

7. Analysis of The Impact of The Russia-Ukraine War on Finland_s Policy Using the Neorealism Perspec

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Analysis of The Impact of The Russia-Ukraine War on Finland's Policy Using the Neorealism Perspective

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Abstract

The Russia-Ukraine war has changed Northern European security, threatening Finland's national security. War has a systemic impact not only on the conflicting nations but also on the security of other nations. Thus, Finland must strengthen its national security defense capabilities, including shifting its 74-year-old neutrality policy into alliance policy and joining NATO. One reason NATO is important is that Article 5 guarantees Finland's security. Article 5 briefly states that an external attack on one alliance member state affects all members. Finland's alliance with NATO, which has 3.3 million troops and various defense technologies and deterrence programs, including nuclear deterrence, helps prevent Russian attacks on Finnish national security and balances power with Russia. And to prevent Russia from becoming a hegemon and Finland from being attacked due to unbalanced cost-benefit considerations. The objective of this study is to analyze how the Russia-Ukraine war impacted Finnish national security policy using a neorealism perspective. This research used a qualitative method, focusing on scientific articles from journals and books related to the research title. Qualitative research describes phenomena accurately using words based on relevant data analysis collection techniques and scientific situations to reveal social situations. According to neorealism, Finland's actions were meant to achieve national security in an anarchic international structure. One effort is the NATO alliance policy. The Russia-Ukraine war changed Finland's neutrality policy. Finland's military integration with NATO allowed it to balance power with Russia and deter Russian attacks.

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Keywords: Russian-Ukraine War, Finland National Defence Policy, NATO Alliance, Neorealism, Deterrence Policy, Balance of Power

Abstrak

Perang Rusia-Ukraina telah mengubah dinamika keamanan di Eropa Utara, sehingga mengancam keamanan nasional Finlandia. Perang ini tidak hanya berdampak sistemik pada negara-negara yang berkonflik, tetapi juga pada keamanan negara-negara lain. Oleh karena itu, Finlandia perlu memperkuat kemampuan pertahanan keamanannya, termasuk dengan mengubah kebijakan netralitas selama 74 tahun menjadi kebijakan aliansi, yaitu dengan bergabung ke NATO. Salah satu alasan mengapa NATO penting adalah adanya jaminan keamanan melalui Pasal 5. Pasal 5 secara singkat menyatakan bahwa serangan eksternal terhadap salah satu anggota aliansi dianggap sebagai serangan terhadap seluruh anggota. Aliansi Finlandia dengan NATO, yang memiliki 3,3 juta pasukan serta berbagai teknologi pertahanan dan program pencegahan, termasuk pencegahan nuklir, membantu mencegah serangan Rusia terhadap keamanan nasional Finlandia dan menyeimbangkan kekuatan

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dengan Rusia. Langkah ini juga bertujuan untuk mencegah Rusia menjadi hegemon dan menghindari Finlandia menjadi sasaran serangan akibat ketidakseimbangan pertimbangan biaya dan manfaat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana perang Rusia-Ukraina memengaruhi kebijakan keamanan nasional Finlandia menggunakan perspektif neorealisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan menganalisis artikel ilmiah dari jurnal dan buku yang relevan dengan judul penelitian. Penelitian kualitatif bertujuan menggambarkan fenomena secara akurat menggunakan kata-kata berdasarkan teknik pengumpulan data yang relevan dan situasi ilmiah untuk mengungkap situasi sosial. Menurut neorealisme, tindakan Finlandia bertujuan untuk mencapai keamanan nasional dalam struktur internasional yang anarkis. Salah satu upaya tersebut adalah kebijakan aliansi dengan NATO. Perang Rusia-Ukraina telah mengubah kebijakan netralitas Finlandia. Integrasi militer Finlandia dengan NATO memungkinkan negara tersebut menyeimbangkan kekuatan dengan Rusia dan mencegah serangan Rusia.

