

THE EAGLE AND THE BEAR: US-FINNISH RELATIONS FROM 1917-1946

by

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Finland's ability to maintain its independence at the end of the Second World War remains largely understudied in English-language publications. This thesis explains how and why Finland was able to maintain its independence, with a special focus on how the United States helped to ensure that Finland did not fall under the Soviet sphere of influence at the conclusion of the Second World War. Publications about this period tend to focus on one or more of the major players during the Second World War; however, this means that the efforts of smaller nations to survive during the Second World War are often overshadowed and ignored. Finland's ability to maintain its independence, and the policies that it adopted in the immediate period after the Second World War, known as "Finlandization," serve as an important reminder that nations caught between the influence of world powers are able to survive, thrive, and hold a healthy relationship with the competing sides.

The policy of "Finlandization" is not covered in this thesis in depth, however it is very important to note that this policy is unique, especially in the study of the Cold War. The policies taken by Finland in the aftermath of the Second World War demonstrate effectively how a nation that has recently broken away from another can maintain friendly relations with the world, and not get caught up in a battle of competing ideologies. What makes Finland unique is that they, unlike their Baltic neighbors, stood up to the Soviet Union and its demands for territorial concessions and "protection" proposals. By bloodying up the Soviet Union in two separate wars, the Finns were able to convince the Soviets that any attempt to militarily conquer Finland would be met with fierce resistance which, especially at the end of the Second World War, the Soviets were

not inclined to consider. The policies undertaken by Finland during “Finlandization” were what Thornwell Haynes noted would be beneficial while advocating for a US recognition of Finland- a trading avenue through a third party with Russia. While the US was too late in using trade and close economic ties (even by proxy) as a means to influence countries with ideological differences than theirs, the lesson that the US should have learned leading into the Cold War was that the power of money is vastly more effective, and efficient, than brute military force when seeking to create stability within a countries that borders communist regimes.

Currently, there has been very little English-language work that has focused on the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Finland. One of the major works that examines this theme is a published thesis by Jaroslaw Suchoples, titled *Finland and the United States, 1917-1919*; in this work, the author examines the early relationship between the United States and Finland, and attempts to compare that relationship to that of Poland, where the author is critical of the United States. This thesis compliments Suchoples work by giving a thorough examination of *The Foreign Relations Papers of the United States* and other American sources, and indirectly questions some of the major points made by the author. Travis Beal Jacobs’ *America and the Winter War: 1939-1940* is another English-language work that covers the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Finland. This book is probably one of the most detailed books regarding the US reaction to the outbreak of the Winter War, and the US public support and outcry that resulted. I build on both Jacob’s and Suchoples’ work by discussing not only the US documents, but also the period between the wars. The interwar period was very important for the US-Finnish relations, as the prompt repayment

of Finnish debt helped establish a favorable view of the Finnish people and government, not only in the US media and public, but the US government as well.

Michael Jonas provides a detailed examination of Scandinavian relations with the world powers in his 2019 book, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers in the First World War*. He dedicates an entire chapter to Finland's relationship with Russia before and during the First World War. This chapter provides an excellent background into the relationship that Finland and Imperial Russia had prior to the start of the First World War, and how the relationship slowly deteriorated, ultimately leading to Finland declaring its independence in 1917.

The only English-language book I have located that provides a holistic picture of the US diplomatic relationship with Finland is R. Michael Berry's *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception: Ideological Preferences and Wartime Realities*. While this work does cover the longer diplomatic relationship and Finnish repayment of WWI debt in the post-WWI period, it focuses mainly on the World War II period. There is an immense amount of detail in this book regarding the thoughts of policy makers during the Second World War, and Berry often demonstrates a contrast between the feelings of the American public and those of the foreign policy makers. The inter-war period is largely glossed over, as is the discussion of the Finnish struggle for international recognition in the period immediately following the Finnish Civil War (Dec. 1917-May 1918). Again, as US documents help to demonstrate, the unique diplomatic interests of Finland and the United States moved the two more closely into a diplomatic relationship from the end of WWI through World War Two, causing the perhaps surprising relationship between the two countries to be instrumental in aiding Finland to maintain its independence following

the Second World War.

It also needs to be noted that there is a noticeable difference between the decisions of US policy makers and public opinion, especially in the case of Finland, starting with the beginning of the Winter War. While there are no clear instances of US policy maker's minds being changed by public opinion polling, there are some instances where policy makers decisions aligned with the favorable public opinion. This thesis does not focus on public opinion, nor does it attempt to justify that public opinion swayed the decisions of policy makers. Any use of public opinion polling is used to show the favorable support held by members of the general public in the United States, and as this thesis shows, the public support and desires did not align exactly with the decisions made by US policy makers. Once the First World War ended, the United States felt itself in a precarious position, one where it was suddenly thrust into a position of global leadership. If one were to examine the policies taken by the US government in international dealings, we would see that there were many instances that its decisions collided with the public opinion. An example of this is the establishment of a League of Nations with the help of Woodrow Wilson, an organization that the US never joined as the American public and US Senate rejected it and instead favored policies of isolationism. While US policy makers, and the US citizens, often tended to have an isolationist focus, business and economics did not, and it was this international growth that played a key factor in the friendly, favorable relationship that was enjoyed by the United States and Finland.

## II. THE BACKGROUND OF FINLAND

As this chapter details, the people of Finland have experienced a democratic form of government prior to their actual declaration of independence. Very similar to the United States, once Finland felt that it could do a better job of governing itself than its master, it chose to declare independence and chart its own course. Unlike the American Revolution, Finland did not fight a war for independence against Russia directly, but rather Finland experienced a civil war and was divided between the “Reds” and the “Whites.” As chapter two will discuss, the civil war was short, yet bloody. There is no doubt that the establishment of a democratic means of government not only helped Finland gain its independence and recognition, but that governmental form also was very similar to that of the United States, which is one reason why the American public (and government) expressed favorability and partiality towards Finland.

To understand how Finland came to this governmental form, and managed to retain it over time, a brief overview of earlier Finnish history is necessary. When the glaciers and ice caps receded at the end of the last ice age, human settlement began in Finland, as it did with other areas of the globe where new land was exposed by the melting ice. The first ‘modern’ settlers arrived in what is now Finland from Sweden around the ninth century, and it would be another three centuries before the territory that constitutes Finland and Sweden would be united under Swedish rule.<sup>1</sup> Today, modern Finland occupies an area that is slightly smaller than the US state of Montana, sharing land borders with Norway, Sweden, and Russia, with the latter constituting a border equal

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<sup>1</sup> Swedish is a modern language, hence the use of the term ‘modern’ when describing the early settlers. Early Finns were members of their own unique linguistic group, and therefore looked down upon by the Swedes as being heathens, among other things; Uzo Marvin, *Finland History* (Abidjan: Sonit Education Academy, 2016), 1.

to that of the first two nations.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in the 1150s, Swedish missionaries and other holy men moved eastward to convert the Finns to Christianity. What soon followed was a political and religious union between the Swedes and Finnish tribes, one that would last for nearly seven centuries. Sweden wasn't the only country that had its sights set on the Finnish people, with the Russians also wanting to expand (both their religion and empire) into Finland, and what followed was a series of crusades sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church and carried out by the Swedes into Russian territory to combat the influence of Eastern Orthodoxy. It is also important to note that while Roman Catholicism was spread to most of the native Finnish tribes, Eastern Orthodoxy was successfully spread to the Karelian people.<sup>3</sup> The Karelian territory would become a point of contention during the Finnish split from the Russia, all the way up to the Second World War, and will be explained further in detail during the second chapter, which will look more closely at the relationship between Finland and Russia.

Finland's union with Sweden came to an end in 1809, a year after Tsar Alexander I invaded Finland in 1808, with the Treaty of Hamina on September 17, 1809.<sup>4</sup> While the Russians initially planned to annex Finland as a providence, due to the high level of skepticism, and rather violent history between the Finns and Russians, Tsar Alexander I offered more favorable terms instead. Finland would join Russia as the Grand Duchy of Finland, an autonomous region that maintained not only its existing laws and government system, but in 1812 also received the lands that Russia had annexed in the seventeenth century. Finnish men also received an exemption from conscription into the Russian

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<sup>2</sup> CIA Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fi.html>, online: accessed June 30, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 27.

army, and Finland was able to benefit internally due to a lack of warfare on its soil.<sup>5</sup> Finnish exemption from the Russian military meant that the Finnish people would not absorb themselves into the Russian culture, but maintain their own culture and develop their own national identity. An internal benefit gained by Finland was the rise of Finnish language nationalism. Russia initially supported this rise, as it saw the shift away from Swedish speaking as a good sign that there would be no risk of the Finns wanting to rejoin Sweden. The seeds of Finnish independence were beginning to be sewn, with the phrase, “We are no longer Swedes; we cannot become Russians; we must be Finns,” coined and spread in popularity during the early nineteenth<sup>h</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that the Finns had zero desire to become Russians, as they had almost no cultural or linguistic relationship with them, and that is what is meant by “we cannot become Russians,” which was an attitude that the Finns maintained ever since.

The nationalist movement gained momentum after the Crimean War (1853-1856), in which Russia made domestic reforms to keep the populous happy following their defeat in the war, and in 1858 Finnish was established as the official language of government matters within the Grand Duchy. In 1863, as a reward for not revolting against Russia like the Poles did, the Russian monarchy allowed Finland to reform its Diet (Congress; for the first time since 1809), and recognized Finnish as a language equal to that of Swedish in government matters.<sup>7</sup> The Diet then created a separate monetary system and standing army, with the latter serving as a point of contention among the

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<sup>5</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 28-29.

<sup>6</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 30.; Another version of the phrase goes, “Swedes we are not, Russians we do not want to become, let us therefore be Finns.”

<sup>7</sup> The Polish revolt mentioned refers to the 1863 Polish Uprising.

Finns and Russians in the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> In an empire that was ruled autocratically, Finland was able to establish a democratic bubble, one where the people of Finland had a say in matters within their borders, and eventually universal suffrage, one that was wholly embraced by its population. Ultimately, the autonomy of the Finnish language allowed for the rise of an educated, articulate class of nationalists that would eventually play a large role in establishing an independent Finland.

Nationalism and a budding democratic form of government was not the only product of Finnish autonomy under Russian rule; capitalism allowed the Finns to begin trading with Europe, without having to first go through Russia. Throughout the 1800's, Finland quickly modernized its economy, and used its most abundant resource, lumber, as its cash crop. Finland benefitted from a rapidly expanding Europe that had a dwindling supply of lumber, and an appetite for finished lumber products, such as railroad ties, supports, and other construction materials. Additionally, Finland had the merchant marine resources that enabled merchants to trade with regions as far away as the Mediterranean, which helped the citizens of coastal towns improve their quality of life.<sup>9</sup> The Finnish government financed the internal developments, like railroads and waterways that helped connect the interior of the country to the coast, enabling the products to get to market quicker. The Bank of Finland and the country's economic system also were revamped to encourage industrialization and modern improvements within the country. The lumber industry spawned other related industries, such as wood pulp, paper, textiles, and cement, and by 1910 Germany was Finland's biggest trading

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<sup>8</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 31-32.

<sup>9</sup> David Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53.

partner, with Russia and Britain rounding out the top three.<sup>10</sup> With the expansion of industry also came a population boom, with the total population rising from 865,000 in 1810 to 2,950,000 a century later. Finnish industry was unable to absorb all of the new workers into its economy, and as a result between 1870 and 1920, a total of 380,000 Finns emigrated, with 90% making their way to the United States.<sup>11</sup> Leading up to World War I, the trade between Finland and Russia measured more than 100 million Finnish Marks for both imports and exports. Finnish merchants and businesses were able to access the Imperial Russian market, in addition to the Finnish market, which allowed them to make heavy profits. This profitability was the subject of many Russian businesses and their owners, who complained that it was unfair that the Russian colony was able to exploit the Empire as it did.<sup>12</sup> The economic growth and strength resulting from a strong economy also caught the notice of Russia, who soon sought to attempt to rein Finland in.

Russia, led by its own nationalist leaders, had four reasons for bringing Finland under tighter Russian control through what was known as “Russification.”<sup>13</sup> The reasons were: suspicions that a continuation of Finnish nationalism would lead to Finnish separatism; commercial competition between Finland and Russia was increasing beginning in the 1880s; Russia feared Germany would use its influence in Sweden to

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<sup>10</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 34-35; While a majority of the Finns that immigrated to the United States stayed, there were some that immigrated again, this time to Soviet Karelia, and Dr. Alexey Golubev’s *The Search for a Socialist El Dorado* is a good resource for those interested in learning about that particular set of immigrants.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Jonas, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers in the First World War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Russification was not unique to Finland. During the time that Imperial Russia sought to reign Finland in, it was conducting the same policy in all areas of its empire that the Imperial Court believed was too autonomous.

persuade Finland to allow it to use the latter as a base for an invasion of Russia (These fears did come to fruition, albeit not until the Second World War.); and there was a growing demand among military leadership and other nationalists within Russia to conscript Finnish men into their ranks, especially since they were enjoying protection under the Russian empire.<sup>14</sup> The Russification campaign began in 1899, with the February Manifesto, in which Russia decreed its right to rule over Finland without consulting the Finnish Diet, essentially relegating Finland to the status of a province, similar to the rest of the Russian Empire. The following month, nearly a half million Finns signed a petition, known as the Great Address, expressing their grievances with the Tsar's latest decree. This petition by the Finnish people demonstrates that they had embraced their democratic freedoms and were willing to stand up for their beliefs. Their petition was ignored and followed up with a second decree from the Tsar that dictated that Russian would be the main language of government administration in Finland.<sup>15</sup>

In July 1901, the Tsar Nicholas II signed off on a decree that reinstated conscription of Finnish men into the Russian army, effectively ending the autonomy of the Finnish Army (its primary mission was what today would be considered a National Guard force), and incorporating it into the Russian army and thus subjected to being sent abroad in support of conflicts around the empire and Europe.<sup>16</sup> The idea of being conscripted into the Russian military did not sit well with the Finns, and after the Tsar ignored another petition from the Finnish people, this time totaling one million signatures, the protest efforts were ramped up. Finnish men simply refused to comply

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<sup>14</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 36.

