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**Finland's security and defense policy changes  
from the end of the cold war to present**

PhD Thesis

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Since the end of World War II Finland, as small states consciously trying to adapt to changes in the external environment, fully maintaining the security and freedom of movement. During the Cold War period of the country's political objective was to ensure the neutrality and its international position. It used to strengthen its international position, where it could gain experience and actively influence the work of the institutions by its representatives. Neutrality and independent military defense are starting point of such policy. This policy has led to the EU membership of Finland in 1995.

During the Cold War period Finland had proactive policy, to be able to achieve its objectives. The country's leadership hoped that Finland's international relations and its neutral behavior can compensate for the consequences of the agreement signed with Soviet Union. Finland's sought to demonstrate consistent behavior in its foreign policy despite the fact that the international legal guarantees were not available. The country has not alleged that remained neutral in legal terms as western neighbor Sweden, however, it can be stated that Finland conduct a particular policy. The Soviet leadership at times reminded Finland of its obligations under the agreement, but it tried to keep equal distance from the two main actors of the Cold War. Of course, these efforts were not successful in all cases while during the Cold War period neutrality was the basis of the Finnish security and defense policy, the country responded with slow continuous changes to political events that took place in the 1990s. The effect of changes was in East-Central Europe and Eastern Europe. Finland has tried to make void the agreement with the Soviet Union and put on a new basis. The country's foreign policy got to a real crossroads, when it had to select a new strategic direction based on western values and the geopolitical situation. The milestone of the new direction was the issue of EU membership. In the early 1990s the Finnish society was divided on the question of the membership. Opponents argued that the country loses foreign policy maneuvering room, while supporters of the view professed that accession will create new opportunities.

The changes of the Finnish foreign and security policy in the last decade of the XX. century caused a decisive impact on the current security situation in Finland. The challenges at the beginning of the 2000s appear to bring changes in the security and defense policy of the country too.

## The formulation of the scientific problem

The relationship with Russia has decisive importance from the point of view of Finland's EU integration and of the full use of possibility of cooperation with NATO. The relationship with

the eastern neighbor significantly affected the current latitude of the Finnish security and defense policy. One could not forget that the small states like Finland is a power center join to a bilateral relationship that will help to achieve long -term political and economic goals. The relationship is between an independent Finland and Russia is more than a century back. This study does not aim to introduce all aspects of this relationship, just lift them out of it, which they determine the present Finland's security and defense policy, and since 1990 had a decisive influence on it.

Finland responded to political events that took place in the 1990s successfully and joined the European Union. In the first decade of the XXI century it became a highly successful European Union member state. It was able to flexibly respond to the new challenges and successfully validated the principles in the foreign policy that were laid down in the changed security and defense strategy.

## Hypotheses

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- 1 The basic hypothesis of my research topic is that current thesis of the Finland's security and defense policy the 1990s due to new challenges. The political, economic and social changes taking place in the last decade of the XX century transformed the world and Europe in it. The changes have created a strong, new opportunities for some countries, which is clearly positive, but there were negative effects for others. As a result of events taking place in Europe, new small states were created, new political, economic and cultural ties were established, new born independent areas related to their historical region. All of these changes have appeared in Finland's security and defense policy. The changes appear to reflect the country's relationship with strategic partners.
- 2 After the conclusion of the Cold War Finland transformed the quality of its relationship to the eastern neighbor, Russia. The result of the changes occurring in their relationship is that Finland participate as an equal partner in the shaping their bilateral relations. Finland continues to be viewed as a strategic partner from the point of view of the eastern neighbor, the continental Russia. Changes in the past decade occurred in their relationship have created many new opportunities for both countries economically and politically as well. These changes gave the possibility of a fundamental change in the Finnish security and defense policy. I think, this

relationship system as the effect of development must be examined from the Finland's point of view.