Kata Kunci: Perang Rusia-Ukraina; Kebijakan Nasional Finlandia; Aliansi NATO; Neorealism; Kebijakan Deterrence; Balance of Power

Introduction

Russia's significant invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has created a highly volatile situation for European regional security. This invasion, which began on February 24, 2022, has further escalated the conflict since 2014. It is one of the largest conflicts in continental Europe since World War II, resulting in around 10,000 casualties on both sides (Lister et al., 2022). Russia's actions are in clear violation of the peace treaties that most European countries have upheld since the end of World War II and the Cold War. The invasion highlights Putin's disregard for peace and indirectly jeopardizes the security of neighboring countries.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has significant global economic and political implications. The conflict has not only destabilized the European region but also affected international energy and food markets. As the world's two largest wheat-producing countries, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused major disruptions in the global food supply chain, triggering a food crisis in countries that are heavily dependent on wheat imports from both countries, especially in Africa and the Middle East. In terms of food security, for example, Ukraine, as a major grain exporter, and Russia, as a leading wheat supplier, are crucial to the global food market (Ay & Söylemez, 2023). The conflict has also disrupted supply chains, leading to a food crisis, especially in countries that are heavily dependent on imports.

One of the countries that shares a direct border with Russia is Finland. Geographically, Finland shares a border with Russia, spanning

1,340 kilometers. The northernmost point of the border between Finland, Norway, and Russia forms a tripoint marked by Treriksrysa, a pile of stones near Muotkavaara (69°03'06"N 28°55'45"E). To the south, its boundary lies along the coast of the Gulf of Finland, where there exists a maritime border between their respective territorial waters, terminating at the narrow passage of international waters between Finland's and Estonia's territorial waters (Center, 1998).

Finland is a country located in Northern Europe, sharing a direct border with Russia in the east. It is a nation that maintained its political neutrality for 74 years during the Cold War era (1948). This stance was taken as Finland aimed to sustain a neutral relationship with Russia. Numerous reasons underlie this policy, with one of them being historical considerations.

In the past, Finland was part of the Russian Empire. Several decades later, Finland gained independence from Russia following the Russian Revolution in 1917, which marked the collapse of the Russian Empire and the establishment of the Soviet Union (Larson, 2023). Throughout the existence of the Soviet Union until its dissolution and the subsequent shift to Russia, Finland aimed to prevent and execute the Balance of Power strategy, balancing the power dynamics between the West and Russia. As a measure to achieve this balance, Finland opted to maintain its political neutrality for 74 years (Akbar & Fadiyah, 2024).

The history of Finland's neutrality is intriguing to explore. After gaining independence in 1917, Finland's foreign policy

and security measures were heavily influenced by its relationship with Russia. The concept of neutrality became relevant during the Cold War as a strategic approach to navigating relations between the East (Russia) and the West. Throughout the Cold War era, Finland adopted a policy of neutrality out of practical necessity rather than solely for reasons of national identity. Finland aimed to maintain friendly relations with Russia while also fostering ties with Western nations without provoking its eastern neighbors (Haynes, 2017).

During this period, Finland's neutrality served as a delicate balancing act amid geopolitical tensions, allowing the country to maintain closeness with Russia while avoiding provocation of its neighboring Eastern countries. This adaptive strategy enabled Finland to uphold stability and security in its region while engaging with both sides despite the tense political environment. Mikhail Gorbachev, a General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, officially recognized Finland's neutral status in 1989 (Plokhy, 2023). However, in the post-Cold War era, neutrality began to be seen as an obstacle to forging deeper ties with Western institutions.

After Finland joined the European Union (EU) on January 1, 1995, Finland's neutrality policy began to develop. Nevertheless, the idea of not participating in the military alliance was again a major concern or focus of Finland. In fact, more and more people support the possibility of Finland joining NATO (RFL Journalists, 2022). Pertinent clarification lies in the fact that the concept of legal neutrality applies solely during times of war. However, the fundamental idea consistently shaping Finland's foreign policy is the principle of neutrality.

