm_self-propelled_howitzers_from_south_korea.html); “Millä perusteilla Suomi on kenttätykistön suurvalta? [On what basis is Finland a great power of field artillery?].”

<sup>47</sup> Arie Egozi 24 September 2014, “Finland Gets Second Batch of Orbiter UAVs,” Flight Global, accessed May 14, 2022, <https://www.flightglobal.com/military-uavs/finland-gets-second-batch-of-orbiter-uavs/114578.article>; IISS, *Military Balance*.

<sup>48</sup> “Finland Buys One Hundred Tanks from the Netherlands,” *Atlantic Council* (blog), January 22, 2014, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/finland-buys-one-hundred-tanks-from-the-netherlands/>

<sup>49</sup> IISS, *Military Balance*, 67.

<sup>50</sup> Puolustusvoimat - The Finnish Defence Forces, *Maavoimien Uudistettu Taistelutapa - Perusteet [Army Renewed Doctrine – Basics]*, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2crAx8kibis>

In the sea, the navy and coastal units use agile, multi-role combat vessels equipped for various tasks.<sup>51</sup> These tasks could include sea mine laying and clearing, surface and anti-submarine warfare and intelligence and target acquisition. These tasks can support both defending the Finnish coast against an invading force and secure logistics and other traffic via sea. Multirole combat vessels are supported by coastal artillery which participates in destroying targets in the waterways and coastal troops, who secure the coast and support in intelligence gathering. The navy and supporting troops can direct the enemy to desired areas by mining, for example where they are destroyed by direct or usually indirect fire.<sup>52</sup>

### *Deterrence capabilities*

Finland is increasingly investing in long-range missile systems which can destroy high-value targets far behind front lines. The most important platforms so far are the F/A-18 multirole combat jets which have seen two mid-life upgrades (MLU) to increase their capability. From 2012 to 2016 MLU2 equipped Hornets with JASSM cruise missiles with a range of over 370 km and JSOW glide bombs with a range of up to 130 km.<sup>53</sup> Both missiles are stealth air-to-ground missiles with significant range and effect and are therefore threshold weapons. On heavy MLRS uses missiles with exceeding accuracy and range of up to 150km.<sup>54</sup>

### *Doctrine*

Equipment is important but would be of little use if it was not used effectively. Especially since Finland is the weaker party against Russia, it must use clever strategies to compensate for the imbalance in capabilities. All FDF branched exercise dispersed battle method to maximize the effect of limited resources.<sup>55</sup> For example, the army doctrine has been gradually updated to a

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<sup>51</sup> “About Us,” Merivoimat, accessed May 25, 2022, <https://merivoimat.fi/en/about-us>

<sup>52</sup> Puolustusvoimat - Försvarsmakten - The Finnish Defense Forces, *Meritiedustelukomppania – Opetuspaketti [Coastal Reconnaissance - Educational Video]*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NpGPtVzrPE>

<sup>53</sup> “Ilmapuolustuksen suorituskyvyn kehittäminen [Developing air defense capabilities],” Ilmavoimat, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://ilmavoimat.fi/ilmapuolustuksen-suorituskyvyn-kehittaminen>

<sup>54</sup> “Effects Capability for the Army -,” Puolustusvoimat, accessed May 14, 2022, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/-/1950813/effects-capability-for-the-army>

<sup>55</sup> Puolustusvoimat - The Finnish Defense Forces, *Maavoimien Uudistettu Taistelutapa - Perusteet [Army Renewed Doctrine – Basics]*, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2crAx8kibis>; Juha Tuominen, “Hajautettu taistelutapa edellyttää yhteisöllistä ja innovatiivista asiantuntijuutta [Dispersed battle method requires social and innovative leadership],” *Kylkirauta* (blog), 2015, <https://kylkirauta.fi/index.php/2015/01/06/hajautettu-taistelutapa-edellyttaa-yhteisollista-ja-innovatiivista-asiantuntijuutta/>

less stationary method of fighting. As presented in the educational material by the Finnish army, the direction of the enemy is controlled by mines, for example, to lead it to areas where it is first consumed by agile smaller unit attacks and concentrated artillery fire and then destroyed with larger combined units counter attacks.<sup>56</sup> When troops are dispersed and mobile, they are more difficult to target. The attacker must exhaust its resources in trying to neutralize the evasive defender or pass them leaving them to the rear and exposing logistics and reserve to a threat. Finnish soldiers then, in short, evade confrontational battles where Russia's material overpower would prevail, and rather slowly consume the enemy's most vulnerable assets within the whole depth of the battlefield. Only after the attacking main parts are isolated from their logistics and reserve, they are destroyed with larger units.<sup>57</sup>