<sup>15</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 36-38.

<sup>16</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 36-37.

with their draft notice, rising to nearly four-fifths of those drafted in 1904. Interestingly, the number of Finns who would have had to serve in the Russian military per the Tsar's decree was minute, compared to what it could have been. A total of 500 out of 25,000 would have to serve in 1902, and 190 Finns in each of the following two years.<sup>17</sup> The Russians relented in 1904, and instead of forcing the Finns to fight for them, they instead subjected the citizens of Finland to an extra tax, levied by the imperial government that surmounted to \$10,000,000 marks annually.<sup>18</sup> This extra tax, however, was not introduced until after the Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905 with an embarrassing Russian defeat, which led to the 1905 Russian revolution that forced the imperial government to make concessions to the people in order to maintain power.<sup>19</sup> One can see similarities between the Finnish protests to the Russian demands and the British demands on the American colonies prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. The Finns, having tasted autonomy and democracy, were willing to resist their masters to preserve the freedoms that they had gained.

The October Revolution broke out in October 1905 due to the internal strains caused by the Russo-Japanese War, and unlike other areas of Russia, the revolt that took place in Finland lacked the bloodshed seen elsewhere. Finnish workers, starting with the railway men, went on strike on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, and two days later the strike had spread through most of the country. The main motivation for the strike was the repeal of the Tsarist decrees passed in the previous years that the Finns saw as a threat to their autonomy. To keep the peace while Russian troops remained outside of urban areas, local

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<sup>17</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 141-142; Marvin, *Finland History*, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 38.

guard units arose, and those that had been in league with the Russians either resigned or fled their posts and offices.<sup>20</sup> The Finns were quick to get their demands recognized from the Tsar, and on November 4, he rescinded all of the previous manifestos, and recognized the resignation of the old government, giving the green light for Leo Mechelin to organize a new Senate.<sup>21</sup> Finland once again was able to establish a democratic government, one that would become among the most progressive in the world.<sup>22</sup>

Of the reforms that Finland benefitted from in the wake of the October Revolution was the re-establishment of a unicameral parliament (Eduskunta) to replace the Diet, which the Finns were satisfied with. In addition to gaining local representation again, the Tsar allowed both male and female voters to choose the Eduskunta, increasing the number of eligible voters from 125,000 to 1,250,000. With the granting of universal suffrage, Finland became the second country in the world to allow women to vote, following New Zealand.<sup>23</sup> Of the 1,250,000 eligible voters in 1907, seventy percent or 899,347 men and women turned out to elect the new Eduskunta.<sup>24</sup> One of the parties that benefitted substantially in the wake of the October Revolution was the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the orthodox Marxist party in Finland. By 1906, the party reached a peak membership of nearly 100,000, with most of the gains occurring in rural areas, and by 1913 there were 1,584 workers associations scattered throughout the country. These associations were meeting grounds where the latest literature and ideas were disseminated among the members, and they often hosted social events for the local

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<sup>20</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 142-143.

<sup>21</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 143-144.

<sup>22</sup> Finland would become rather inclusive in terms of who could vote in elections, becoming the second country in the world to grant women the right to vote, as the next paragraph and footnote explain. Seems redundant (and in wrong font).

<sup>23</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 39.

<sup>24</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 150.

members. The Finns that immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s brought the associations with them, and these ended up being important recruiting grounds for the Soviets when they looked to repopulate Soviet Karelia in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>25</sup> While the elements of the SDP that leaned towards the Soviets were from the fringes of the party, mainstream leaders such as Otto Ville Kuusinen, Yrjö Sirola, and Kullervo Manner chose to steer the party towards the Marxist line of Socialism, but worried about the increasingly militant wing of the party, who became known as the 'Red Guards.'<sup>26</sup> Despite the internal concerns, the Finnish electorate overwhelmingly supported the SDP in the first Eduskunta elections, taking 80 of the 200 seats up for grabs.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for Finland, the autonomy that it enjoyed again following the October Revolution would be short-lived, as the Tsar soon sought to tighten up control of the Empire.

In 1910, the Russian Empire felt it had a strong enough power base that it could continue its Russification program, and by 1914 the Finnish constitution was weakened to the point that Finland, once again, was relegated to the status of province within the Russian empire. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 did not hurt Finland in the ways that past wars had, when it was the site of conflict, but its economy took a drastic hit, especially the lumber industry. Food shortages that plagued other areas of Russia were also felt in Finland, and to add to the frustrations of the Finns, nearly 100,000 Russian army and navy personnel were stationed in Finland to thwart a German invasion of Russia via Finland. The extreme disdain for Russia, and especially seeing Russians in

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<sup>25</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 144-145; Alexey Golubev and Irina Takala, *The Search for a Soviet El Dorado* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 27.

<sup>26</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 145-147.; Kuusinen, Sirola, and Manner would all become leading members of the Finnish Communist Party in exile.

<sup>27</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 150.

their territory, led the Finnish press to claim that it was a part of a Russian plan to complete Russification of Finland, which led to many Finns to secretly root for a German victory. It also drove young Finns of fighting age to receive military training in Germany, and these men were organized into a jaeger (light infantry) battalion and sent to the eastern front to face the Russians.<sup>28</sup> As later chapters will detail, the men that joined the jaegers played a key role not only in the Finnish Civil War, but also served in key leadership roles during the Winter War and Second World War. Finland declared its independence in 1917, which led to a brief, bloody civil war that ultimately led to the establishment of a Finnish Republic. As US records show, this republic would soon become a darling in the eyes of the United States public, and through the aid and persistence of a handful of US government officials, it would flourish as a beacon of democracy in a sea of communism.

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<sup>28</sup> Marvin, *Finland History*, 39-40.

### III. MONEY TALKS, COMMUNISM WALKS: THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES AND FINLAND, 1919-1939

The United States near the end of World War I had an excellent opportunity to support the newly developing democratic republic in Finland with a timely infusion of aid, primarily in the form of food. This infusion of aid would have aided US foreign policy in Europe, but rather than immediately jumping into the breach to provide this support, the US procrastinated and refused to take decisive action, to the point that the Finns had to turn to America's enemy, Germany, for help. Nevertheless, after the conclusion of the war, the US government did supply aid to Finland, and Finland demonstrated its determination to remain on good terms with the US by repaying all of its war debts—even during the Depression. However, by 1939 the US was again hesitating to support Finland's needs, despite a close relationship between the two nations, this time regarding the Finnish requests for arms to defend itself against Russia. Once again, the United States failed to offer explicit support that would have given Finland a better chance to defend itself, and shortly after the conclusion of the Winter War the Finns once again turned to Germany, then under the control of the Nazis. The United States did not have an effective foreign policy during times of crisis regarding Finland, a nation with ideals very compatible to those of the US and in a position in northeastern Europe to prevent expansion of Soviet power. The United States lacked an effective foreign policy as it was coming out of the shadows of isolationism and into the spotlight as a world power. The failure by the United States to support Finland was due to the United States being unsure of its policy and future diplomatic relationship with the Soviet Union. The US-Soviet relationship was heavily influenced by public opinion, with the American

public being skeptical of the communists. Finally, the United States lacked the diplomatic expertise to effectively handle the ensuing crises.

Despite the United States being an ocean away from the center of the communist uprisings, communist ideologies still reached the US shores and created a general sense of fear within the government. Fears of communism in the United States in the immediate post-World War I era resulted from a rise in nativism, an outbreak of labor strikes, the organization of a communist party in the United States, and the rise of Bolshevism worldwide. The United States also faced a severe recession after the end of World War I, which caused concern among the population and led to internal strife. In February 1919, workers in Seattle began a general strike, which kicked off the first “Red Scare” in the United States. A total of four million workers participated in the strike across the country, with 3,600 total strikes in 1919 and some becoming violent and resulting in fatalities.<sup>29</sup> Finland, during the same period, experienced the re-foundation of the Social Democrat Party (one of the parties that had fought alongside the Reds during the Finnish Civil War of January-May 1918) in Finnish national politics. According to Tauno Saarela, “The re-founders wanted to give priority to work in Parliament and the municipal councils and help the labor masses understand the significance and reform policy and cooperation with the bourgeois center parties. They regarded spontaneous activities of the labor masses as suspicious...”<sup>30</sup>

The “Red Scare” in the United States continued into 1920, though fears gradually

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<sup>29</sup> David R. Colburn, "Governor Alfred E. Smith and the Red Scare, 1919-20," *Political Science Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (1973): 424, doi:10.2307/2148992.

<sup>30</sup> Tauno Saarela, “To Commemorate or Not: The Finnish Labor Movement and the Memory of the Civil War in the Interwar Period”, *The Finnish Civil War 1918*, ed. Tuomas Teora, Aapo Rosel (Boston: Brill, 2014), 332.

began to subside after the Palmer Raids in January, when the Justice Department rounded up 3,000 immigrants suspected of radicalism.<sup>31</sup> In April 1920, J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the Justice Department's General Intelligence Division publicly declared that at least half of the strikes were influenced directly by communist agents.<sup>32</sup> Adding to the fears, bombs were mailed to thirty-four prominent citizens, including the Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, and John D. Rockefeller, the American oil magnate.<sup>33</sup> As a means of countering the fears of the spread of Bolshevism, Hollywood produced a large number of films about the early history of the United States, reconstruction of colonial Williamsburg began, and Secretary of State Lansing directed that the Constitution and Declaration of Independence be placed on display in addition to having his department distribute films of this unveiling to every town and city in the US. These actions led to a rise in patriotism, with the American flag being considered a sacred symbol. Legionnaires forced anyone accused of having communist views to kiss the flag.<sup>34</sup> American concerns about the spread of Bolshevism were not limited to domestic politics; American foreign policymakers also went through great lengths to curb its spread internationally.

When the Communist International (Comintern) was established in Moscow in 1919, the United States government feared that the ideology would spread around the world unless checked. The establishment of a communist regime in Hungary (Spring 1919), and Bolshevik interference in Poland and Germany in 1920-21, only enhanced the

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew Pressman, "Black and White and Red All Over?" *Journalism History* 39, no. 1 (2013): 29-30, *Humanities Source, EBSCOhost* (accessed January 27, 2018), doi:10.1080/00947679.2013.12062898.

<sup>32</sup> Stanley Coben, "A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-20," *Political Science Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (1964): 67. doi:10.2307/2146574

<sup>33</sup> Colburn, "Governor Alfred E. Smith and the Red Scare, 1919-20," 425.

<sup>34</sup> Coben, "A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-20," 70.

fears of the American government. American foreign policy makers harbored an immense amount of hostility towards the Soviets during the inter-war period, and Douglas Little credits this to “the persistence of progressive principles, the reorganization of the State Department, and the professionalization of the Foreign Service.”<sup>35</sup> American policy makers such as Herbert Hoover and Director of the Division of Eastern European Affairs’ Robert Kelley loathed bolshevism and the Soviet Union and promoted these feelings among their subordinates.<sup>36</sup> The Allies decided to allow German troops to maintain a presence (until 1919) in the Baltic region after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. This decision came as a result of fear that an immediate withdrawal of German forces in the Baltics would lead to the rapid spread of Bolshevism, due to their close proximity to the Bolshevik Russia.<sup>37</sup> Policy makers were convinced of the wisdom of Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who advised President Wilson “famine and economic disorganization” were “the parents of Bolshevism in Russia and Europe.” Lansing argued that Bolshevism could only be curbed by “food and restoration of economic life, and not by arms.”<sup>38</sup> Wilson concurred with Lansing and sought Congressional appropriation to help stave off the spread of Communism in (Eastern) Europe after the end of the First World War. Wilson used Lansing’s argument when faced with Congressional opposition to funding his proposed international aid programs

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<sup>35</sup> Douglas Little, “Antibolshevism and American Foreign Policy, 1919-1939: The Diplomacy of Self-Delusion,” *American Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1983): 377-378, Doi:10.2307/2712876.

<sup>36</sup> Little, “Antibolshevism and American Foreign Policy,” 378-379; The Soviet Union was created in 1922.

<sup>37</sup> David Fogelson, “The United States, Self-Determination and the Struggle Against Bolshevism in the Eastern Baltic Region, 1918-1920,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 26, no. 2 (1995): 108.