According to Neorealism, National Security is the main interest of a state. Neorealism considers security to be the primary goal of a state. Power is not an ultimate goal but a means to achieve national security (Rosyidin, 2020). Neorealism, commonly known as Structural Realism, was pioneered by the figure of Kenneth Waltz.

In Kenneth Waltz's book titled "Theory of International Politics," neorealism assumes that war occurs due to the anarchic nature of the

international structure; war emerges because of structural pressures (structural constraint). Neorealism focuses on the Distribution of Power within the anarchic international system. International dynamics are determined by changes in the Distribution of Capabilities, encompassing the distribution of economic and military power (Frankel & Waltz, 1980).

Neorealism argues that a state's actions are influenced by the idea of how the state is able to defend its national interests and security in an anarchic international system. In this case, Russia's invasive action that arbitrarily invaded Ukraine is a phenomenon of the development of actors' actions in the European security sphere, which directly affects the surrounding countries to respond with actions and policies that need to be taken in order to maintain their national security.

Finland's actions to uphold its national security emerge due to structural constraints or pressures arising from the anarchic conditions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Particularly, this stems from Russia's highly anarchic and unpredictable invasive actions. Therefore, one of the policies adopted by Finland is joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO is a military alliance among nations that was established in 1949. NATO guarantees the security of all its members, as stipulated in Article 5, which states that an attack on one member country is considered an attack on all NATO member nations (NATO, 2023c).

NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance comprising thirty-one member countries in Europe and North America. It was established based on the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, aimed at creating a balance against the military power of the Soviet Union after World War II. NATO facilitates cooperation and consultation in defense and security matters between these two continents, and it conducts multinational crisis management operations. Its headquarters are located in Brussels, Belgium (NATO, 2023).

Finland has established formal relations with NATO since 1994 and actively cooperates with the alliance in peace support operations, exercises, and information exchange (Laverick, 2023). Finland applied for NATO membership

on May 17, 2022, and was invited to join the alliance at the Madrid summit on June 29, 2022 (NATO, 2023b). Finland received an invitation to join NATO on July 5, 2022, after all NATO members signed the Accession Protocol. Finland's security environment shifted following Russia's aggression towards Ukraine in 2014. Finland's membership in NATO will bolster its security and enhance stability in the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe (NATO, 2023a).

On April 4, 2023, Finland officially became the 31st NATO member. This marked a significant shift in Finland's foreign policy, which had maintained an official stance of neutrality since 1948 in an effort to avoid unnecessary confrontation with its eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union (Benoit Gorgemans, 2023). However, Russia's continued invasion of Ukraine convinced Finland—along with another Nordic country, Sweden—to abandon neutrality and pursue membership in NATO. Based on the introduction provided, the researcher wants to answer the research question of how the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Finland's policies in efforts to maintain national security using the perspective of neorealism. Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to examine and analyze Finland's policies in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict using the paradigm of neorealism as a means to safeguard Finland's sovereignty and national security.

Literature Review

Finland in NATO: Bolstering Arctic Defense & Baltic Stability

The first discussion discussed Finland's recent membership in NATO and its transition from neutrality to active deterrence (Park & Carll, 2023). The research highlights the strong public support and political ties between NATO and Finland, as well as the security and interoperability gained through membership.

The study discusses the implications of Finland's potential alliance with NATO on Arctic defense and Baltic stability. Joining NATO is viewed as crucial for enhancing Finland's military capabilities and regional security in the Baltic Sea area. Finland's membership in NATO extends the alliance's

reach into the Baltic Sea region, thereby expanding the scope of NATO's Article 5, which serves as a deterrent against potential Russian aggression.

Examining the research by Joy Park and Kendall Carll, the authors strongly endorse the view that Finland's alliance with NATO is necessary to bolster its security stability and military strength. However, this research has yet to delve into the paradigmatic approach of neorealism in defending Finland's national security. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze Finland's actions through the lens of neorealism to safeguard its national security amidst ongoing conflicts.

The option of strengthening military alignments in Finland's defense policy in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war

This research analyses and compares how the Russia-Ukraine war has affected perceptions of options for strengthening military linkages in Finnish defense policy (Čerkass, 2022). The basic directions of Finland's defense policy towards Russia and Finland's long-standing traditions of military alliance were also outlined.