Both Navy and Air Forces use similar doctrine. The Navy's agile vessels evade enemy fire and conduct fast operations.<sup>58</sup> The Air Force uses dispersed ad hoc bases where jets take off and land on road strips. This way equipment is more difficult to locate and destroy by the enemy.<sup>59</sup>

It requires good situational awareness and initiative-taking from officers and NCOs in the field to complete tasks when troops are dispersed or even isolated on the battlefield.<sup>60</sup> This requires comprehensive training of the conscripts and reservists as they most often function as the leaders of the groups, even at a battalion level.<sup>61</sup> To ensure coordination of units, timely situational image and effective command and control, functioning and reliable communications networks are important. With dispersed troops, communications networks are like nets where

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<sup>56</sup> Puolustusvoimat - The Finnish Defense Forces, *Maavoimien Uudistettu Taistelutapa - Perusteet [Army Renewed Doctrine – Basics]*.

<sup>57</sup> Puolustusvoimat - The Finnish Defense Forces.

<sup>58</sup> Puolustusvoimat - Försvarsmakten - The Finnish Defense Forces, *Meritiedustelukompania – Opetuspaketti [Coastal Reconnaissance - Educational Video]*.

<sup>59</sup> “Hajautettu taktiikka on yhdessä Hornettien kanssa muualta opittujen toimintatapojen kanssa tehnyt Suomesta hävittäjätorjunnan kärkimaan, sanoo uusien HX-koneiden hankintaa vetävä Lauri Puranen [Dispersed tactic together with other learnt doctrines and Hornets has made Finland a top performer in fighter jet defense],” Maaseudun Tulevaisuus, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.maaseuduntulevaisuus.fi/lukemisto/8e44ac59-94e5-56d1-8206-ab9378dac686>

<sup>60</sup> Tuominen, “Hajautettu taistelutapa edellyttää yhteisöllistä ja innovatiivista asiantuntijuutta [Dispersed battle method requires social and innovative leadership].”

<sup>61</sup> Tuominen.

single communications stations have multiple others to where they are connected to. If one link goes down, the chain does not break and troops can communicate with each other and the command.<sup>62</sup>

### *Networked defense cooperation*

This strategy in practice means that some of the logistics, equipment acquisitions and capability development are coordinated with neighboring countries like Sweden, Norway and Estonia. It also means regular exercise together to ensure integration, shared knowledge and enhanced readiness to work together if needed. Most of it happens within the NORDEFECO framework.<sup>63</sup> It is a defense cooperation with Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark. Recently under NORDEFECO, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway are choosing together a service uniform.<sup>64</sup> This will lower the costs for each country and increase logistics security since they can, if necessary, fill each other's supplies. Finland exercises regularly with its international partners, mostly on Finnish soil and sometimes in other countries. FDF, its personnel and conscripts are described as professional and motivated.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, Finland is part of the United Kingdom lead Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF),<sup>66</sup> Partner for Peace for NATO<sup>67</sup> and a close partner with the United States<sup>68</sup>. Even though Finland is cooperating and is compatible to fight with its partners, it is important to underline that

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<sup>62</sup> Puolustusvoimat - The Finnish Defense Forces, *Maavoimien Uudistettu Taistelutapa - Perusteet [Army Renewed Doctrine – Basics]*.

<sup>63</sup> "Frontpage - Nordefco," accessed April 29, 2022, <https://www.nordefco.org/>

<sup>64</sup> "Oskar Pederson to Deliver Combat Uniforms for Nordic Countries," *Army Technology* (blog), February 10, 2022, <https://www.army-technology.com/news/oskar-pederson-nordic-combat-uniforms/>.