<sup>38</sup> Fogelson, “The United States, Self-Determination and the Struggle Against Bolshevism in the Eastern Baltic Region, 1918-1920,” 109.

and was successful in gaining \$100 million in funding.<sup>39</sup>

The autonomy of Finland, specifically in maintaining its status as a democracy, has been extremely important to the United States since the declaration of Finnish independence from Russia on December 6, 1917 and yet, US recognition was not immediate. The United States finally extended recognition in 1919 when Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim was appointed Regent of Finland and began instituting democratic institutions. The United States aided the young republic with the desperately needed economic aid, specifically foodstuffs that prevented famine from overtaking the young country. As the rise of Bolshevism was also a concern for the United States, Finland's ability to fight off an internal uprising of Russian-backed communists after Finland's declaration of independence in 1917 also caught the attention of the United States. What concerned the United States, however, was the assistance that Finland had received from Germany during her bid for independence, and the close ties that the two nations had with one another following the victory of the White (anti-Bolshevik) Finns. These concerns were alleviated following the end of World War I, and during the inter-war period, the United States and Finland maintained a healthy economic relationship, which included a number of mutually beneficial trade and loan repayment agreements. During the inter-war period, as Jacob Kamm notes, the United States transformed itself from the world's largest debtor nation, to the second largest creditor.<sup>40</sup> By the eve of the Second World War, Finland was the only European nation to continuously repay its war debt obligations

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<sup>39</sup> Fogelson, "The United States, Self-Determination and the Struggle Against Bolshevism in the Eastern Baltic Region", 1918-1920," 111.; While not specifically mentioned, the Baltic states were one of the prime targets of US food and economic aid.

<sup>40</sup> Jacob O. Kamm, "Purchase of Foreign Securities in the Interwar Period," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 11, no. 2 (1952): 161-70.

to the United States, something that the US government never forgot.<sup>41</sup>

The establishment of a US-Finnish diplomatic relationship began in 1850, with the United States establishing a consulate in Helsinki and Reynold Frenckall being appointed Consul, the United States and what became Finland after 1917 enjoyed friendly relations.<sup>42</sup> As the previous chapter discussed, Finland was given autonomy by the Russian Empire to conduct its own internal affairs, which helped Finland establish an identity for itself, and perfect its own form of democracy. In 1856, Tsar Alexander II laid out his plans for reform in the Grand Duchy of Finland and by the late 1870s, and these reforms had a positive impact on the Finnish economy, especially in the timber sector, which in a period of less than 20 years, had risen from being non-existent to a fully thriving industry, accounting for nearly three-quarters of all Finnish exports by 1913.<sup>43</sup> Alexander's reforms, and the lack of oversight from the Russian throne allowed Finland to grow into a largely semi-autonomous state. By the turn of the twentieth century, Finland already had in place a self-sustaining government, a well-functioning school system that taught Finnish not Russian, and an economic system that not only thrived domestically, but also was successful in international markets and allowed Finland to establish international credits. This of course led to a renewed rise of Finnish nationalism, more specifically a desire for independence, and the Russians' attempt at curbing this rise resulted in a propaganda war, one that saw the Finns appeal to the international

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<sup>41</sup> Dennis Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 113; Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Volume II, 1874-1924, Years of Adventure* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), 367.

<sup>42</sup> Golden, *The United States and Finland: An Enduring Relationship 1919-1989*, (Washington DC: Department of State), 21.

<sup>43</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 105-112.

community for help.<sup>44</sup>

The Russians attempted to curb this rising nationalism by instituting a series of Manifestos in 1900 and 1901 that established Russian as the official language in administrative and military circles and ended the autonomy of the Finnish army. These actions not only strengthened the resolve of the Finnish nationalists, but also began creating a division of opinion amongst Finns.<sup>45</sup> Tensions between the factions finally passed their breaking point in 1917. While the Finnish favored declaring their independence from the Russian empire, there was split among the political elites in how that split was to occur, with the Socialists (Reds) favoring a split with Russia on negotiated terms, whereas the rest of the elites (Whites) favored independence without negotiation. The Whites relented into attempting negotiations as they knew if there was a mutual split with Russia that international recognition would soon follow. The Russian Council of Peoples' Commissars did recognize independent Finland on January 4, 1918, however they refused to remove Russian soldiers stationed throughout the country, which led to internal conflict within the Finnish government.<sup>46</sup> This internal conflict was between the Social Democrats and the rest of the political parties, who held a slim majority of seats in the Finnish Diet. The Social Democrats were being pushed further and further to the left by the communist faction among their members, and the Soviet government and troops still stationed in Finland were actively aiding the extreme

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<sup>44</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 123-126; While Finland would not receive international assistance at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, its progressive, established democratic government would play a key role in Finland's dealings with the West immediately following their declaration of independence, especially with the United States.

<sup>45</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 137.

<sup>46</sup> Carl Gustaf Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, INC.), 131.

members of the Social Democrats in their creation of unrest.<sup>47</sup> Internal tensions soon became too great to control politically, and on the night of January 27 into January 28, 1918, the Reds began seizing government buildings and property in Helsinki, pushing the country into full-blown civil war.<sup>48</sup>

White Finland from the beginning had an interest in closely aligning itself with the United States, but this feeling was not initially mutual. A lack of expertise, and frankly, the lack of a plan amongst the US State Department for dealing with the crumbling of the Russian Empire led to a hesitation in making a decision. In the days leading up to the declaration of independence, the Finnish food commissioner Von Wendt had been in contact with the American Minister in Sweden requesting that food be sent to Finland, as its people were facing a dire situation. Von Wendt told the Americans that his people were optimistic that America could give the Finns the aid that was needed, but warned them that if they were unable to fill the void, the White Finnish government would accept German aid, which would no doubt align them in the German corner.<sup>49</sup> According to the *Milling and Grain News*, a plan to ship Finland food was devised, via offloading the food in Norway, and sending it by train to storage warehouses in Sweden to be distributed weekly to the Finns.<sup>50</sup> On December 4, 1917 the president of the Finnish Senate proclaimed Finnish independence before the Diet, and the same body ratified the

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<sup>47</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 20 December 1917, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1918*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), II: 737-738 (hereafter *FRUS*); Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 131.

<sup>48</sup> Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, 161-162.

<sup>49</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 3 December 1917, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 733.

<sup>50</sup> *Milling and Grain News*, Vol. 30, No. 24, November 6, 1917. Accessed online, Oct. 16, 2019. [https://books.google.com/books?id=4hcfAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA50&lpg=PA50&dq=von+wendt+finnish+food+commissioner&source=bl&ots=ZJS70fHjLs&sig=ACfU3U1A9\\_ayMQa-bMwk4U4wU8FahiQkxg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjLvq7C0aHIAhVNL6wKHdL1BA4Q6AEwC3oEAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=von%20wendt%20finnish%20food%20commissioner&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=4hcfAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA50&lpg=PA50&dq=von+wendt+finnish+food+commissioner&source=bl&ots=ZJS70fHjLs&sig=ACfU3U1A9_ayMQa-bMwk4U4wU8FahiQkxg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjLvq7C0aHIAhVNL6wKHdL1BA4Q6AEwC3oEAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=von%20wendt%20finnish%20food%20commissioner&f=false)

independence two days later. Also on December 4, the President of the Senate appealed to Thornwell Haynes, the American Consul at Helsinki, for U.S. recognition of Finland.<sup>51</sup> The Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, cabled the Russian Ambassador telling him to relay to the Finnish Consul that there was no objection to the Finns sending a delegation to state the Finnish case for recognition, but that the United States was not ready to make a decision regarding the recognition of Finland.<sup>52</sup> The United States had also not made a decision relating to the supply of food that was badly needed in Finland, where the citizens were living on half-rations in most areas, and U.S. hesitation became the basis of communist propaganda.<sup>53</sup> On January 24, 1918, Thornwell Haynes made a desperate plea to the Secretary of State imploring him to push forward the immediate recognition of Finland. In his plea, he implied that the United States was sacrificing Finland for war gains and expressed his dissatisfaction with the current policy. He argued that U.S. recognition of Finland would strengthen the American position in the region and open up numerous avenues of trade. Of Finland he wrote, "No other small nation clamoring for recognition offers such historical worthiness nor such geographical trade advantages." One of the trade advantages to which he was referring was the possibility of post-war trade with the Soviet Union through Finland.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, the United States continued to delay recognition of Finland, and the reply to Haynes from Secretary Lansing was that the United States was only to assist Finland in delivering food supplies that were urgently needed. And this only in so far as the delivery of food did not cause a

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<sup>51</sup> The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, 4 December 1917, *FRUS*, 1918, II: 733-734.

<sup>52</sup> The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Russia (Francis), 14 December 1917, *FRUS*, 1918, II: 736.

<sup>53</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 20 December 1917, *FRUS*, 1918, II: 738.

<sup>54</sup> The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, 24 January 1918, *FRUS*, 1918, II: 743-744.

strain on the food supplies to the Allied troops in France.<sup>55</sup>

The shipment of food supplies to the allied troops in France would become a point of contention amongst the US government in Washington, and its representatives in Finland and abroad, including a future United States President, Herbert Hoover. Finland had asked to purchase food from the United States prior to its independence, and the two nations came to an arrangement after the Russian Provincial Government gave its approval to Washington, as this approval was a condition set forth by the State Department.<sup>56</sup> The food that was ordered in 1917 was significantly delayed, as U.S. policy makers decided that they could not spare the food because the British and French armies were low on food.<sup>57</sup> Jaroslaw Suchople's explanation of the denial of food places the blame on Hoover, without diving into the factors that influenced the decision to deny the shipment, many of which were outside of Hoover's control. In his memoirs, Hoover does not mention delaying Finland's shipment, but offers an alternate possible explanation, discussing the events of 1917 as the United States was shifting from its isolationist policies to choosing a side and entering World War I. Partial crop failures in 1916 and 1917 also meant that the United States had less food than expected and most importantly, less food to aid those most in need. Secondly, German submarines were wreaking havoc on transport ships, with losses in April 1917 reaching more than 850,000 tons of merchant ships sunk.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, the decision to control the food supply was spearheaded largely by the military, and more specifically General Pershing. Pershing,

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<sup>55</sup> The Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Morris), 8 February 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 749.

<sup>56</sup> Jaroslaw Suchople, *Finland and the United States, 1917-1919*, trans. Tadeuz Z. Wolanski (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2000), 46.

<sup>57</sup> Suchople, *Finland and the United States, 1917-1919*, 47.

<sup>58</sup> Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 255

the American commander, wanted to ensure that he had the ships and food to transport and feed his army as the American presence in Europe increased. Hoover, the chief of the United States Food Administration, details the impact that Pershing had on his ability to ensure food was delivered. According to Hoover, his administration had estimated that they needed 2,000,000 tons of shipping per month to meet their needs. Pershing initially gave them 1,200,000 tons, and once the Americans joined World War I in force, Hoover's ship tonnage was cut down to a meager 700,000 tons per month.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to American hesitancy, Germany quickly came to Finnish assistance, which created a huge problem for US policy makers that advocated assistance to Finland. The decision by the Finnish to take German aid was motivated by the promise of food, as Finnish leadership sought to stave off public sympathies and loyalties to the Communists who had used the food crisis as a rallying cry that change was needed. The Germans and the Finns had an established relationship prior to the latter's declaration of Independence, as some young Finns made the journey to Germany during the outbreak of the First World War. These men were formed into their own units, known as the jägers, and saw combat on the eastern front. These soldiers would later go on to form the core of Mannerheim's "White" army during the Finnish Civil War.<sup>60</sup> Politically, Germany was given a free hand to assist the Finnish, as according to the Brest-Litovsk treaty, which was signed March 5, 1918, the Russians were to evacuate their forces from Finland, in addition to ending all propaganda and agitation against the Finnish government.<sup>61</sup> Geographically, Germany was the best suited to assist Finland, both militarily in driving

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<sup>59</sup> Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 259-260.

<sup>60</sup> "Memorandum on the situation in Finland," CAB 24/43/13, February 22, 1918, 52-53.

<sup>61</sup> The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The\\_Peace\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Brest-Litovsk](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Peace_Treaty_of_Brest-Litovsk), accessed January 24, 2020.

out the Reds, and supporting the Finns with shipments of food. The United States had known prior to the German assistance that Finland was desperate for food, more specifically that the White Finns were desperate, as the only food that was going into the country from Russia was being distributed to the Red forces.<sup>62</sup> On March 8, 1918, the German and Finnish governments reached commercial and maritime agreements, in addition to Finland gaining German recognition of its independence.<sup>63</sup> Along with the agreements came the promise of German military assistance, which was not welcomed in all circles of “White” Finland. General Mannerheim, the Commander in Chief of the Finnish Army, considered resigning from his duties.<sup>64</sup> Further complicating matters, around this time the Red government signed a treaty with the Soviets, which granted recognition of Socialist Finland. The United States now found itself in a precarious position, having to contend with combating the influence of not one political enemy, but two.

The military assistance provided by the German army quickly helped bring about an end to the Civil War gripping Finland, with the Reds having been driven completely out of Finland by mid-May 1918. Members of the White Finnish government soon set about establishing a new national government. To prevent any conflicts with the Soviets, the Finnish Diet had begun contemplating an alliance with Germany complete with instituting a German prince as the King of Finland. The Finnish intent was to use the Brest-Litovsk treaty, signed in March 1918, as a catalyst for ensuring their nation would prosper under the German umbrella of protection. The Finnish leadership rationalized

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<sup>62</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 15 February 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 751.

<sup>63</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 8 March 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 769.

