



Finland: Capable but Informed by Frontline Realism

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Political will

Finland is a staunch political, financial and military backer of Ukraine. Despite the lack of previous military cooperation with Ukraine, Finland's immediate response to the full-scale war was to send military aid to the country fighting a defensive war against a shared expansionist neighbor, Russia.

[Between 2022 and 2025 Finland has allocated around 3,9 billion euros](#) in support to Ukraine [and is ready to continue support as long as needed](#). Recently, under President **Alexander Stubb**, Finland has assumed a [prominent role](#) in transatlantic diplomatic efforts, focused on sustaining support for Ukraine, [planning for a potential security assurance framework](#) under the Coalition of the Willing and engaging with [President Trump's ceasefire endeavors](#). While Finland is not a leading nation within the CoW, it has actively supported planning at [political](#), [expert](#) and [military](#) levels. All parliamentary parties [support](#) Finland's participation in security arrangements for Ukraine, but no decisions have yet been made. A strong majority of Finns support military aid to Ukraine and are ready to send soldiers to non-combatant duties as part of a European reassurance force.

Finland's political willingness to contribute to the potential Multinational Force Ukraine (MFU) is supported by several factors. First, Finland perceives Russia as a long-term threat. A broad and credible international effort to deter Russia from future escalations is a vital

interest for Finland. Second, there is a strong sense of solidarity with the Ukrainians, partly due to Finland's own historical experiences of defending against the expansionist Soviet Union in 1939-1944. Third, the CoW is a means to bind the Euro-Atlantic community to address Eastern security challenges. Additionally, Finland feels some pressure to live up to the high expectations set by President Stubb's prominent role in European diplomacy through contributions and actions.

However, there are also constraints. Participation in a poorly planned or insufficiently supported military operation carries horizontal escalation risks and would hence constitute a security threat to Finland, which is a frontline state responsible for approximately half of the extended NATO-Russia border. Russia has already signaled its intention to [increase military presence in Northern Europe](#) in the future. The scope of Finland's contribution is therefore necessarily affected by the security situation on its own border. Furthermore, while aid to Ukraine has been largely insulated from financial pressures due to strong political support, there are budgetary limitations due to Finland's weak public finances and the country's defense spending commitments. Finally, while Finland has a long history of participating in peace-keeping operations, it is not so familiar with coercive operations – and this time the operation context would involve Russia as an adversary.

In sum, Finland is politically committed to contributing to the Coalition of the Willing, but the exact nature of the

commitment remains open. The key political conditions for Finland's participation will be US involvement and a credible pause in the active warfighting in Ukraine. Regardless, Helsinki believes that it is important to conduct European planning in advance. The [law](#) governing Finland's participation in international military activities requires the government to consult Parliament prior to decision-making. After consultations with the Parliament, the President will make a decision based on a proposal by the government.

Military dimension

Finland is militarily well equipped to contribute to a multinational force deterring Russia. Yet, the strategic demands of its position as a frontline state, together with the planned scope of the MFU, restrict Finland's capacity to engage. In the land domain, Finland has sufficient reserves to provide a meaningful contribution, but its willingness to deploy them is constrained by the level of risk involved. Moreover, moving troops from one border state to another has a limited effect on deterrence. In the sea domain, Finland has capabilities, but they are mostly scaled and designed for operations in the Baltic sea.

Ongoing capability development processes are both a constraining and enabling factor. The navy is [in the process](#) of replacing seven vessels with four modern corvettes. In the air domain Finland is currently replacing old F/A-18 Hornet fighters with [a fleet of 64 F-35A Lightning II](#) multirole fighters, temporarily limiting available air capability. Also the ongoing integration process to NATO occupies Finnish resources.

To enable national planning, the CoW should develop a better internal understanding of the potential

purpose and mandate of the MFU, including rules-of-engagement and escalation management principles, as well as some clarity on the commitment of the US and major European powers. As a frontline state, it is crucial for Finland to understand how the operation would impact NATO's overall deterrence and collective defence, including the regional defence plans. Finland's participation is not only affected by a US contribution but also by its general commitment to European security.

Another central question is whether the MFU would resemble an international peace operation or rather a battlegroup that might have to fight alongside Ukraine against Russia. A key factor distinguishing the two scenarios is the solidity of a ceasefire or peace agreement established prior to deployment. Ukraine's political development also factors in when assessing the risks of participation. The primary responsibility for Ukrainian security will, in all scenarios, remain with the Ukrainian armed forces. Providing materiel support for the Ukrainian army will in itself require immense contributions from the Coalition.

In conclusion, Helsinki shares the key goals of the Coalition's work, which are to deter Russia and to anchor the US to European security. Finland is committed to participating in some form, but its precise contribution will depend on broader European security dynamics and operational plans. In any case, it is likely that Finland's participation will be limited in scale due to the strategic realities linked to its role as a frontline state.

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In the *Multinational Force Ukraine* series of policy briefs leading experts from allied countries assess key factors for participation in the Multinational Force Ukraine. This includes the political willingness of allies to deploy troops—on the ground, in the air, or at sea—to establish a military presence in or around Ukraine. They also examine the conditions for such deployments to occur (before, during, or after peace negotiations), the roles these forces would be expected to perform (defensive or offensive), the red lines imposed by national governments, and the specific capabilities each country could realistically contribute.