<sup>65</sup> "NATO - News: Exercise Cold Response 2022 – NATO and Partner Forces Face the Freeze in Norway, 07-Mar.-2022," accessed May 25, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_192351.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_192351.htm); "International Exercise Arrow 22 Develops National Defense Competence at All Levels -," *Maavoimat*, accessed May 10, 2022, <https://maavoimat.fi/en/-/international-exercise-arrow-22-develops-national-defense-competence-at-all-levels>

<sup>66</sup> "The Joint Expeditionary Force: Global Britain in Northern Europe?," accessed May 26, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/joint-expeditionary-force-global-britain-northern-europe>

<sup>67</sup> "NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme."

<sup>68</sup> "U.S. Security Cooperation With Finland - United States Department of State," accessed May 26, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-finland/>

readiness to cooperate does not directly mean a commitment to help. Finland has no actual security guarantees for anyone, nor from anyone.

### b. Comprehensive security

Besides territorial integrity, the Finns have realized that the society must be able to function during armed conflict or any other crisis. Finns have practiced, for decades already a model of comprehensive security, where the resources of the whole society are used in a coordinated manner to prevent and endure any crisis. The yearly publication “Safe Finland”<sup>69</sup> outlines Finland’s yearly priorities and changing security environment in a narrative style with a goal of clear communication to the general public. It complements the broader publication, “security strategy of the society”<sup>70</sup>, which is published every ten years. It outlines different scenarios of crisis and how administrative branches of the state, companies, NGOs, communities and individual citizens act in times of crisis. The Security Committee coordinates the planning and communication of comprehensive security, but each individual, group and organization are responsible for its execution.

The model of comprehensive security in Finland in practice means that vital functions of the society are secured during any crisis, even a military attack. Vital functions, as listed by the Security Committee, are:

1. **Leadership**, which is the base of all other functions. Effective crisis response requires coordination between leadership, situational awareness and communications.
2. **International and EU cooperation**. All levels of society are affected by international cooperation in crisis prevention and securing society’s functions.
3. **National defense**. It is planned in relation to the security environment with the primary goal of sufficient deterrence to prevent an attack. If needed, any military threat is responded to with force.
4. **Internal security**. To secure citizens from crime, accidents, environmental hazards or such disturbances and threats and their consequences. Close cooperation with other

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<sup>69</sup> Turvallisuuskomitea, “Turvallinen Suomi 2018: Tietoja Suomen Kokonaisturvallisuudesta [Safe Finland: Information on Finland’s Comprehensive Security],” 2018.

<sup>70</sup> “Yhteiskunnan Turvallisuusstrategia: Valtioneuvoston Periaatepäätös [Security Strategy of the Society: Principle Decision of the Finnish Government]” (Turvallisuuskomitea, 2017), [https://turvallisuuskomitea.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/YTS\\_2017\\_suomi.pdf](https://turvallisuuskomitea.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/YTS_2017_suomi.pdf)

national and international partners and between the EU and other actors supports this work.

5. **Economy, infrastructure and security of supply.** By securing them, resources and funding are ensured for the rest of the functions.
6. **Functionality and services of the population.** Basic services ensure the functioning and independent survival of the population in all situations.
7. **Mental crisis resilience** means individuals, groups, states and the nation's ability to endure the psychological pressure. Good mental resilience helps with the recovery from the crisis.<sup>71</sup>

The model of comprehensive security could be considered a 'clever strategy'<sup>72</sup> of a small state, where all state resources are utilized in a coordinated manner to increase its prospects for survival.

#### c. Responsiveness

Finland has shown a significant ability to adapt to a changing security environment. Several legislations were passed shortly after unmarked soldiers occupied Crimea in 2014, Finland passed legislation that allowed to better act against these types of unconventional soldiers.<sup>73</sup> New legislation criminalized soldiers without insignia making an effective response possible.

Readiness units consisting of staff and conscripts were formed on all battalion levels on a voluntary basis.<sup>74</sup> After completing 6 months of training, conscripts of the readiness unit serve another 6 months and would immediately respond to any military threat before general mobilization starts. Hence, Finland has adjusted accordingly to a changing security environment, and has not just stood and watched by.

#### d. Public perception

Finns have consistently (1) trusted the FDF, (2) supported the strategy of military non-alliance, and (3) seen Russia as a relatively low threat. This is shown in the polls conducted by The

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<sup>71</sup> "Comprehensive Security – Turvallisuuskomitea."