<sup>64</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 155.

that in accordance with the treaty, Soviet Russia acknowledged that Finland was no longer in its sphere of influence.<sup>65</sup> The majority of the Finnish citizenry did not support this plan, with Haynes reporting that about 60 percent of the population favored the western allies, and that there was growing dissatisfaction with the Germans because of their inability to provide food supplies. He advised the Secretary of State that if the US were able to gain Finnish consent that American food relief would be distributed strictly by the Americans, that sending supplies immediately would provide a positive impact on US-Finnish relations.<sup>66</sup> However, President Wilson was not in favor of providing any assistance to Finland, or providing it with recognition, until it could demonstrate that it was its own independent nation, free of any German influence.<sup>67</sup>

During the summer of 1918, while the Finnish Diet was slowly working to decide how the country would be governed, Haynes and Morris, the American representatives in Finland and Sweden, were working towards establishing a solution that would draw Finland and the US closer. Morris had been holding meetings with Mannerheim during his visits to Sweden, and it became clear that he was attempting not only to build up Mannerheim's standing in the United States, but also to begin to persuade influential minds that a Mannerheim-led Finnish government would bring about American recognition promptly.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, Haynes was still crusading for American recognition of Finland and on July 15, 1918 he sent a very detailed report to the Secretary of State outlining his observations in Finland and providing additional context to events that were

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<sup>65</sup> Tuomas Tepora and Aapo Roselius, eds., "Introduction: The Finnish Civil War, Revolution and Scholarship", *The Finnish Civil War 1918*, 4.

<sup>66</sup> The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, undated, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 787.

<sup>67</sup> The President to the Secretary of State, 20 May 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 788.

<sup>68</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Morris) to the Secretary of State, 14 June 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 794; The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Morris), 20 July 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 802.

occurring on the ground. He again advocated for American-Finnish trade to be established, claiming that there was no more important of a country in Europe to the United States than Finland. He argued that by opening trade with Finland, the United States would have an opportunity for post-war trade with Russia through Finland and that such trade would help the United States spread its influence economically to a country that was quickly becoming a political adversary.<sup>69</sup> On October 9, 1918 the Finnish Diet elected Frederick Carl—the brother-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm, as King of Finland. However, due to the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm, the deterioration of the German war effort, and the international dissatisfaction that was expressed at this news, the Diet quickly reversed course, and on November 15, appointed Mannerheim as Regent.<sup>70</sup> Mannerheim's appointment as Regent was satisfactory to the American government, and in the same cable that Haynes notified the Secretary of State of his appointment, he also recommended that food relief be sent. The State Department agreed with Haynes this time and notified him on November 22, 1918 that it was prepared to send 5,000 tons of foodstuffs to Finland, but that the United States still was not ready to recognize Finnish independence.<sup>71</sup>

Herbert Hoover, then the Director of European Relief and the United States Food Administrator soon took up the cause of providing food relief to Finland, among other European nations. In the case of Finland, he stated that “The food is practically exhausted in the cities. While many of the peasants have some bread, other sections are mixing

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<sup>69</sup> The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, 15 July 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 801.

<sup>70</sup> The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, 11 October 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 811; The Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes) to the Secretary of State, 16 November 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 813.

<sup>71</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Helsingfors (Haynes), 22 November 1918, *FRUS, 1918*, II: 814.

large amounts of straw. They are exhausted of fats, meats, and sugar, and need help to prevent renewed rise of Bolshevism.”<sup>72</sup> The following month, the American Mission in Europe that was overseeing the peace following World War I cabled the Secretary of State in support of Hoover’s request for a \$14 million credit from the National City Bank to the Bank of Helsinki to be used to purchase foodstuffs in Finland, if the US government were to provisionally recognize Finland. The acting Secretary of State, Frank Polk, agreed with the American Mission, but wanted to wait until the conclusion of the Finnish national elections that were to be held on March 1, 1919.<sup>73</sup> These elections were held without any hiccups, and a new government took office without any opposition or violence. However, recognition from the United States did not immediately follow.

The lack of a decision pushed Hoover into action, and on April 26, 1919 he penned a letter to President Wilson imploring him to formally recognize Finland. In his letter, he pointed out that by not having recognition, the Finns were isolated commercially and not able to market their goods in the international marketplace and establish trade credits. He also pointed out that Finnish deposits in American banks were in the tens of millions of dollars, and that these accounts were essentially frozen, further hurting Finland’s economy and the potential for money to be made by American banks. He also went on to praise the Finns for their ability to build themselves up without taking a dime from the US but warned that without US recognition that they would either fail or

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<sup>72</sup> *New York Times*, “Hoover Issues Call to Feed Peoples,” January 8, 1919, accessed online February 17, 2018.

<sup>73</sup> The Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Acting Secretary of State, 1 March 1919, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1919*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), II: 211 (hereby *FRUS*); United States Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Robert Lansing (1864-1928)”, accessed online April 2, 2018. The official State Department history of the Secretaries of State make no mention of Frank Polk ever serving as an official Secretary of State, and so Polk acting in a temporary capacity can be best explained as Lansing being away from Washington at the time of the telegram correspondence, and he had designated Polk as his acting secretary.

become dependent on US charity for the long term. He concluded his letter by emphasizing the development of Finnish democracy, meeting every criteria set forth to Finland by the world, despite the “sinister shadow” that had been looming over them.<sup>74</sup> Also worth noting is that during this delay in recognition, Hoover also defied the Allied food blockade by sending ships laden with food to Finland under the protection of the US Navy, and tapped into a \$5 million dollar fund controlled by President Wilson in order to provide free meals to millions of Finnish children.<sup>75</sup> Finally, after many months of delay, American recognition of Finland finally came on May 7, 1919.<sup>76</sup> Within the United States, the conservative Finnish-American contingent was successful in rallying public and governmental support for the White Finnish government, despite the Whites’ ties to Germany. Hoover’s actions also were beneficial to him politically, as the conservative Finnish-Americans became drawn to him and viewed him as a savior.<sup>77</sup>

The importance of Herbert Hoover’s actions lay not only in the recognition of Finland, but also his willingness to seize the initiative in a time of indecision, perhaps one of the most overlooked historical facts following the end of World War I. The United States at the conclusion of World War I found itself thrust into the global spotlight as a global power, and its government and policymakers were largely unprepared and hesitant to move. Few men, such as Hoover, drew tired of the inaction from their superiors and decided it was time to take matters into their own hands. Hoover was aware of the dire situation Finland faced when he was back in the United States, and upon returning to

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<sup>74</sup> *New York Times*, “Finland’s Creation Helped By Hoover”, Published December 21, 1939, accessed February 24, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Glen Jeansonne, *Herbert Hoover*, (New York: New American Library, 2016), 127-128.

<sup>76</sup> The Secretary of State to the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs (Holsti), 7 May 1919, *FRUS, 1919*, II: 215.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Kivisto, "Finnish Americans and the Homeland, 1918-1958," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 7, no. 1 (1987): 11.

Europe in 1919, he met with Dr. Rudolf Holsti, the leader of the Finnish deputation in Europe. Hoover immediately sent 10,000 tons of emergency supplies to Finland from Sweden and Denmark, much to the chagrin of the allied blockade authorities. The allied blockade authorities could only protest as the US Navy led the food-laden ships through the Baltic Sea blockade towards Finland. Holsti and his delegation were not out to seek charity, as they assured Hoover that they would repay the debts owed to the United States, promising, "We will pay. Our people will work and pay."<sup>78</sup> Shortly after the official recognition of Finland, Hoover's chief of staff, Colonel James Logan, sent a confidential telegram to Major Ferry Heath, "The recognition of Finland has been brought about entirely by Mr. Hoover by his urgent and repeated representations to the various governments."<sup>79</sup> Hoover and his food administration also set up a program that provided free meals to children. In total, this program gave 35,000,000 free meals to Finnish children, not only causing a great appreciation towards Hoover and the United States, but also leading to the children thanking the United States through prayer. In total, Hoover helped Finland attain 170,275 tons of food, 336 tons of clothing, medical supplies, and other miscellaneous items, along with \$9,872,171 in loans from the United States. The Finns also received \$932,780 in charity from the United States, which was \$12,230 more than the loans to Finland from the United Kingdom.<sup>80</sup>

The aid administered at the direction of Hoover and his Food Aid Administration was the starting point of not only friendly relations between the United States and Finland, but the investment of the United States in ensuring Finnish survival. When

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<sup>78</sup> Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 363-364.

<sup>79</sup> Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 366.; Major Heath was sent to Finland as a part of a delegation to prepare for the arrival of the food shipment.

<sup>80</sup> Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 366-367.

President Wilson received the Finnish Minister to the United States, Armas Herman Saastamoinen, on August 21, 1919, the latter stated that the first Finns immigrated to the United States during the period of early colonial settlement, nestling down in Delaware among other places, and this long-standing relationship had helped foster a very favorable opinion of the United States in Finland. He went on to state that Finland sought to “establish and maintain the friendliest and most cordial relations with the United States and that no effort will be spared to win the confidence and sympathy of your country.” President Wilson likened the US recognition of Finland to that of America’s own struggle for independence. Wilson told the Finnish Minister that the United States was glad to provide assistance to Finland and share with it the knowledge of the United States. He also broadly proclaimed that this struggle for independence was the case of all people “seeking to voice their own principles of self-government.”<sup>81</sup>

The Finnish and Bolshevik Russian governments agreed to a cessation of hostilities on October 14, 1920, with the general peace treaty becoming effective on December 31, 1920. The peace treaty was not popular in Finland, however, save for within the Socialist and far right-wing parties.<sup>82</sup> Finland had long seemed a threat from the Soviet perspective, especially in the early years of the Bolshevik revolution. The establishment of a general peace allowed the Soviet government to focus on consolidating its power, a process that would not be concluded until 1923.<sup>83</sup> Soviet concerns about Finland had many grounds for justification, as at multiple points in 1919

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<sup>81</sup> Remarks of the Finnish Minister (Saastamoinen) on the Occasion of His Reception by President Wilson, 21 August 1919, *FRUS, 1919*, II: 221-222.

<sup>82</sup> The Charge in Finland (Magruder) to the Secretary of State, 15 October 1920, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1920*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), II: 256.

<sup>83</sup> Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, (USA: Praeger Publishers, 1968), 104; 126-127. Very old book (and very conservative historian).

the leader of the White Russians- Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak, and General Yudenitch, appealed to Mannerheim asking that he lead the Finnish army on a campaign against Petrograd (St. Petersburg). The proposed campaign lacked the necessary support from the Finnish public, and the British and White Russian leadership could not come to an agreement about the recognition of Finland, due to White Russian leadership refusal.<sup>84</sup> Mannerheim himself was very adamant that Finland make a move against the Soviet forces in support of the allied operations, going as far as writing an open letter to President Stahlberg of Finland, on October 28, 1919. By this time, however, the balance of the Russian Civil War had shifted so much towards the side of the Soviets that the allied powers were disengaging.<sup>85</sup>

Soviet Russia was also a beneficiary of Hoover's American Food Relief Organization, which provided relief during the great famine of 1921-1922, saving countless lives and earning praise from official Soviet publications. The Americans, however, did not extend aid any further than providing food to stave off famine and failed to use their most powerful weapon, economics, as a means to fight Bolshevism at its source.<sup>86</sup> Coincidentally, during the period of time that the Soviets were facing a famine Lenin was optimistic that the incoming presidency of Warren G. Harding would lead the United States to trade and establish diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. However, when the United States maintained its policy of economic and diplomatic isolation from Soviet Russia, the Soviets turned to the only country that was willing to trade with them:

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<sup>84</sup> S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis 1890-1928*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 170-173; Mr. Bell to Earl Curzon, June 30, 1919, *Documents on British Foreign Policy: 1919-1939* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949), First Series, III, 407.

<sup>85</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 234-235.

<sup>86</sup> Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, 148.

Germany.<sup>87</sup> With Soviet Russia, the United States allowed its hatred of communism to blind it from the economic opportunity that was presented. The missed opportunity came after helping feed the masses during the 1921-22 famine, an opportunity that very well could have helped establish a friendly, long-term US-Soviet relationship had it been acted upon. By building strong economic ties and bringing American business to the Soviet Union, the potential to curb the influence of communism, or even shift the political perspectives of the Soviet people, the Soviet Union could very well have been much different than the country it turned into once communism was fully rooted in the economic and political system.

With Finland, the United States invested a substantial amount of its energy in building up strong economic ties. Because Finland was a young, budding Republic that had defeated a communist threat and thrived despite being adjacent to the center of the Bolshevik revolution, they sought friendly relations with the United States, a nation that they admired and looked up to.<sup>88</sup> Finland also had a vast amount of raw resources such as lumber, wood pulp, and minerals that the United States sought, trade between the nations became lucrative. Beginning in 1923, the United States and Finland entered into negotiations to establish a commercial treaty granting most-favored nation treatment to both parties. This agreement was signed on May 2, 1925 and was ratified by the Finnish Diet in December 1925.<sup>89</sup> The two nations also agreed to respect tonnage dues and other charges in December 1925, which was enacted in January 1926.<sup>90</sup> The two nations also

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<sup>87</sup> Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, 148.

<sup>88</sup> See footnote 71.

<sup>89</sup> The Finnish Minister (Astrom) to the Secretary of State, 24 December 1925, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1925*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940), II: 99 (hereby *FRUS*).

