



Image 1. Finnish Ambassador to NATO Klaus Korhonen, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Swedish Ambassador to NATO Axel Wernhoff.

REASONS WHY SWEDEN AND FINLAND WANT TO JOIN NATO

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Sweden and Finland have been two countries that have always been in a neutral position on defense issues. However, after the war in Ukraine, these two countries have felt threatened by their neighbor Russia. In this article I will explain the reasons why Finland and Sweden have decided to join NATO and why they have been neutral on defense issues all this time.

Sweden is a country whose foreign policy has been based on a marked neutrality since the 19th century. This positioning began with King Charles IV and later continued with subsequent Swedish rulers. However, this strong Swedish neutrality has not always been the case, it must be remembered that Sweden helped the Baltic countries to their independence and later helped in the first maneuvers of the Atlantic Alliance. However, it was this year that Sweden finally decided to stop playing that characteristic neutral role and ask NATO to join the organization.

The reasons for their request are clear, this country is a neighbor of Russia and they fear a possible violation of their border by Russian troops. Thanks to its integration into the organization, it can achieve great military protection since it can apply Article 5 in the event of an attack, which

establishes that an attack on a NATO member represents an attack on all the nations of the organization.

On the other hand, Finland has remained neutral for 80 years. This is due to the reprisals of World War II, in which he had to pay a price for his support of Nazi Germany. In the years 1947 and 1948 the country had to sign several treaties with the Soviets in which they included territorial concessions (it lost 12% of its territory), compensation and a series of political commitments.

As for the reasons for its accession, it shared the same concern as Sweden. This country has Russia as a border, and a historical past. Finland belonged to Russian territory between 1809 and 1917 and with the Soviet Revolution the Finns claimed their independence, achieving it with much effort. Vladimir Putin's strategy of recovering former territories of the former Soviet Union and the tsarist empire has led the Finnish government to consider joining NATO.



Image 2. Finnish soldiers conducting military exercises.

Other reasons that justify their adherence is public opinion. Finnish citizens are in favor of joining NATO, following the Russian invasion on February 24, polls in March showed that 61% of Finns supported joining.

On the other hand, economic relations with Russia have ceased to be beneficial for Helsinki and seeking common interests that would benefit both countries is now nonsense. In the same way, as the Finnish president Sauli Niinistö underlined in an interview, for the Finns the international image matters, so belonging to NATO can generate a positive impact abroad.

In conclusion, this integration can generate many advantages for both countries.

In the first place, both countries will participate in the decision-making and consensus of the Alliance, influencing the issues that are considered. On the other hand, the fifth chapter of the NATO treaty, which indicates that all the countries would defend a member state in the event of suffering an attack, brings peace of mind to the population. Ultimately, it would have positive repercussions for Nordic cooperation as any boost to the "Norden" (the five Nordic states) would be welcomed by politicians and citizens.

NATO is the best option in a situation of threat such as the one these two countries are experiencing. That is why their accession is essential for these two countries to enjoy peace of mind and military protection.

Paraphrasing Julius Caesar "Si vis pacem, para bellum" (if you want peace, prepare for war). We trust that the deterrence represented by a broad and united NATO will be enough to stop the Russian danger. Freedom must be conquered!!!

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