<sup>72</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>73</sup> "Soldiers without Insignia' to Be Included in the Territorial Surveillance Act," Valtioneuvosto, accessed May 14, 2022, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/tunnuksettomat-sotilaat-aluevalvontalakiin>

<sup>74</sup> "Sotilaille sataa uusia tehtäviä – nämä lait muuttuvat armeijassa seuraavaksi [new tasks for soldiers - these laws change in the armed forces next]," Yle Uutiset, February 16, 2017, <http://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9459766>

Advisory Board for Defense Information (ABDI).<sup>75</sup> The polls have been repeated already since 1964 but since most of the relevant questions were repeated only since 2001, that is the beginning of the observations for this study.

The question “do you trust in the ability of the FDF to defense against different military threats?” was asked for the first time in 2021. 73 % of participants trust very much or quite a lot.<sup>76</sup> Similar results have been seen in previous years with questions like “how well do you think Finland has prepared to defend against following security threats: armed attack” and “how well or bad do you think Finland’s defense politics have been conducted during recent years?”

Even though an increasing amount of people find Russia as a security threat, in 2021 “development in Russia” is only the 9<sup>th</sup> worrying matter according to respondents. More worrying has been for example climate change, extreme political movements and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).<sup>77</sup>

These findings suggest that the public has found FDF to be well enough equipped and prepared to respond sufficiently to threats at the time of the poll. Joining NATO has then been unnecessary. In fact, the percentage of respondents thinking joining NATO would increase Finland’s security has been close to the same as that of thinking it would decrease it.<sup>78</sup> Such probing is not done on many other topics in Finnish politics. Security and alliance politics are sensitive matters and dealt with together.

This feeling lasted over Georgia and Crimea. Now the equation of the perceived threat has changed as the scale of military operation in Ukraine is larger than ever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The public opinion toward joining NATO has steadily increased since February 2022, and the

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<sup>75</sup> Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta MTS, “Suomalaisten Mielipiteitä Ulko- Ja Turvallisuuspolitiikasta, Maanpuolustuksesta Ja Turvallisuudesta [Finns’ Opinions on Foreign and Defense Policy, Territorial Defense and Security],” *Maanpuolustustiedotuksen Suunnittelukunta* 1 (2021), <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-663-305-6>

<sup>76</sup> Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta MTS, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta MTS, 73.

<sup>78</sup> Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta MTS, 72.

politicians have followed in accordingly up to a point where in May Finland's government voted in favor of joining NATO with votes 188-8.<sup>79</sup>

#### e. Conclusion

As shown, FDF has high readiness and capability to destroy any opponent disturbing Finland's security. However, it does not have great deterrence capabilities and relies more on conventional defense. Well-chosen deterrence and defense capabilities together with tailor-made doctrine ensure high losses for the attacker and high costs for obtaining objectives by force. Comprehensive security ensures the readiness of the society for prolonged conflict as well as logistics security.

Finland's cost-efficient strategy of survival, or a security solution, communicates both internally and externally. Finns and possible adversaries are aware of credible defense and increased crisis resilience of the society, which to Finns means faith in security and for the adversary a high cost for any aggression.<sup>80</sup>

## 6. Discussion

My findings suggest that Finland's security solution of credible defense and a model of comprehensive security have been enough for the public to feel safe without NATO. Up until February 2022, the threat of Russia was perceived as relatively low, and NATO membership was seen to decrease Finland's security. The public saw that the FDF was up to its task. In other words, Finland's internal balancing efforts were sufficient in relation to the perceived threat.

FDF has used custom-made solutions in its preparation to defend against Russian attacks. Where the equipment lacks, good training of the soldiers and choice of doctrine complement. The model of comprehensive security shows centralized planning, clear communication and preparedness on the state's security. It shows that Finland is pioneering in security solutions and uses its limited resources creatively and efficiently.

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<sup>79</sup> "Yle Poll: Support for Nato Membership Soars to 76%," News, May 9, 2022, <https://yle.fi/news/3-12437506>; "Eduskunta äänesti Suomen Natoon hakemisen puolesta selvin luvuin 188–8 – [Parliament voted in favor of applying for NATO with votes 188-8]," Yle Uutiset, May 16, 2022, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-12446945>

<sup>80</sup> Display of power and credible contributes for deterrence building. Pascal Vennesson, "Grand Strategy and Military Power," *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*, September 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198840299.013.21>

Therefore, the first hypothesis, *Finland has remained militarily non-allied but has had no credible security solution*, is rejected. Even though Finland counts on its close partners in terms of supply during the crisis and is in close military cooperation with several western and European countries, most of its security relies on internal efforts. Cost-efficient, innovative and comprehensive solutions are the base of Finland's internal balancing.