<sup>90</sup> The Finnish Minister (Astrom) to the Secretary of State, 30 January 1926, *FRUS, 1925*, II: 104.

signed treaties regarding arbitration and conciliation on June 7, 1928, further demonstrating friendly relations, especially economically.<sup>91</sup>

The most important aspect of the US-Finnish relationship during the inter-war period was not the agreements regarding trade and arbitration, but instead the repayment of loans made to Finland by the United States. On May 1, 1923 the United States and Finland entered into a debt agreement that outlined the terms of the repayment of the roughly \$9 million of outstanding Finnish debt.<sup>92</sup> Finland faithfully paid its debt obligations to the United States, and continued to do so even after the Stock Market crashed in 1929 and during the subsequent Great Depression. The exception to this was in 1931, when the U.S. president ordered the postponement of debts that were due for one year, by order of the President.<sup>93</sup> Once the payments resumed, Finland was one of the only foreign debtors to repay the United States on schedule, and as a result President Roosevelt wanted to reward the Finns for their punctuality by proposing a new repayment plan. Under the president's plan, the interest rate that would be charged to Finland would be drastically reduced, in turn allowing for a substantial reduction in the amount of money owed by Finland.<sup>94</sup>

President Roosevelt submitted his proposed debt repayment plan for Finland to

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<sup>91</sup> Arbitration Treaty Between the United States of America and Finland, Signed at Washington, 7 June 1928, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1928*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), II: 806-808.

<sup>92</sup> Report on the Finances 1922, [https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/treasar/pages/59321\\_1920-1924.pdf](https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/treasar/pages/59321_1920-1924.pdf), online, accessed January 25, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> The Finnish Minister (Astrom) to the Secretary of State, 8 October 1931, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1931*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), I, 203-204.

<sup>94</sup> Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State, 13 November 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1933*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), I, 864

the State Department on December 22, 1933.<sup>95</sup> This plan was forwarded to the Finnish Legation on January 6, 1934 and five days later, the Finnish Legation replied back to the Department of State that the Finnish government was prepared to accept the thirty-year, zero interest plan.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately for Finland, this agreement was never submitted for Congressional approval, as Roosevelt did not feel that he was in a situation politically to get the approval of Congress, largely due to the concerns that other debtors may complain about favoritism shown towards the Finns. Because traditional allies, such as Great Britain, were likely to complain about not receiving a restructured deal and because Roosevelt did not want to prolong the Congressional session, he opted out of submitting the new Finnish debt deal.<sup>97</sup> The failure to close this deal did not impact US-Finnish relations, however, and Finland continued to make its debt payments on schedule according to the 1923 agreement. The fact that the United States was willing to forfeit thirty years of interest on the outstanding Finnish debt is extremely significant, especially when the same opportunities were not even considered for the United States' more traditional allies, such as Great Britain. One would be hard pressed to find another incident in the twentieth century, let alone the history of the United States, where the United States government had a plan in place to allow for a country to pay back debt at a zero percent interest rate.

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<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt's proposal, put together by the Treasury Department, included three separate payment options, spanning between thirty and fifty years. The thirty-year plan was a zero-interest plan, with an annual payment of \$195,163.44; the forty-year plan was at 1% interest, with an annual payment of \$178,333.77; and the fifty-year plan was at 1.5% interest, with an annual payment of \$167,285.30. Roosevelt hoped that Finland would take the thirty-year option, as it reduced the amount of debt Finland owed from \$8,429,000 to \$5,854,903.25. The other two proposed plans would have reduced the Finnish debt obligation to \$7,132,550.80 and \$8,364,264 respectively.

<sup>96</sup> President Roosevelt to the Acting Secretary of State, 22 December 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1934*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), I: 559-560 (hereby *FRUS*); The Finnish Legation to the Department of State, 11 January 1934, *FRUS, 1934*, I: 563.

<sup>97</sup> Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips), 29 March 1934, *FRUS, 1934*, I: 564.

The debt repayment plan proposed by the Roosevelt administration was the ultimate reward that any country could hope for. The Finns held a special place in the hearts of both the American public and the administration due to their consistent payments. As the third chapter will discuss, the American public held Finland in high regard, and was far more willing to support aid for a country that had honored its debt deal with the US over Britain and France. It seems that that the average American saw a lot of the American spirit in the Finns. That is, they recognized that the people and government of Finland worked hard and made something of themselves, much like the “American Dream” that many Americans were a generation or two removed from.

Despite not being able to get a restructured debt deal passed in 1934, the two nations continued to build economic interdependence with each other, through numerous treaties and trade deals. This continued relationship demonstrated that the United States considered Finland a valuable trade partner, and that the Finnish government sought to strengthen its relationship with the United States. On February 13, 1934, the United States and Finland signed a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights. The purpose of this treaty was to replace the current *modus vivendi* (temporary agreement) with a treaty that established permanent economic and commercial relations, in addition to the regulation of consular relations and other non-commercial relations between the two countries.<sup>98</sup> The United States was motivated to enter into this treaty in part because of a favorable balance of trade between the United States and Finland (in addition to the influence of Finnish-Americans) and most importantly, Finland’s punctuality in repaying

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<sup>98</sup> The Minister in Finland (Pearson) to the Secretary of State, 3 February 1927, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1934*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), II: 134-135 (Hereby *FRUS*).

its debt obligations. The United States was impressed by the Finnish resolve to break with what the US government perceived as a “united front” of the debtor countries and continue to repay their debts, all while risking criticism from internal political opponents.<sup>99</sup> Both countries ratified the treaty, and the ratifications were exchanged on July 11, 1934, with the effective date of the treaty being August 10, 1934.<sup>100</sup>

With this treaty, the United States wanted to reward Finland for its consistent debt payment, and while the Roosevelt administration was unable to restructure the outstanding Finnish debt to a zero-percent interest loan, the Treaty of Friendship was the next best thing. Key provisions of the treaty included: Article I- which granted citizens of Finland and the United States the ability to trade, travel, and reside in each other’s country, with the same privileges that local nationals had, granted they stayed within the law. They also were guaranteed that they would not face any additional tax, were given access to legal rights, and enjoyed property and security rights in accordance with international law. Article II- ensured that the civil liability legal rights guaranteed to local nationals were granted to American or Finnish citizens (and by extension their families), in the event of injury or death. Article IV- guaranteed that in the event of death, property would be passed along to relatives or other designated parties, without threat of seizure from local administrators. Articles VI/VII- Freedom of navigation in territorial waters and unrestricted access to ports open to trade, and a guarantee that there would not be any high duties applied to imports, nor would there be any restrictions on imports that were

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<sup>99</sup> Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Eastern European Affairs (Packer), 14 August 1933, *FRUS, 1934*, II: 138-139; Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips), 22 January 1934, *FRUS, 1934*, II: 140.

<sup>100</sup> Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Consular Rights, 49 Stat. 2659; “Treaty Series 868”, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-fi-ust000007-0718.pdf>, 718.

not applied to other foreign nations. Article XVI- Corporations and LLCs would be allowed to operate within the laws of both countries and have open access to their host country's judicial system should they need to use it. Articles XIX-XXX- Established the rights granted to consular officers, which included the rights of consular officers to fly their home nation's flag outside of their offices and any vehicle being used in an official consular activity.<sup>101</sup>

With the Treaty of Friendship concluded, the United States would soon seek the establishment of a permanent embassy. The United States would spare no expense on the facility, demonstrating their commitment to a long, healthy relationship with Finland. On June 15, 1935, the United States Congress authorized an allotment of \$300,000 for the Finnish Legation, the equivalent of roughly \$5 million in 2018 dollars. These funds were to be used for the procurement of a site for the Legation, the buildings, and all associated furnishings.<sup>102</sup> *Time* magazine would later describe the Legation as "splendiferous" and go on to say that all of the materials and the labor were of Finnish origin. This gave the reader the impression that this was not only a rare occurrence, but also one that was demonstrative of the friendly relations and trust that the United States and Finland shared with one another.<sup>103</sup>

The economic diplomacy for the United States and Finland continued to succeed, as on May 18, 1936, the two nations entered into a Reciprocal Trade Agreement.<sup>104</sup> This agreement had been in the works for over two years in response to the Anglo-Finnish

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<sup>101</sup> Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Consular Rights, 49 Stat. 2659; "Treaty Series 868", 718-732.

<sup>102</sup> 74<sup>th</sup> Congress, Session I, CH. 508, August 12, 1935, <http://legisworks.org/congress/74/publaw-260.pdf>.

<sup>103</sup> *Time Magazine*, "Finland. Active Neutrality!", October 23, 1939.

<sup>104</sup> Reciprocal Trade Treaty, 50 Stat. 1436, "Executive Agreement Series 97", <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-fi-ust000007-0736.pdf>, 736.

Commercial Agreement of September 29, 1933, where England and Finland entered into a trade agreement that put the United States at the disadvantage.<sup>105</sup> In accordance with this agreement, the United States received favorable tariff concessions on a multitude of agricultural products, and in return, Finland granted concessions on granite, cheese, sulphate wrapping paper, cream separators, birch plywood, and spools of thread.<sup>106</sup> While global trade competition is nothing new, the United States clearly valued Finland as a trade partner, as it continuously worked with Finland to come to mutually beneficial trade agreements during the inter-war period as competitors began investing in trade with Finland.

Finland had an agrarian-based economy, and during the inter-war period it grew across all sectors, despite being heavily reliant on manual and animal-powered labor. For example, there were only 6,000 tractors in Finland by 1930, timber was brought out of the forest by horse drawn wagons, and the lumber fell by hand saw. Finland's agricultural success can be attributed to a fine-tuned co-operative system, which helped milk output, potato production, and rye harvests increase two, three, and tenfold during the inter-war period. Finland's greatest export outside of food consisted of forestry products. The paper and wood pulp industry, once heavily reliant on Russia, found success in the markets of England and the rest of the west. Finnish industry was the only one in Europe to increase output annually during the depression.<sup>107</sup>

By the mid-1930s, thanks in part to the purges being conducted by Stalin in the Soviet Union, Communism in Finland was a non-existent threat to the government.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> The Minister in Finland (Albright) to the Secretary of State, 17 April 1934, *FRUS, 1934*, II: 141.

<sup>106</sup> Golden, "The United States and Finland: An Enduring Relationship 1919-1989", 28.

<sup>107</sup> Kirby, *Concise History of Finland*, 187.

<sup>108</sup> Kirby, *Concise History of Finland*, 178.

Finland's practice of a democratic form of government was not only welcomed by its citizens, but by the American public and government as well. This support among the citizenry of Finland, and subsequently by the US in the form of favorable trade deals and economic loans, helped ensure that Finland would continue to thrive as a democracy. Stalin inadvertently helped as well, as his purges targeted foreign communists that had immigrated to the Soviet Union, and in regions like Soviet Karelia, many that could have posed a threat to the Finnish government were eliminated in the Stalin purges.<sup>109</sup> *The New York Times* ran an article on February 21, 1931 declaring, "Communism has 'not a chance' in Finland" after the return of Edward Brodie, the American envoy to Helsinki under Hoover. Brodie was quoted giving a promising economic outlook for the Finns despite the depression and praising their religiousness and their resistance to anti-Christian Soviet ideologies.<sup>110</sup> Finland also benefitted from a ban of the Socialist Worker's Party, Finland's Communist Party, beginning in August 1923 and lasting until 1944. Members of the party who were national and local leaders were arrested and sentenced to prison after the Finnish Supreme Court declared the party a criminal association. The party offshoot, the Socialist Workers' and Smallholders' Party was allowed to continue in existence until it was banned in the summer of 1930.<sup>111</sup>

Vitality to the US-Finnish relationship, Finland's freedom from Communism

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<sup>109</sup> Alexey Golubev and Irina Takala's *The Search for a Socialist El Dorado: Finnish Immigration to Soviet Karelia from the United States and Canada in the 1930s* is an excellent starting point for those that wish to know more about Stalin's purges in the Karelian region of the Soviet Union.

<sup>110</sup> *The New York Times*, "Envoy Says Finland Has Stamped Out Reds," Published: Feb. 21, 1931, accessed February 24, 2018

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=9F0DE1DC143AEE3ABC4951DFB466838A629EDE>

<sup>111</sup> Saarela, "To Commemorate or Not: The Finnish Labor Movement and the Memory of the Civil War in the Interwar Period", *The Finnish Civil War 1918*, 336; Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 239. In addition to adding context to the ban, which Saarela does not do, Mannerheim claims that these parties harassed "patriotically-minded" workers and seemed resentful that the government took so long in outlawing the Communists.

would be short lived. By 1938 the Soviet Union began making demands on the Finnish government in preparation for the looming global war. Finland maintained its position of neutrality, despite Soviet promises of military and economic aid; their position was met with disdain by the Soviets. The Soviets were persistent with their demands on Finland, which led Marshall Mannerheim to push for the re-armament of the Finnish military.<sup>112</sup> The Finns also turned to the United States to seek out assistance, both financially and diplomatically. Beginning in the summer of 1939, Finland began inquiring about United States' willingness to make loans that would help with the rearmament of their military. Secretary of State Cordell Hull replied that the United States would give "prompt consideration" to any licensing requests by the Finnish government for the exportation of armaments and that the Finns were free to purchase them from any private manufacturer in the US, but he gave no definitive reply regarding the Finnish request for a loan.<sup>113</sup>

The US State Department once again would balk at an opportunity to help Finland, just as they had done immediately following Finland's declaration of independence in 1917. This time, the staunch isolationist policies within the United States at all levels was the chief reason for the lack of assistance. On April 10, 1939, the Finnish Minister to the United States, Hjalmar J. Procope, met with Secretary Hull to discuss the demands placed on Finland by the Soviets. Procope asked Hull if he was willing to say something to the Soviets that would discourage them from applying pressure on Finland for a territory swap. Hull told Procope, "I then added that my Government has a traditional policy of not undertaking to interfere in political controversies across the seas;

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<sup>112</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 294-298.

