The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Putin Warns of 'Problems' With Finland After NATO Membership

By AFP

December 17, 2023

**Vyacheslav Prokofyev/TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned of "problems" with neighboring Finland after it joined NATO earlier this year, saying Moscow will create a new military district in northwest Russia in response, in an interview published Sunday.

Finland, which shares a 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border with Russia, joined NATO in April this year in the midst of Moscow's Ukraine offensive.

"They (the West) dragged Finland into NATO. Did we have any disputes with them? All disputes, including territorial ones in the mid-20th century, have long been solved," Putin told a state TV reporter.

"There were no problems there, now there will be, because we will create the Leningrad military district and concentrate a certain amount of military units there."

The comments come as Finland again shut its border with Russia this week, accusing it of orchestrating a migrant crisis on its border.

Moscow has warned of countermeasures to Helsinki's NATO accession.

Putin also said Russia had no reason to be at war with NATO countries, after U.S. leader Joe Biden said this month that Moscow "won't stop" in Ukraine if it is successful there.

"It is rhetoric to justify a false policy on Russia," Putin said.

He said Moscow had "no interest — either in geopolitical, economic or military terms — to fight with NATO countries."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/12/17/putin-warns-of-problems-with-finland-after-nato-membership-a83454