- 3 The concept of new foreign and security policy of Finland has shifted towards global cooperation. Thanks to this concept, Finland changed its relationship with the European Union and NATO as well. In addition to the new concept of the foreign and security policy - due to Finland 's geostrategic position – the new relationship is with the Nordic countries as well as the independent Baltic states are very important too. While the development of global cooperation on many issues eclipsed Finland advocacy capacity cooperation among the countries of the northern region, the definition of a common defense policy principles , the possibility of a new unity of action in many areas and strengthened its role in the region
- 4 The country presented the principles set out by the security and defense policy strategy that neutrality policy pursued by Finland radically changed. Redefining the concept of neutrality define the contribution of the country to the European Common Security and Defense Policy its role in the establishing of common European defense and its efforts serve as defining examples for the small European countries
- 5 Following the conclusion of the Cold War, Finland's international relations have changed radically. The security and defense policy concept published in the 1990s is not interrupted by the Finnish foreign and security policy traditions, but it builds up the country's international role on the ongoing adaptation. The result of continuous adaptation to the new geopolitical changes the security and defense policy document, in which one of the strategic issues is the increasing cooperation between Finland and NATO on the Finland potential NATO membership. The cooperation with NATO created new opportunities for Finland. Although the number of opponents of NATO membership is extremely high the development of the Finnish Defense Force and of the country's crisis management capacity is very important. In light of the above, I set up the hypothesis that improves its relationships in a pragmatic way and approach to NATO be observed in Finnish security and defense policy, which process could lead to NATO membership in the long run.

## Summary of the results of research work

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The aim of my research was that I introduce changes of Finland's security and defense policy in the end of the XX. century by processing of the scholarly literature.

To achieve the research goals I proved the Finnish security and defense policy changes due to new challenges in the 1990s, which determined the history of the country in the past two decades, development of the international engagement, the evolution of the security situation.

It is proved that the new type of foreign and security policy has been able to flexibly respond to challenges, and successfully validated the principles that were laid down in the changed security and defense strategy.

The first chapter summarized the conclusions that during the Cold War period Finland's policy of neutrality was different from other neutral countries, it was controlled by the adjacent high power and national interests. However, this pragmatic policy created the possibility to establish the country's economic relations with states from the European Community. The new security situation after the end of the Cold War and the declared new policy of neutrality contributed jointly to joining the European Union successfully.

The second chapter summarized the conclusions that the Finnish security and defense policy changes are reflected by the country's policy which is slow, pragmatic, logical and coherent. The country's "military non-aligned" status refers to changes in the geopolitical situation of the country, but this status gave the opportunity for a flexible interpretation of the country's foreign and security policy and a fast "Europeanisation". The participation in peacekeeping operations provided opportunity for the development and successful reform of the Finnish Defense Force.

The third chapter summarized the conclusions that Finland and NATO relations are based on a long -term national consensus. Finland has successfully take advantage of NATO's "open door" policy, under which the cooperation is continuing to enforce national interests. The participation in the NATO-led operations will contribute to successful reform of the Finnish Defense Force, however, the country's NATO accession is of continuous social and professional debates.

The fourth chapter summarized the conclusions that Finland's relations with Russia are looking back more than two centuries however, their relationship is based on the small and big power context. Finland has developed a pragmatic, friendly policy towards Russia. However, the handling of the rising ability enforcing its interests of the neighboring big power is an ongoing challenge for Finland which needs the EU help to cope with this problem.

The fifth chapter as I found summarized the conclusions that after the Cold War Finland has successfully transformed its relations with the Scandinavian countries. Finland as EU Member

States had a pragmatic policy on the basis of which the EU accepted a developing policy on the Northern region. The Nordic region's existing and newly formed partnerships are Finland's foreign policy cornerstone. The bilateral relations between Finland and the Scandinavian states due to the deepening of regional cooperation and the country's EU membership became multilateral. The geo-strategic changes taking place in the Northern region and the climate change in the Arctic region represent continuous serious challenges. Finland established partnership with all actors in the sub-region, but its sub-regional co-operation and relations should be designed in terms of continuous dialogue with Russia. Finland forms successful relations with the Baltic States which focus on the environmental and economic relations.

## New results of research work

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On the basis of my research and of the scientific systematization and analysis I consider as the scientific results the following:

- In the first hypothesis of my dissertation I proved the current theses of the Finland's security and defense policy are due to the new types of security challenges in the 1990s.
- I proved that Finland's policy of neutrality changed on the effect of new security and defense strategy principles radically. Redefining the concept of neutrality allows an active contribution of Finland to the European Common Security and Defense Policy.
- I proved that the elements of global cooperation became dominant in Finland's current security and defense policy's concept, which at the same time shows significant shifts towards cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic organizations.
- I proved my research hypothesis, according to which Finland's security and defense policy gradually approaches to the strategic concept of NATO, which could lead to a long-term process of NATO membership for Finland.
- I proved that after the Cold War Finland adjusted its relationship – during the period of the Cold War was exceptional - to eastern neighbor, Russia. Furthermore, it was proved that Finland as a small state and Russia as a great power have an equal bilateral relations, while Finland look at its eastern neighbor as a strategic partner.

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