<sup>113</sup> The Secretary of State to the Finnish Minister (Procope), 4 October 1939, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1939*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 957-958 (hereby *FRUS*).

that we only speak about political considerations when they become so acute and dangerous as to constitute a definite threat to the peace of the world.”<sup>114</sup> Hull’s quote outlines the foreign policy of the United States, or rather lack thereof, as the US government was committed to maintaining a policy of isolationism and neutrality. In another memorandum of conversation dated October 5, 1939, Procope again tried to get Hull to say something to the Soviets, and while Hull made no such statement, he assured Procope that the United States was interested in the welfare and well-being of the people of Finland at all times.<sup>115</sup> Even when President Roosevelt sent a message to the Soviets, asking them to not make any demands on Finland that could result in the deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and Finland, he referenced the United States’ policy of neutrality in the opening line.<sup>116</sup> The reply sent by the Soviet President, M.I. Kalinin clearly understood that the United States was in no position to deter the Soviet government from making demands on Finland that the United States viewed as troublesome. He even went as far as subtly asserting that Finland was in the sphere of Soviet influence, due to the recognition of Finnish independence granted by the Soviets on December 31, 1917 and their subsequent Peace Treaty on October 14, 1920.<sup>117</sup> The Finnish government, ever appreciative of the United States, sent a message to President Roosevelt thanking him for speaking on their behalf, stating, “Your personal valuable assistance and interest in Finland’s fate and difficult problems will never be forgotten in this country.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, 10 April 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, I: 953.

<sup>115</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, 5 October 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, I: 959.

<sup>116</sup> The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt), 11 October 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, I: 967.

<sup>117</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 16 October 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, I: 975.

<sup>118</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 18 October 1939, *FRUS, 1939*, I: 976.

The Americans vastly underestimated the intentions of the Soviet Union with respect to Finland in 1939, especially considering that the Soviets were seeking territory that had been ceded to Finland almost two decades earlier after the two nations agreed to end hostilities. The hesitancy exhibited by the United States in the lead-up to the Winter War was in no doubt due to the strict policy of neutrality put forth by the Roosevelt administration. In the case of Finland, the United States had found a partner against Communism, which was also a willing and profitable trade partner and a reliable debtor determined to meet its financial obligations. Nevertheless, Finland would soon find itself valiantly fighting for its survival while the western powers did little to nothing to assist.

#### IV. VALILANT FINLAND: SURVIVING THE WINTER WAR

Earlier US-Finnish relations and the prompt Finnish payment of WW1 debt, especially when highlighted by the American press, helped sway the American public's sympathy towards Finland. US-Finnish relations during the Winter War solidified, with former president Herbert Hoover helping lead the fundraising cause for beleaguered Finnish civilians. The Finnish leadership had succeeded in achieving their goal of friendly relations with the United States, and this relationship would grow stronger after the Soviet invasion in November 1939. The friendly relations between the United States and Finland was attributed largely to Finland's prompt, consistent payment of its debt to the United States, even during the depression. As a result, the American press and public held a soft spot for Finland, as they were seen as a friend that paid their debts and stayed true to their word. The soft spot for the Finns in the hearts of the American press and public would only grow once the Soviets invaded, and the valor and grit of both the Finnish military and its citizens when faced with a tyrannical threat created a lasting sympathy for Finland in the eyes of Americans, which would be beneficial once World War II officially broke out. The US government would also have sympathetic leanings towards Finland, which were driven by public pressure, but also a skepticism of Stalin and the Soviets. Unlike the public, the US government had to deal with a longstanding position of isolationism and had to toe a careful diplomatic line as suspicions were growing that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact would be short-lived, and the Soviet Union might need to be courted into the allied corner. When the Soviets invaded Finland, the main aim of the invasion was to gain territory that would enable them to better fend off a German invasion away from Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Finland, however, had long

sought to remain neutral in any future conflict, but had made defensive preparations, thanks to the efforts of Marshall Mannerheim.

The United States was legally prohibited from selling arms to Finland, but that did not stop the Roosevelt administration from finding legal loopholes to send Finland war materials. The US also limited its aid to the Soviets, including the implementation of a “moral embargo” that encouraged US companies to not send any material to the Soviet Union that could be used to keep their war machine moving against the Finns. The US realized the geographic constraints it faced when providing material assistance to Finland, however they were able to help monetarily. Thanks to the efforts of Herbert Hoover, the American public and business elites donated millions of dollars to the beleaguered Finns, with the money raised going to help resettle those that had been displaced by war. The overwhelming support to Finland by the American government and public would be crucial as the Winter War waged on, and even upon Finland entering the Second World War.

Leading up to the Soviet invasion of Finland (November 1939- March 1940), both American and British foreign policy makers and diplomats did not predict hostilities despite the credible threats made towards the Finnish government by the Soviets, and the fall of the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia). This failure, can be best attributed to naivety on the part of these policy makers, thinking that peace would prevail. The Americans were still set on maintaining a policy of isolationism, while the British worried about their imperial territories, but they did show concern with the possibility of conflict breaking out in Scandinavia, to which they included Finland. When the Winter War broke out, the American and British governments and their citizens were outraged;

however, they took different approaches towards giving Finland aid. The Americans were unable to provide military forces, and officially could not sell arms to Finland, but the British (and French) repeatedly made promises of military assistance to Finland, even when they knew that aid would never materialize. The approaches taken by the Americans and British are important in understanding how these nations interacted with Finland after the Winter War ended. The Americans, realizing that geography prevented them from taking direct action to assist Finland did all that they could diplomatically to assist Finland. The British, on the other hand, were willing to sacrifice Finland for their greater goal of maintaining their hegemonic status, first against the Soviets and then later against the Germans.

The Finnish government began feeling pressure from the Soviet government in 1938, pressure that was not unique to Finland as it was also applied to the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Governments as well. After confidential talks, the Finns agreed preliminarily on August 11, 1938 that they would not allow any foreign power to establish a base of power within their territory that would allow for an attack on the Soviet Union.<sup>119</sup> A week later the Soviets demanded a written pledge that the Finns would repel any attempted German invasion, accept Soviet armed assistance, and access to the island Suursaari in the Gulf of Finland for the purposes of establishing a naval and air base. In return the Soviets offered to guarantee Finnish independence and give them a favorable trade deal. The Finnish government rejected this proposal, which led to the breakdown of negotiations between the Finnish and Soviets.<sup>120</sup> The Finns appealed to the

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<sup>119</sup> Henrik O. Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in WWII* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2011), 10.

<sup>120</sup> Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in WWII*, 10-11.

United States for diplomatic help, but Secretary of State Cordell Hull told the Minister Procopé that the US only intervened when peace was threatened.<sup>121</sup> The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact signed on August 23, 1939 further complicated Finland's position, as the Germans ceded all territory north of the Lithuanian border to the Soviet sphere of influence. This subsequently led to the Baltic states and Finland to receive invitations from the Soviet government to meet for negotiations. This led to the eventual absorption of the Baltic states by the Soviets, which began with the Baltic nations granting the Soviets bases and signing mutual aid pacts and ended with the Soviet Union's absorption of these states in the summer of 1940. Still, however, Finland refused the Soviet demands.<sup>122</sup>

The naivety of the American and British policy makers can be seen right up until Soviet bombs dropped on Helsinki. These men continued to believe Soviet assurances that Finland would face no attack, despite a breakdown in negotiations between the Finnish and Soviet representatives to address Soviet demands. While Finland itself prepared for war, there was a large amount of optimism that the looming crisis with the Soviet Union would be solved diplomatically, especially if the West exerted some pressure on the Soviet Union. Despite Finland's refusal of Soviet demands to cede some of their islands, the Soviets were still giving assurances as late as mid-September of 1939 to Finland that its neutrality would be recognized. These assurances, according to the Chargé in Finland, seemed to please the Finnish government as there was no concern of

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<sup>121</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, 10 April 1939, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1939*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 753 (hereafter *FRUS*); Hjalmar Procopé was the Minister of Finland (Ambassador) to the United States.

<sup>122</sup> Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in WWII*, 11-15.

conflict despite the Soviets having just invaded Poland.<sup>123</sup> While the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 would not have raised any concerns among the Finns, the Soviet invasion some two weeks later should have, as the Poles had signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in 1932 (Finland signed one with the Soviets in the same year).<sup>124</sup> Ambassador Steinhardt, who was the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, reported to the Secretary of State in October 1939 that he did not believe conflict was on the horizon between the Finns and the Soviets, nor did he believe that there was a secret agreement between the Nazis and Soviets that would affect the sovereignty of Finland.<sup>125</sup> While the Americans did not seem concerned about the Soviets, the British were preparing plans in the event that they would find themselves at war. The British were more concerned with the Soviets invading Sweden and Norway, and their main concern was that the ore mines in Sweden would fall into the Soviet hands, and any establishment of bases in Norway would constitute a threat to their national security. The British concluded that a declaration of war against Russia was unwise, as they (and France) did not possess the military strength to fight both Germany and Russia concurrently. If, however, that war was to be necessary with Russia, the Chiefs of Staff Committee recommended that there only be intervention if Sweden and/or Norway were threatened, and supporting Finland alone was ill advised.<sup>126</sup> This paints a clear picture that the British realized the limitations of their power; however, the actions taken by the British and French a few months later paints a different picture that either the original conclusion was

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<sup>123</sup> The Chargé in Finland (Shantz) to the Secretary of State, 18 September 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 956.

<sup>124</sup> "U.S.S.R.-Poland: Treaty of Non-Aggression," *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 4 (1933): 188-90, Accessed March 18, 2020. doi:10.2307/2213562.

<sup>125</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 4 October 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 958.

<sup>126</sup> C.L.N. Newall, Nemund Ironside, T.S.V. Phillips, "Soviet Aggression Against Finland or Other Scandinavian Countries," 31 October 1939, *CAB 66/3/7*, 71-76.

ignored, or there was eventually a willingness to sacrifice Finland as a means to weaken the Soviet Union.

Strong isolationist sentiments in the United States led its policy makers to conclude that the situation in Finland could be resolved diplomatically. The US also lacked intelligence gathering capabilities that could have tipped them off to the Soviet intentions, but even if the US had actionable intelligence, isolationism was still the ruling policy, and any politician calling for military action in Europe would be committing political suicide. The US was optimistic that peace between Finland and the Soviet Union would be maintained, however, the Soviets soon became tired of talking and looked to take action. In a move that eerily mirrored the trumped-up German rationale for invading Poland a few months earlier, the Soviets claimed that on November 26, 1939, Finnish artillery had fired upon Soviet troops just across the Finnish-Soviet border, which wounded nine and killed four. The Soviets had immediately demanded that the Finns withdraw their troops twenty to twenty-five kilometers from the border north of Leningrad and gave the Finns twenty-four hours to reply. A Finnish investigation into the Soviet claims found that there had been no rounds fired from Finland, but rather that the Soviets had been practicing with hand grenades on their side of the border.<sup>127</sup> Finland then forwarded the results of their investigation to Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov in their reply. The same reply informed the Soviets that Finland would not be moving its forces, which enraged Molotov. Molotov asserted, as the Soviets had from the beginning, that the Finnish border, and the presence of troops along the Mannerheim Line, posed a

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<sup>127</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State, 28 November 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1000-1001.; Travis Beal Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981), 54-55.

security threat to Leningrad.<sup>128</sup> The Soviets continued to claim border incursions by the Finns just days later on November 29<sup>th</sup>, when they claimed that on three different occasions they had contact with Finnish soldiers, though all of these claims were quickly disproven by the Finns.<sup>129</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston), who was continuously updating the Secretary of State about the rising tensions, concluded in a telegram on November 29<sup>th</sup> that the threat of war was unlikely due to a lack of evidence to suggest otherwise. This was reported in spite of leading the telegram informing the Secretary of State about reservists in Moscow being called up, and troops being relocated to the north from Poland.<sup>130</sup> Thurston's assessment demonstrated a sense of naivety on his part, and showed that the US lacked effective intelligence. The *casus belli* for the Soviets (and in their minds only) was already determined and there was no diplomatic solution left to avoid a conflict. War was coming.

The Soviet air bombardment of the Finnish capital of Helsinki on November 30, 1939 shocked the West, and led President Roosevelt to issue a statement the following day that read:

The news of the Soviet naval and military bombings within Finnish territory has come as a profound shock to the Government and people of the United States. Despite efforts made to solve the dispute by peaceful methods to which no reasonable objection could be offered, one power has chosen to resort to force of arms. It is tragic to see the policy of force spreading, and to realize that wanton disregard for law is still on the march. All peace-loving peoples in those nations that are still hoping for the continuance of relations throughout the world on the basis of law and order will unanimously condemn this retort to military force as the arbiter of international differences. To the great misfortune of the world, the present trend to force makes insecure the independent existence of small nations in every continent and jeopardizes the rights of mankind to self-government. The

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<sup>128</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State, 29 November 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1001-1002.