The study proves the hypothesis that "Russian aggression in Ukraine has strengthened the elite consensus in Finnish defense policy on options for increasing military linkages." The Russia-Ukraine war has led to the creation of consensus among both elites and the general public on the option to increase military linkages at the expense of the old policy of neutrality/impartiality in military cooperation. In addition, Finland continues to strengthen its territorial defenses, although the linkage of armed forces with international partners is currently an unavoidable priority.

In this study, the author concurs with the hypothesis that the Russia-Ukraine war has spurred changes in Finland's defensive neutrality policy, leading to closer alignment with international actors like NATO. However, Edijs Bošs and Arturs Čerkass's research does not primarily address how the Finnish state can uphold its national security as a core interest; rather, it concentrates on a public or elite consensus regarding the shift from neutrality to

NATO alliance and on Finland's defensive policy.

In contrast, the author's research extends beyond solely defensive policies and consensus on neutrality transition. It examines various policies implemented by Finland to safeguard its national security, employing a Neorealist perspective.

Russia, Ukraine, and state survival through neutrality

This research explores the Neutrality/Non-aligned policies implemented by European countries during the Cold War period, with the aim of avoiding competition with the great powers of the time (Allison, 2022). The study argues that in the context of the new confrontation between Russia and Western countries, valuable lessons can be gained by conducting a critical analysis of the past experiences of neutral and non-aligned countries, especially those who choose or are forced to forge alliances with foreign parties.

The article delves into a case study of Ukraine, a sovereign state with neutral potential, examining relevant neutrality criteria. These criteria are gleaned from brief reviews of Austria and Finland's experiences during the Cold War, as well as Moldova and Finland in the post-Cold War era. Policies pursued by the Soviet Union and Russia underscored these countries' strategic rejection of NATO, while the concept of armed neutrality bolstered their conventional resilience against threats from Russia.

The author concurs that one means of state survival during the Cold War was a policy of neutrality or non-alignment, prioritizing national security. However, the discrepancy between this study and the author's research lies in the main subject. The author's research focuses on Finland, while the study subject is Ukraine.

Global Media Framing Russian Invasion of Ukraine

This research describes how global mainstream media framed Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Using framing theory and qualitative analysis, the study examined news coverage from four major media

outlets—The Jakarta Post, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The New York Times. Analyzing 120 news stories through NVivo software explores how media narratives depicted Russia as an aggressor and President Vladimir Putin's actions as politically aggressive, often highlighting negative sentiments. The study underscores the significant role of media framing in shaping global perceptions of geopolitical conflicts and evaluates the impact of such portrayals on Russia's efforts to reclaim its status as a major power in the international arena (Sahide et al., 2023).

In this article, the author focused on how different perspectives define Finland's national security policy. According to neorealism, Finland has a way to achieve national security by joining international organizations. From a different perspective, media framing forms a global perspective, and neorealism changes a country's policy based on its national security goals.

Theoretical Framework and Research Method

Neorealism is a theory introduced by one of the greatest thinkers in international relations, Kenneth Waltz. His book *Theory of International Politics* (1979) is a masterpiece in the world of neorealism. As a leading proponent of Neorealism, Kenneth Waltz asserts that there are general 'laws' that can be identified and can be used to analyze phenomena in the world of International Relations. Kenneth Waltz emphasized 'international structure' as the main unit of analysis (Bakry, 2017).

Neorealism has the main assumption that power in the international structure is remarkably diverse, and states will focus on the balance of power distribution. Because the structure of the international system and the distribution of power within it are the main factors determining a country's actions, neorealism assumes that the structure of the international system is remarkably diverse (Waltz et al., 1979). The international structure originates from interactions among state actors and then constrains these states in certain action-

making decisions. This international structure is anarchic, as there are no actors that regulate the international structure (Frankel & Waltz, 1980). Conflict can occur due to structural constraints in the international structure. Conflict occurs because of the anarchic nature of this international structure. Consequently, conflict will not be avoided because it is a logical consequence of the condition of anarchy (Rosyidin, 2020).

