

Neutral no more: Finland joins NATO.

Ben Johnson

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Finnish and NATO flags fly during Finland's acceptance ceremony.

Ben Johnson -An approval from the Turkish Parliament, with an official exchange of documents at NATO headquarters, brought about a historic change in Finland's geopolitical code last week. Now the **newest member of NATO**, Finland has significantly increased the alliance's boundary with Russia by 830 miles while reinforcing their own security. While Finland's addition has clear physical and military benefits, it also acts as a morale boost to the alliance as it faces the growing strain of continued funding to Ukraine.

The concept of **geopolitical codes** refers to the way a country positions itself within the international community. Based on a series of questions, such as current or future allies and enemies, these codes assist a country in determining the best stance to take on issues. Finland joining NATO is an example of a country calculating that the benefit of continued neutrality no longer outweighs the risk of aggression from its neighbor. Russia's attack on Ukraine signaled to Finland a willingness to use military means to expand its control of the region. This decision changed the dynamic between itself, Russia, and the rest of the world. Thus, Finland had significant justification for joining the military alliance. How a country's government justifies and presents a proposed change in its geopolitical code internationally and domestically is a crucial part of the decision-making process. If Finland had moved to join NATO before Russia's attack, there would have likely been substantial pushback within the country and members of the alliance. However, Finland saw much more support

abroad and from their populace due to the escalating situation.

The lengthy boundary between Finland and Russia, 830 miles, is Finland's primary concern and reason for joining the alliance. **Boundaries** are the dividing lines between territories that delineate power and control and are made visible through various means. Since Russia has shown a willingness to ignore boundaries and claim territory outside its own, Finland has joined NATO to provide added security to that boundary.

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