<sup>129</sup> Travis Beal Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 58-59.

<sup>130</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State, 29 November 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1003.

people and government of Finland have a long, honorable and wholly peaceful record which has won for them the respect and warm regard of the people and Government of the United States.<sup>131</sup>

Roosevelt's statement was not only a denunciation of the Soviet actions, but a recognition of the friendly relationship that was shared by the US and Finland. This statement was also a signal from Roosevelt of the arguments that he would make to the public to drum up support for American intervention in Europe. On December 1, 1939 the Finnish Ambassador to the United States, Hjalmar Procope, sent a personal message to President Roosevelt thanking him for the words of support saying, "We feel that you will help us and that you will give us support as you find it possible."<sup>132</sup> Roosevelt's quote is important because it is an early outlier for what would become known as the Atlantic Charter, which was signed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill on August 14, 1941, recognizing the right of self-determination to all nations of the world, regardless of their size.<sup>133</sup> The Atlantic Charter and its principles would be the what the Finnish government would hold on to throughout the duration of the Second World War.

While the Americans and the West were supporting the Finns publicly, the Soviets recognized a puppet Finnish government established by Otto Kuusinen. Kuusinen, a Finnish communist who was active in the Soviet government and upon the outbreak of war moved to the border town of Terijoki. The establishment of the puppet government provided the Soviets a government to negotiate with to achieve their

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<sup>131</sup> Soviet Aggression in Finland. Accessed October 30, 2016.  
[http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/\\_resources/images/msf/msf01296](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msf01296).

<sup>132</sup> "PSF Finland." Accessed October 30, 2016.  
[http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/\\_resources/images/psf/psfa0286.pdf](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/psf/psfa0286.pdf).

<sup>133</sup> "Atlantic Charter." *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia* (2016): 1p. 1. *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 28, 2016).

territorial aims, as they refused to negotiate further with the current, internationally recognized Finnish government. This puppet government then directly appealed to the Soviets for military help.<sup>134</sup> Although the Soviets attempted to frame the situation in Finland as them coming to the aid of oppressed peoples, the West was unmoved and the public, especially in the United States, was outraged.

The American public and press shared the same level of outrage at the Soviet invasion of Finland. This outrage by the public strengthened the sympathies and favorable view of the Finns in the eyes of ordinary Americans. These sympathies would help fuel relief efforts organized by Herbert Hoover, and also begin to change the minds of the American public that intervention in Europe was necessary to prevent further atrocities. The Soviet argument that Finland posed a security threat to Leningrad seemed a poor excuse for an invasion, and the American press and public brushed it off. When the press found out that the bombing raids carried out by the Soviets targeted Helsinki indiscriminately, rather than strictly military targets, there was a strong sense of outrage that the Soviets would bomb children. Editors like Robert McCormick of the Chicago Tribune wrote that the Soviets would, “feel the moral indignation of the entire civilized world for their infamous deeds.”<sup>135</sup> In a Gallup poll taken in mid-December, 88% of those surveyed expressed sympathies with Finland, while only 1% expressed any sympathy for Russia.<sup>136</sup> This sympathy toward Finland would show itself in the form of donations to various aid organizations.

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<sup>134</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 1 December 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1014-1015.; The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 1 December 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1015.

<sup>135</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 76-77.

<sup>136</sup> Gallup Survey #179, Question #4a, 31 December 1939, <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/Gallup/Gallup.pdf>, 197, accessed November 13, 2019.

The Finnish Relief Fund, founded by former President Herbert Hoover, quickly became the most popular relief organization to which the American public donated. This was largely because newspapers nationwide pledged their support to the Finnish Relief Fund and collected donations from their readers. The support shown by both the public and the press demonstrated that the US friendship with Finland was valued, and the people were more than willing to assist a loyal friend in need. By Christmas 1939, the Finnish Relief Fund had raised \$200,000, which Hoover sent to Helsinki for the purposes of civilian aid.<sup>137</sup> The radio also helped bring news reports into the homes of most Americans, which only aided the efforts of the Finnish Relief Fund, helping them raise over \$1 million by mid-January 1940, and led to the establishment of an industrialist branch of the Fund. Thomas J. Watson of the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) took charge of this branch, and within a month and a half it had raised \$600,000 of the promised \$1 million from various companies over all industries.<sup>138</sup> By the end of February 1940, about a month before the Winter War would end, Hoover's Finnish Relief Fund had raised a total of \$2 million since its inception in December 1939. This is a shocking number when one takes into account that the total money raised in 2019 dollars equates to over \$36.5 million in a matter of three months.<sup>139</sup> The citizens of the United States clearly supported Finland's struggle, both because Finland was a small republic fighting for the preservation of its democracy and because Finland was a country held in high regard by the public for its consistent and faithful payment of outstanding debt to the United States.

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<sup>137</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 82.

<sup>138</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 85.

<sup>139</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 87.; Inflation Calculator, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1940?amount=2000000>, accessed Sept. 25, 2019.

Diplomatically, policy makers in the Roosevelt administration discussed whether or not to break off diplomatic relations with Russia. This idea, however, was never given serious consideration, as Secretary Hull recognized that there would eventually be a split between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, with the latter most likely switching sides and joining the allies. Because of this, US policy makers did not want to push away a potential ally.<sup>140</sup> On December 1, 1939 Roosevelt appealed to the Soviets to refrain from directly bombing civilians. The Soviets ignored the appeal, enraging Roosevelt.<sup>141</sup>

The Soviets continued to anger the Roosevelt administration, becoming more and more audacious by attempting to purchase American-made bombers from companies like Boeing, in order to reverse engineer them and produce their own version. The administration was completely unaware of the attempts by Soviet representatives, until Boeing notified the U.S. Government, and on December 2, 1939 Roosevelt appealed to aircraft manufacturers and other companies that produced aircraft material to enact a moral embargo on the Soviets, a move that was supported by the American press.<sup>142</sup> Unbeknownst to Roosevelt, the amount of trade to the Soviet Union had skyrocketed with the outbreak of European war in 1939, with the bulk of the trade being materials such as copper, gasoline, and other metals that could be used to produce, manufacture, and operate weapons of war. When Roosevelt was notified in January 1940, he had few options for taking action other than attempting to persuade businesses to abide by the moral embargo. Congress, however, began holding hearings and demanding answers

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<sup>140</sup> Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 1 December 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1023; Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 92-93.

<sup>141</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 1 December 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1014-1015.

<sup>142</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 97-100.

from the State Department as to why the Soviets were able to procure these items, when they were currently at war with a nation that was adored by the American public.<sup>143</sup> Legally, the United States was bound by a series of Neutrality Acts, which prohibited intervention of any sort by Americans in Europe, and the sale of weapons by the government to a country at war. The origin of the Neutrality Acts rested in America's experience in the First World War, however the actions of the government, especially attempting to intervene on the behalf of Finland and the imposition of a moral embargo, demonstrates that the United States was quickly moving away from its policy of neutrality. This move was also influenced by the feelings of the American public (feelings heavily influenced by the press), who saw the attack on Finland as an attack on democracy by communists and demanded that action be taken.<sup>144</sup>

While some in the United States criticized the policies of the Roosevelt administration, the American public had very favorable views towards providing Finland some semblance of assistance. In fact, support for Finland greatly outweighed that of America's traditional European allies, and that support was directly tied to Finland's prompt repayment of its debts. Polls taken in December 1939 showed that 88% of Americans were sympathetic towards Finland and wanted to help Finland more than they did the allies. Another poll, this time by Gallup, indicated that 65% supported a government loan to Finland that would help purchase required war materials, with 61% favoring the \$60,000,000 that Finland had requested. The same respondents only gave an

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<sup>143</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 25 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, I: 280-281; Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 174-180.

<sup>144</sup> Edwin L. James, "Soviet Russia Adopts Technique of Germany," *New York Times*, 3 December 1939, 87, Accessed March 17, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1939/12/03/94746544.html?pageNumber=87>.

18% favorability towards loans to England and France for the purpose of acquiring war materials, with the number rising to 25% if the two nations would make payments on their outstanding war debts to the United States.<sup>145</sup> The American public had never forgotten that Finland had continuously paid its war debt to the United States, even throughout the Great Depression, and the consistency of payments helped Finland hold a special place in the hearts and minds of the American public.<sup>146</sup>

The aid and sympathy towards Finland and its displaced citizens demonstrated the deep connection that the American public felt that their country had with Finland, but in order to survive the Finns needed more than medical supplies and civilian aid. The Finnish government sought material aid and manpower from the West and the request for aid from the Finns led the United States and the British governments to discuss potential avenues of aid to Finland. While Roosevelt was still constrained by the Neutrality Act legislation and isolationist sentiment, he and his subordinates were able to find and exploit loopholes to assist the Finns. When the British Ambassador in the United States, Lord Lothian, spoke with Secretary of State Hull about the potential for aid, Hull informed him that Finland had about \$4 million available to purchase military supplies, but that the Americans would have issues supplying aid to Finland due to a high volume of outstanding orders by both the United States military, and that of the allies. President Roosevelt, however, used his influence and was able to persuade the US Navy to give Finland priority in the purchase of forty-four Brewster pursuit planes. Further military

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<sup>145</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 104, 110.

<sup>146</sup> W.S. Style, "Excerpts of Letters on Many Subjects- Appreciating Finland," *New York Times*, 24 June 1934, 54, Accessed, March 17, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1934/06/24/94544991.html?pageNumber=54> .

aid, though, would be harder to come by.<sup>147</sup> Part of the reason for the lack of military aid was, ironically, the Finnish successes on the battlefield in December 1939; the Finns had managed to fight the Soviets to a stalemate, without losing ground, and thus the United States did not seem to feel immense pressure to expedite aid to Finland.<sup>148</sup> Another possible reason for the lack of aid to Finland during the Winter War was Secretary of State Hull's dislike of Finnish Minister Procope, which was shared by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs at the State Department, Jay Moffat.<sup>149</sup> Both men deplored the persistent nature of the minister, who did not like taking 'no' for an answer from the Americans, and thus placed many calls to Secretary Hull and Moffat. While authors like R. Michael Berry argue that Hull's dislike of Procope had no influence on his views towards Finland, he notes that the Secretary did approach Finnish aid with hesitancy. He gives three reasons for the hesitancy: Hull's presidential ambitions, desire to ensure the Reciprocal Trade Act was passed and renewed, and concern about upsetting isolationists who could then have a strong case to challenge the administration in the upcoming election.<sup>150</sup>

Finnish battlefield success in the opening months of the Winter War helped it gain support from western allies such as Britain and France, who had originally been very hesitant to commit to aiding Finland. This support, however, would only come to fruition on a much smaller scale than originally planned, due to the British policymakers and planners underestimating their power globally, and maintaining a superior colonial

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<sup>147</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 30 December 1939, *FRUS 1939*, I: 1037-1038.; *Jacobs, America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 114, 119.

<sup>148</sup> *Jacobs, America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 121.

<sup>149</sup> *Jacobs, America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 114-115.

<sup>150</sup> R. Michael Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception* (Helsinki: SHS, 1987), 73.

mindset. In a cable dated January 4, 1940, the U.S. Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) cabled the Secretary of State discussing his conversation with Lord Halifax, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In this conversation, Halifax told Johnson that the Swedish government had refused to allow foreign troops to pass through its territory, and that the current plans were to pursue a non-intervention policy in a manner similar to that of the Spanish Civil War. The British planned to send as much small arms ammunition as possible to the Finnish to alleviate their 20,000,000-round request. In the same dispatch, Johnson reported press stories of German threats against Sweden if the Swedes allowed the passage of foreign soldiers through its territory. He also included information that neither Britain, nor France intended to declare war on Soviet Russia. This dispatch also included talk that the French were entertaining the idea of sending 10,000 Alpine Chasseurs to assist the Finnish military. However, Lord Halifax informed Johnson that this was due to the internal political pressure from French anti-communist groups, who were also advocating a declaration of war against Soviet Russia, but the French government had no intention of making such a declaration.<sup>151</sup> In a memorandum discussed by the War Cabinet, the British also were considering allowing volunteers to go to Finland, and advocated for some semblance of governmental control over the volunteers. There was also discussion about ensuring that there was Swedish approval prior to sending volunteers, as they would most likely pass through Swedish territory en route to Finland.<sup>152</sup> This discussion highlights a complete 180 of the British

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<sup>151</sup> The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 4 January 1940, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*) 1940, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 269-270.

<sup>152</sup> War Cabinet, "Report by the Minister for Co-Ordination of Defence," 11 January 1940, CAB 66/4/44, 305-309.

government. The British policymakers went from recommending that there be no intervention in Finland if it were alone in conflict with the Soviet Union, to discussing ways to aid and intervene on behalf of Finland.

