

Medvedev Says NATO Expansion in Nordics Would Force Russian Response

June 05, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

KIRKENES, Norway — Any expansion of NATO to include Sweden and Finland would upset the balance of power and force Russia to respond, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said, underlining Moscow's nerves over moves to bring the Western alliance closer to its border.

Although Sweden and Finland are not actively seeking membership, both nations cooperate extensively with NATO and have openly debated the possibility of joining.

Speculation over Sweden mounted after it warned earlier this year that its defense capabilities were alarmingly limited. Finland shares a long boundary with Russia.

"New participants emerging close to our border will change the parity, and we'll have to take this into account and respond to that," Medvedev told a news conference Tuesday at a summit of Nordic and Russian leaders in Norway.

(Reuters)

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