

Finland wants to join NATO

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Finland's President confirmed that his country will apply for membership in the Intergovernmental organization (NATO) military alliance.



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Significance of Finland joining NATO

- **Finland was declared independent in 1917** after more than a century of rule by Moscow.
- Its army **twice fought off Soviet forces** during the **second world war** before ceding about 10 percent of its territory.
- If Finland joins NATO, it will be **one of the quickest enlargements** for the alliance.
- Russia and Finland share a **1,300-km border**.
 - If Finland joins, it would **double the length of the alliance's border with Russia**.
- **Russia's second-biggest city, St. Petersburg**, lies some 170 km from the border with Finland.
- Finland and Sweden joining the NATO will mark an **overhaul and redrawing of Europe's security map in the East**.

Conditions put forward by Finland, Sweden

- **Finland and Sweden** have asked for **some guarantees** that **NATO member nations** would **defend them during this period** until they become full members.
- **Sweden and Finland** have already **received assurances from the US, Germany, and Britain** of support should they come under attack.

The current relationship between Finland and NATO

- Finland and Sweden are **NATO's closest partners**.
- They contribute to the **alliance's operations and air policing**.
- After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they **formally boosted information exchanges** with NATO and sat in on every meeting on war issues.
- Finland says **it's already hit NATO's defence spending guideline of 2 percent** of gross domestic product.
- Sweden too is **ramping up its military budget** and expects to reach the target by 2028.

Russia's warning to Finland

- Russian President told his Finnish counterpart that **ditching neutrality and joining NATO** would be a mistake that could **damage relations between the two countries**.
- Russia has, in parts, blamed NATO's Eastward expansion for the war with Ukraine.
- Russia has promised a **"military, technical" response if they join the alliance**.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

- It is an **intergovernmental military alliance** between 27 European countries, 2 North American countries, and 1 Eurasian country.
- It was founded in **1949** by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to **provide collective security against the Soviet Union**.
- **Headquarters**: Brussels, Belgium.
- NATO constitutes a **system of collective security**, whereby its independent member states agree to **mutual defense** in response to an attack by any external party.
- NATO is traditionally focused on **Russia** and the **European neighborhood**.
 - It recognizes the need to **deter revisionist and militarily advanced Russia**, and the threat posed by rogue nations such as North Korea.
- The Soviet Union formed its own defence and political alliance with Eastern European nations as a counterbalance to NATO-**The Warsaw Pact**.
 - The Warsaw Pact was signed in 1955.
 - This alliance was disbanded after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991.