Waltz Neorealism has three layers of variables that can be used as explanatory factors to explain the following state behaviors: Anarchy, Self-Help System, and changes in the distribution of power capabilities (Bakry, 2017). Variables are certain factors that can be measured or observed, and variables are properties or characteristics of concepts that can be measured (Scribbr, 2022). Variables are directly observable and have varying values (Mas'ud, 1990).

As explained above, the international structure is in a state of anarchy, i.e., there are no actors that organize the international world. The self-help variable can be used to explain how Finland acted under the structural pressure stemming from the Russia-Ukraine war, and the power distribution variable refers to the balance of power between states. In the Balance of Power concept, the distribution of power is an important variable that refers to how power is allocated between states in the international system. This distribution can be even or uneven, and it greatly affects the dynamics of international relations (Balance of Power - Center for International Relations and International Security, n.d.). The author can use this variable to explain Finland's behavior in trying to maintain its national security.

While neorealism also offers levels of analysis to analyze the actions of the state in an anarchic system, neorealism uses the structural level of analysis as the Third Image, while the domestic level of analysis is the second image, and the individual level of analysis is the first image:

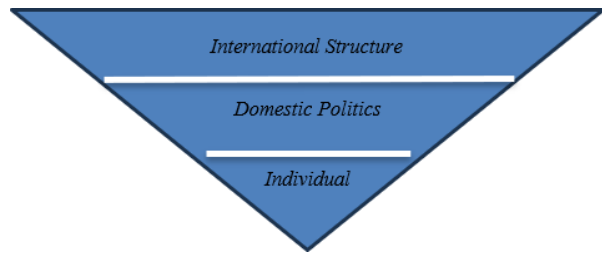


Figure 1. Levels of Analysis of Neorealism
According to Kenneth Waltz
Source: (Rosyidin, 2020)

The first image, the individual, is the primary root of state action in the anarchic international structure. The ultimate cause of conflict or peace is rooted in human nature and the perception of choice and action. The second image level of analysis is domestic politics. The causes of war and peace are found in the nature of the state, in its internal organization, ethnic composition, or ideology. Finally, at the third level of analysis, international structure was used. It is the international structure that determines how states interact with each other and how constraints play into those interactions that is the main focus. For example, international insecurity is caused by the absence of a higher authority than the state, which then leads to war (Thue, 2007). Neorealism considers security to be the primary goal of a state. Power is not an ultimate goal but rather a means to achieve national security.

In essence, neorealism is a systemic theory aimed at explaining state behavior. In other words, neorealism explains different types of state behavior by using systemic structural factors, such as the concepts of balance of power, bandwagoning, or deterrence. This is why neorealism is often referred to as structural realism (Bakry, 2017).

Neorealism provides a suitable framework for analyzing Finland's response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It allows for an examination of how Finland's actions align with its goal of achieving national security, considering power dynamics within an anarchic international system. This theory enables an analysis of the impact of the conflict on Finland's policies, addressing structural constraints and efforts for

state survival amidst the anarchic international environment.

Results and Explanation

Kenneth Waltz's neorealism, also known as structural realism, posits that states pursue power as a means to achieve national security rather than as an end in itself. Wars arise due to the anarchic nature of the international system, where no higher authority exists to regulate states' interactions, leading to conflicts driven by intersecting interests. Neorealism emphasizes balancing power distribution among states to mitigate the pressures of this anarchic structure, thereby focusing state actions on securing national interests within this framework (Rosyidin, 2020).

Finland's pursuit of its national interests can be understood through neorealism's explanatory factor variables, as outlined by Mochtar Mas'ood: Anarchy Variables, Self-Help System, and changes in power distribution (Mas'ud, 1990). As a sovereign nation for 106 years, Finland has navigated various challenges stemming from the anarchic international system, including World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Despite not being directly involved, Finland's national security is at risk due to factors such as proximity to the conflict zone, Russia's bordering territory, and its recent alliance with NATO. The Russia-Ukraine conflict exemplifies the anarchic nature of the international structure, where conflicting interests between states can escalate into threats against Finland's security (Frankel & Waltz, 1980).

