

## **Abstract**

This diploma thesis focuses on Finland's assessment of the Russian Federation as a possible threat to its security in the context of Russian armed actions – war in Georgia, annexation of Crimea and a conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine from 2022. The aim of this thesis is to investigate Finland's shift from military non-alignment to balancing behaviour in the form of application for NATO membership after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In addition to rigorous overview of the balance of threat theory, its critiques and refinements including operationalisation of threat dimensions, the thesis includes a section devoted to the evolution of Finnish security. Special attention is paid to the history of Finno-Soviet relations during the Second World War and the Cold War, which influenced Finland's security and defence policy for decades to come, especially in regard to NATO membership, which was for a long time seen as unlikely. The analysis of Finland's security is written with an emphasis on variables of balance of threat theory and their role in Finnish security assessment of the potential threat from the Russian Federation throughout the years after war in Georgia to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Given Finland's recent accession to NATO, this thesis offers a new perspective on Finnish balancing behaviour.