Regarding the theories, Finland's security solution fills the criteria suggested by Silove to consider its behavior as a grand strategy.<sup>81</sup> First, it was long-term in scope; the Finnish population and decision-makers were mutually decisive about non-alliance and strong defense forces. Second, it considered highest state priorities; staying out of a potential great-power conflict while maximizing its security were both crucial for ensuring the safety of the state and its population. Finally, it made use of all state resources; a large conscript army makes use of the population's high will to defend the country and the model of comprehensive security ensures all actors within Finland contribute to crisis resilience.

Against what previous research suggests, Finland has been able to exercise internal balancing. Finland has been able to make its own security solutions without a military alliance, while being autonomous and independent from Russian influence. Finland's choices of strategy can be considered as increasing economic capabilities, military strength or developing clever strategies, as Waltz suggests for internal balancing.<sup>82</sup> Economic capabilities are Finland's cost-efficient solutions and utilizing the resources of the whole society in crisis response. FDF has increased its capability after 2008 with new equipment and updated doctrine. Both the model of comprehensive security and the FDF doctrine can be considered as clever strategies; they are innovative and replace lacking resources.

If Finland were to continue its non-alliance policy, theory and my findings suggest it most likely should increase its defense spending significantly to increase its deterrence and defense capabilities to balance against Russia's increasing assertiveness. Now the more cost-efficient solution is to join NATO while Russia is focused on and weakened by its war in Ukraine. Whereas before relations with Russia prevented Finland from joining, now they are severed by

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<sup>81</sup> Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of "Grand Strategy."

<sup>82</sup> Waltz, 118.

Russia's actions and matter less since Russia has become a rogue state with its violent attack on Ukraine.

The scale of the attack in Ukraine in February 2022 is unprecedented in the history of the Russian Federation on European soil. This has shown to any observer, especially those more exposed to the threat of Russia, that a full-scale military operation is an option for the Kremlin to achieve its political goals.

Finns realize that military non-alliance would not save Finland from an armed conflict, and in such a case, its security would be greater if it were part of NATO. Public opinion turned to support NATO membership. Finns learned this costly during the Second World War when the Soviet Union attacked non-allied Finland.<sup>83</sup> The Russian Federation is showing in its invasion of Ukraine that it has no respect for small states' sovereignty or their non-alliance.

Small states can do it on their own, but not against an increasingly unpredictable and violent opponent who wields nuclear weapons and massively more power compared to Finland. Russia shows once again that against small, non-allied states, it does as it pleases. Finns have now found that remaining non-allied has little value if the opponent does not respect it. In an anarchic and increasingly dangerous world "good neighborly relations" matter less than survival.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper was set out to find *how has Finland's security solution made it possible to stay militarily non-allied in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?* Using Finland as an exceptional case and through qualitative content analysis, I found that Finland's security solution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been a combination of credible defense and comprehensive security. The public has been satisfied with this strategy and NATO membership was unnecessary. I studied publications on national defense and comprehensive security to evaluate Finland's security solution, and polls on national security to understand the public's opinion on their perceived security.

Finland's security solution shows that despite existing literature on small states, Finland has had a grand strategy and could practice internal balancing to maximize its security.

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<sup>83</sup> "Russo-Finnish War | Summary, Combatants, & Facts | Britannica," accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russo-Finnish-War>

This study was limited in its scope and could not consider all possible defense strategies and capabilities of Finland, and I focused on the most relevant ones. The paper also could not engage in comparing Finland's strategy to those of other small states, which could be interesting for future research. Concerning avenues for future research, the findings suggest that most grand strategy research is misled by the thought that states can have grand strategies only if they have a great impact. Perhaps the existence and impact of grand strategy should be studied separately. This way also small states could be studied in the context of grand strategy. Future research could also investigate how other small states have implemented similar internal balancing strategies as Finland and how these efforts succeeded; or, why they were not tried or considered initially? In the case of the Baltics, perhaps they were too preoccupied and limited in resources after the USSR fell to consider internal balancing only.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Urbelis, "Defense Policies of the Baltic States: From the Concept of Neutrality Towards."

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