Neorealism posits that a neighboring war poses a direct threat to a state's survival, prompting defensive actions like military buildup and alliances. The theory highlights the anarchic structure of the international system as a key determinant of state behavior, suggesting systemic effects of conflicts that extend beyond the involved states. With continuity across time and place, international relations are shaped by power distribution within the system. Consequently, wars can have far-reaching effects, impacting nearby nations and potentially altering power dynamics globally (Mas'ud, 1990).

War profoundly affects the security of nations near conflict zones for various reasons. Challenges stemming from the conflict, such as instability and law enforcement failures, can spill over borders, impacting neighboring countries like Finland. Mass displacement of refugees, who often migrate beyond immediate borders, strains resources and fosters social tensions in neighboring nations (World Bank, n.d.).

The Self-Help variable, the second explanatory factor, pertains to how a country, such as Finland, ensures its national security using its own capabilities. Finland historically maintained security through neutrality but shifted toward the NATO alliance due to Russia's actions in Ukraine. This shift reflects Finland's ability to adapt policies to navigate the anarchic international structure and safeguard its security. Policies, defined as purposeful rules guiding actions toward specific objectives, play a crucial role in decision-making and governance, implemented through various means such as laws, rules, and administrative actions (Stewart, 2014).

Following the 2022 Russian invasion, Finnish leaders swiftly responded to the precarious state, with President Sauli Niinisto and Prime Minister Sanna Marin taking decisive action on the global geopolitical stage. After internal negotiations, they announced Finland's intention to apply for NATO membership, citing the need to strengthen overall defense. This demonstrates Finland's commitment to regional security and stability. Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto highlighted the significant security shift caused by Russia's actions, emphasizing its impact not only on Finland but on all of Europe during his address to European lawmakers (Timsit et al., 2022).

These circumstances underscore the significance of international cooperation amid escalating security challenges. Finland's actions aim to underscore its dedication to bolstering both national and global stability and security. The official report from the Finnish foreign ministry condemns Russia's military actions in Ukraine, affirming support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Finland closely monitors Russia's

actions and their implications for European security, viewing them as a threat to the European Union (Finnish Government, 2023). Maintaining Finland's ability to operate independently and make decisions on its own is a fundamental aspect of Finnish foreign, security, and defense policy (Timsit et al., 2022).

The Distribution of Power variables, a key aspect of neorealism, aims to maintain a balance of power within the international structure. Finland's foreign and security policy, along with proactive diplomacy, aims to enhance security domestically and regionally through international cooperation. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine complicates assessments of its impact, prompting Finland to enhance defense capacities and collaborate with key allies. Finland prioritizes national security, independent decision-making, and societal effectiveness in its foreign and security policies, maintaining autonomy in decision-making processes (Muller & Pogodin, 2021). Finland is committed to enhancing its national security through various means, including its alliance policy with actors such as NATO, to achieve a balance of power in the Northern European region. These efforts aim to prevent Russia from becoming a dominant power capable of threatening the national security of surrounding countries, including Finland (Haynes, 2017).

Furthermore, neorealism introduces three factors of analysis that can be used to analyze the behavior of a state, such as Finland, in achieving its primary interest, which is national security. Kenneth Waltz describes three levels of analysis to describe the actions of the state within an anarchic structure as follows:

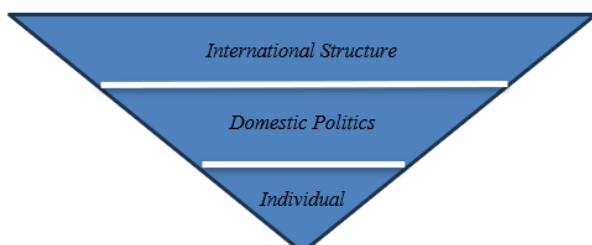


Figure 2. Levels of Analysis of Neorealism
According to Kenneth Waltz
Source: (Rosyidin, 2020)

This graph illustrates the significant influence of international structures on domestic politics, highlighting how these structures impose constraints that shape interactions among state actors. In the context of Finland, domestic politics encompasses state actions aimed at surviving within anarchic structural pressures and implementing policies for national security. However, at the core of state actions lie individual actors, with human nature and perspectives on choice and action serving as the ultimate drivers of conflicts. Subsequent sub-chapters will delve into an analysis based on Kenneth Waltz's level of analysis, exploring the impact of the Russian-Ukraine War on Finland's national security policy.

The Russian-Ukrainian war vividly portrays the anarchic dynamics of international structures, where conflicting interests between nations result in prolonged conflict. This situation places structural pressure on neighboring countries like Finland, necessitating immediate policy formulation within Finnish domestic politics to enhance defense capabilities. Such capabilities must be cultivated through a sustainable, systematic, and comprehensive approach. Russia's incursion into Ukraine underscores the imperative for Finland to fortify its defense capabilities, given the potential for Russian military aggression. This emphasizes the crucial role of Finland's military forces, particularly in addressing early-stage threats (Liu, 2023).

Finland is steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding its territory, population, and people, utilizing all available resources. The primary objective of maintaining defense capabilities is to deter the enemy from employing military force or making threats to ensure the prevention of such actions. In addition to monitoring and securing Finland's territorial boundaries, it is imperative to strategize for potential scenarios resembling the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The complexity, duration, and multifaceted nature of such crises pose significant challenges to the nation's defense capabilities. By allocating additional resources to defense, Finland aims to expedite plans to address emergent situations effectively. Essential components of effective defense

capabilities include modern and functional equipment tailored to battlefield requirements, adequate ammunition and spare parts, proficient personnel within the Defense Forces and reserves, and unwavering national determination to protect the country (Liwång et al., 2023).

The Finnish Defense Forces are urged to initiate acquisition procedures promptly to procure additional defense equipment, address long-standing shortages, and adapt to evolving operational circumstances stemming from the conflict in Ukraine. Recognizing the uncertain availability of essential supplies during emergencies, there will be a boost in ammunition storage capacity, along with efforts to increase the Defense Force's capacity for explosives production. Commencing in 2022, the number of reserve soldiers undergoing retraining will be augmented to meet security requirements amidst reduced exercise frequency due to the pandemic. This increase in retraining aims to bolster specific capabilities for mobilizing military forces, effective leadership in combat situations, proficient use of weaponry, and enhanced coordination among military units. Both operational forces and those in formation, including Border Guard forces, will undergo retraining, underscoring the heightened importance of the Border Guard in monitoring and protecting territorial integrity and national defense missions amidst changing operational landscapes. Additionally, efforts will be made to enhance the military proficiency of Border Guards and border personnel (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022).

As the operating environment evolves, defense cooperation is increasingly focused on addressing security concerns in neighboring regions. This entails adapting to emerging security threats, bolstering military capabilities, enhancing situational awareness, and fostering cooperation during crisis scenarios. Regular and diverse international exercises play a crucial role in this collaborative effort. Finnish defense cooperation is guided by national principles and shared interests. In recent years, Finland has actively and systematically expanded its defense cooperation by establishing bilateral and multilateral defense networks. These networks

are designed to strengthen Finland's defense capabilities through a variety of means (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022).

Finland's pursuit of interoperability and support through defense cooperation is vital for enhancing Finnish capabilities and securing military supplies. Given the prevailing security landscape, the significance of defense collaboration, particularly in bolstering situational awareness, should be underscored. Encouraging the advancement of defense collaboration aligns with the objectives outlined in the Government's Defense Report. The overarching aim of defense cooperation is to strengthen military capacity and foster effective collaboration with Finland's key allies, particularly in times of crisis. These policy initiatives are poised to bolster Finland's security and establish conducive conditions for coordinated and integrated actions (Finnish Government, 2021).

To ensure the availability of essential resources, there will be a concerted effort to enhance military capabilities. This will involve a heightened emphasis on bolstering defense cooperation with groups of countries and individual partners. Such collaboration increases the likelihood of obtaining assistance during crises and raises the threshold for potential armed operations against Finland. Legal enhancements for cooperation will be formulated as part of the revisions to the law governing the granting and receiving of international assistance. It's important to note that defense cooperation institutions or agreements Finland participates in do not substitute for collective defense solutions, nor do they offer security guarantees or obligations. Defending Finland with domestic resources remains imperative (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2022).

Efforts to ensure the availability of crucial resources will be intensified through enhancing military capabilities, with a particular focus on strengthening defense cooperation with groups of countries and individual partners. This collaborative approach enhances the prospects of receiving assistance during crises and elevates the threshold for potential armed operations against Finland. Legal refinements

for cooperation will be integrated into revisions of the law concerning the provision and receipt of international assistance. It is crucial to emphasize that participation in defense cooperation institutions or agreements does not supplant collective defense solutions, nor does it entail security guarantees or obligations. Therefore, the defense of Finland with domestic resources remains indispensable (Lehto, 2022).

In a recent address, Antti Häkkinen, the current Finnish Minister of Defense, conveyed his perspective on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, primarily directed at Finnish soldiers engaged in peacekeeping missions. Häkkinen's speech emphasized the seriousness of the situation in Ukraine and suggested that a resolution to the conflict might not be imminent. Additionally, Häkkinen delved into the geopolitical ramifications of the conflict, linking the insecurity and uncertainty prevalent in Europe and globally to Russian power dynamics. He underscored the troubling precedent set by a larger nation's use of military force to influence the decisions of a smaller neighboring country for its own gain. According to Häkkinen, this serves as a stark reminder of the potential repercussions of power disparities in international relations (YLE NEWS, 2023).

As a key figure responsible for shaping Finland's security and defense actions amidst the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Häkkinen plays a pivotal role in determining the direction of the national security defense policy outlined above. This underscores the significant influence individual actors wield in shaping Finland's national defense policy, aligning with the overarching goal of the Finnish state to uphold national security within the anarchic international structure. The perspectives, viewpoints, and insights articulated by the Finnish defense minister undoubtedly reflect Finland's stance and endeavors in navigating the complexities of the Russia-Ukraine war (Mas'ud, 1990).

Conclusion

Finland upheld a policy of neutrality for 74 years, effectively maintaining relations with both Western countries and Russia despite their differing ideologies. However, in 2022, the

international community was rattled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, showcasing Putin's assertiveness in pursuing Russian interests. This invasion blatantly violated numerous international treaties and pacts, revealing Russia's readiness to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations to advance its own agenda. As a neighboring country, Finland felt threatened by the upheaval, recognizing the broad-reaching impact of war on regional security.

In response to this urgent situation, Finland made the decision to transition from a neutrality policy to an alliance policy. A key driving factor behind this shift was the changing attitudes of the Finnish populace following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, coupled with widespread agreement among policymakers that existing security measures were insufficient. Recognizing the escalating threat posed by Russia, Finnish politicians concluded that collective deterrence, provided by NATO, was the most effective means of bolstering national defense.

Joining NATO was deemed essential for enhancing Finland's defense and security. Membership in NATO would provide Finland with a security guarantee outlined in Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Moreover, aligning with NATO, which boasts 3.3 million soldiers and advanced defensive technologies, would enable Finland to counter potential Russian aggression and maintain a balance of power with a global superpower.

From a neorealism perspective, utilizing Kenneth Waltz's framework of analysis, Finland's alliance actions align with the state's primary interest in national security. The anarchic international structure generates structural pressure, leading to intersecting interests and conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war. Finland's decision to abandon neutrality and ally with NATO is a strategic move aimed at strengthening its power and achieving national security within this anarchic environment. By distributing power through military strength and defense capabilities, Finland aims to safeguard its interests amidst international uncertainties.

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