The American press and public followed the events of the Winter War very closely but were unable to pressure the government into giving Finland the material aid it really needed. Finland thus employed creative means to get the material aid that was so desperately needed, such as offering bounties for war materials. As *Time* reported, the Finns were offering what essentially was a bounty to Russian soldiers for their weapons. Finnish pilots dropped leaflets over the Soviet lines, and over Leningrad in an attempt to draw deserters. Included in the leaflet were instructions on how to surrender to Finnish forces, should the soldiers decide to take the monetary offer. They offered 100 rubles for a pistol, 150 rubles for a rifle, 10,000 rubles for a tank, and they were willing to pay 1,000 American dollars for any pilot who brought to them an undamaged plane. In addition to receiving \$1,000 American dollars, the Finns offered to fly the pilot to any location in the world that they desired. While it is unclear whether Soviet soldiers took the Finns up on their offer, the creativity displayed to get much needed material, and the way that the American press covered it only served to boost the American opinion of and the respect for the Finnish cause.<sup>153</sup>

While the Allies were discussing ways to assist Finland, the Finns were busy worrying about aid that the Soviets may be receiving. The Finns were very concerned with the potential of German aid to Soviet Russia, as the Minister to Finland, Schoenfeld, cabled the Secretary of State on January 5, 1940; he echoed Finnish concerns about the

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<sup>153</sup> "World War: Finland Will Pay," *Time*, 15 January 1940, online, accessed 24 February 2020, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,772328,00.html>.

alleged Soviet request for 200 German pilots stating that if the pilot request were to be true, there was no way that the Finns could hold militarily. Schoenfeld relayed Prime Minister Ryti's realization of the important role that Sweden was playing for the Finnish army, in which Sweden was importing war materials from Germany, then sending their stock to Finland, and that if Sweden were to be forced to take a position against either Germany or the Soviet Union the situation could be dire for Finland.<sup>154</sup> The Germans had absolutely no qualms with their neighbor's army losing division after division to the Finnish army, just so long as the arms were not being shipped directly to the Finnish, thus keeping the appearance of German 'neutrality' in the matter. The Germans may well have welcomed a weakened Soviet army, and their view of the Slavic people as inferior may have caused them to expect the Finnish army to triumph, but because the two nations were allied in a pact of non-aggression, the direct supply of arms could be interpreted as an act of aggression.

Finland was hopeful that the friendly relationship between the Germans and the Soviets would be beneficial to them diplomatically. Finland was hopeful for German neutrality during the Winter War because Finland had a very strong desire for Germany to be a mediator in the resolution of the conflict. The Americans were also considered possible mediators but it only made sense that Finland would prefer an active 'ally' to the Soviets to serve as a mediator, which was relayed to the Secretary of State by Schoenfeld on January 8, 1940.<sup>155</sup> The following day, Schoenfeld again cabled the Secretary of State to relay a statement from the Finnish Prime Minister, Tanner, which read "That the

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<sup>154</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 5 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 271-272.

<sup>155</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 8 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 273.

United States, together with the other neutral great power Italy, would approach Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Finland offering their good offices for the purpose of bringing about armistice and peace negotiations and that the United States would invite Italy and Sweden to try to bring pressure to bear on Germany at the same time for the same purpose.”<sup>156</sup> While the Germans were maintaining an official policy of neutrality, one of their closest allies, Italy, openly supported Finland. The Italian government was one of the biggest supporters of Finland during the Winter War, outside of Sweden, and its support included planes and 76mm anti-aircraft guns, which Schoenfeld noted in his January 9<sup>th</sup> cable, were obtained with great difficulty.<sup>157</sup>

The French were also very vocal supporters of the Finnish cause and made no secret to the American government of their material support. U.S. ambassador to France William Bullitt cabled back to the Secretary of State on January 15, 1940, that the first 30 French planes had arrived in Finland and had already joined Finnish air operations.<sup>158</sup> Bullitt in the same cable also spoke of the strategic disconnect between the allies and the growing complications involved in supporting the Finns. He stated that the French were willing to send an army into Finland, with their plan calling for the British army joining the French, and a combined French, Polish, and British naval force covering the landings. The British however, demurred because they argued that the Poles wanted no part of the planned invasion; the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski, contradicted the British saying that his fleet would love to partake in such an action, which then forced the British

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<sup>156</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, 9 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 274.

<sup>157</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 9 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 275.

<sup>158</sup> The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State, 15 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 276.

to flatly state that they did not want to take any action that could be deemed as a hostile act towards the Soviet Union. Further complicating the French plan, both the Norwegian and Swedish governments refused to permit the French army from passing through their territory.<sup>159</sup> Both the French and British governments wanted Finland to continue to stay in a state of war with the Soviet Union, largely because the war was hurting the German war machine. While the Soviets were engaged in warfare, they were unable to supply Germany with the supplies that it required, and the Swedes were also not shipping supplies to the Germans, but if peace came about, then the supply channels would open up again, giving Germany an advantage.<sup>160</sup>

Despite its disadvantages in manpower and material, Finland was determined to stand its ground. For the American public, closely following the Winter War through press reports, this struggle would have reminded them of the War of 1812, where an undermanned, outgunned United States military was able to fend off a British invasion. It was previous events in American history that the press, when reporting on the Winter War, was sure to correlate when discussing the conflict. The early part of the Winter War was marked by one Finnish victory after another on the ground. The infamous “Mannerheim Line” was an eighty-mile long series of fortifications spread out along the Karelian Isthmus bordered by Lake Ladoga to the north and the Baltic Sea to the south.<sup>161</sup> On February 5, 1940, Schoenfeld cabled the Secretary of State to inform him of the recent military successes the Finns had in the vicinity of the line, successes that included

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<sup>159</sup> The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State, 15 January 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 276-277.

<sup>160</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 218.

<sup>161</sup> William R. Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1991), 64, 70.

the destruction of the 18<sup>th</sup> Soviet division at Kittala, and the encirclement of the 168<sup>th</sup> division south of the lake. In the same cable, he also reported back that the Soviets were rumored to be reaching out to the Swedes to establish contact with Finland, so the two sides could begin peace talks.<sup>162</sup> In order to defeat a numerically superior foe, the Finns employed a tactic known as “motti” in which a smaller force slowly chips away at a larger force by using a front and rear guard to surround the larger element, and utilizes quick, ambush attacks to deplete the enemy morale. The Finns employed this tactic effectively by targeting the supply sections and the Soviet kitchens, depriving them of any warmth.”<sup>163</sup> *Life* detailed the destruction of the Russian’s 44<sup>th</sup> division, comparing it to the defeat suffered by General Braddock at the hands of the French and Indians during the French and Indian War.<sup>164</sup> This analogy would be one of many used by the American press to help drive home the struggle of an outnumbered, outgunned group fighting against a technologically superior enemy.

The motti tactics employed by the Finnish army did not go unnoticed by American military leadership. The Finnish army’s effective use of motti tactics during the course of the Winter War, especially at the Battle of Suomussalmi where these tactics destroyed two entire Soviet divisions, was taught as a part of a military history course at the United States Military Academy at West Point.<sup>165</sup> The fact that the United States army was teaching its future officers the tactics employed by the Finnish army fifty years after they were employed in battle not only demonstrated that its tactical effectiveness

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<sup>162</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 5 February 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 287.

<sup>163</sup> Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940*, 131.

<sup>164</sup> “Second Battle of Suomussalmi,” *Life*, 12 February 1940, 28.

<sup>165</sup> Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940*, 131.; Trotter’s book was published in 1991, and it is currently unknown if the USMA is still teaching a military history course that discusses motti tactics.

had withstood the test of time, but also showed the amount of respect that American leadership had for the Finns. The American magazine *Time* introduced its readers, and the world, to the term “sisu” the Finnish word for “guts”, which the Finns used as their rallying cry during the course of the war. More importantly, the magazine helped drive the cry for international assistance to the beleaguered Finns.<sup>166</sup>

It is clear why not only the West be so enamored by the successes of the Finns, but also why Germany would reconsider its alliance with a power that it thought to be much stronger. The Finnish successes were not restricted to combat on the ground. The Finnish air force performed exceptionally well, considering that their aircraft were comprised of donations from many different countries. This performance is especially surprising as the Finns tended to only send one aircraft up against incoming Soviet formations, and on one occasion, the (only) Finnish ace Jorma Sarvanto downed six Soviet bombers in only four minutes. By the end of the war, the Soviet planes would break formation and turn back at the sight of the lone Finnish aircraft sent to challenge them.<sup>167</sup> This not only spoke to the skill and effectiveness of both the Finnish pilots and strategy, but also to the incompetence of the Soviet air force. By the end of the war, the pilots of the Finnish air force had sustained a loss of 26 aircraft, while shooting down 240 Soviet aircraft.<sup>168</sup>

While Finland had successes during the first three months of the Winter War, its lack of sufficient manpower and war material supplies posed a serious problem. Unfortunately for Finland, it could not hold back the Soviets forever. Finland knew that it

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<sup>166</sup> James Aldridge, “Northern Theatre: Sisu,” *Time*, 8 January 1940, online, accessed 24 Feb 2020, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,763161-1,00.html>.

<sup>167</sup> Jonathan Clements, *Mannerheim: President, Soldier, Spy* (London: Haus, 2012), 251.

<sup>168</sup> Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940*, 191.

desperately needed assistance from western allies, such as the United States, Britain, and France. US isolationism was still strong, and the British and French knew their plan to send an expedition through Norway and Sweden was never going to materialize due to resistance from the Norwegian and Swedish governments, yet they attempted to act as if permission was soon coming as a means to keep Finland in the fight, thus weakening the Soviets. As the spring thaw approached, it desperately sought peace knowing that Finnish forces would not hold out as they had during the winter. It should be noted that according to the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, as late as March 2, 1940, the British and French had appealed to the Norwegian and Swedish governments for passage of forces, but that yet again, they were denied.<sup>169</sup> While the United States was not willing to take an active role in the mediation of peace talks, it did take a vested interest in the independence of Finland. The American Ambassador in the Soviet Union, Laurence Steinhardt, cabled the Secretary of State on March 8, 1940 to inform him of the proposed peace treaty that the Soviets were preparing to send to the Finnish government. It was a treaty that was very favorable to the Soviet Union and the proposition was made from a position of Soviet strength, not weakness. In this cable, Steinhardt included a conversation that he had with Molotov, who told him that “The Soviet Union is not interested in the composition of the Finnish government.” Steinhardt did not entirely believe this statement; he expressed his concern that the Soviets may attempt to go outside their reported terms in order to put Kuusinen’s pro-Soviet government in power.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 4 March 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 296.

<sup>170</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 8 March 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 305-306.

The Winter War came to a close on March 13, 1940 with the signing of the Treaty of Moscow. Finland ceded about ten percent of its territory, having to relocate 400,000 to 500,000 citizens from that territory, and having to deal with the loss of agricultural and forestry lands, and dealing with cuts in forestry product production.<sup>171</sup> Americans had donated \$300,000 to the Red Cross and nearly \$3 million to Hoover's Finnish Relief Fund by the end of the Winter War, and these organizations pledged to continue helping the soldiers wounded in the fighting, and the resettlement of Finns who lost their land in the Treaty of Moscow.<sup>172</sup> In the closing months of the war, the United States had only delivered seventeen of the forty-four Brewster airplanes purchased by Finland, with only a handful participating in the Winter War's waning days. The War Department did help Finland secure contracts to purchase small arms ammunition, powder, and TNT, however these were not delivered in time to be used during the Winter War. With the Treaty of Moscow also came the opportunity for Finland to buy arms directly from the United States, which they took advantage of, purchasing 75mm guns and 8-inch howitzers.<sup>173</sup> Despite negotiating a peace that retained their autonomy, Finland's future was far from assured.

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<sup>171</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 13 March 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 317; The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 13 March 1940, *FRUS 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 314-317; Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in WWII*, 19.

<sup>172</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 228.

<sup>173</sup> Jacobs, *America and the Winter War, 1939-1940*, 224-225.

## V. THE FINNISH MIRACLE: FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE AFTER WORLD WAR II

At the conclusion of the Winter War, the American public still overwhelmingly supported Finland, as did the Roosevelt administration. Anti-communist sentiment in the United States was part of the reason for the continued support. Americans also supported Finland because they witnessed the tiny republic stand up against communist tyranny, which brought back memories of American history, when the tiny American republic stood up against tyrannical Britain. Finally, the promptness and consistency of Finland's repayment of its debt to the United States not only helped Finland gain support from the Roosevelt Administration, but also the American people. This support would become vital when Finland entered the Second World War as an Axis belligerent. The United States was the only allied nation that did not declare war on Finland, as the government saw Finland's war with the Soviet Union as a separate war, outside of the global conflict. The United States, unlike the United Kingdom, benefitted from the geographic separation from Finland, as they did not need to declare war to simply appease the Soviets. The Finnish government, despite being in a full-blown war, continued to make its debt payments to the United States. This was not only appreciated by the American public and government, but it was a sign of goodwill that demonstrated that Finland wished to maintain its close relationship with the United States. The United States, like any lender, appreciated the promptness of the debt payments and continued to work towards finding a solution that would keep its preferred borrower independent and able to borrow more in the future. It was this positive economic relationship, and its resulting influence on

American public opinion, that drove US policy makers to find an avenue to ensure an independent Finland.

Finland was the only country in Europe that shares a land border with Soviet Union (Russia) to retain its complete autonomy at the end of World War II. Finland fought two separate wars against the Soviet Union from 1939-1940 (Winter War) and 1941-1944 (Continuation War), and yet was still able to maintain its complete independence. The previous chapter detailed the events of the Winter War, and this chapter will focus on the events of the Continuation War. This then brings up the question, how was Finland able to maintain its independence after World War II? The first factor that deserves consideration is the nature of Finland's co-belligerency with Germany, and its impact on relations with the allied nations. Specifically, Finland's relationship with Britain was severely impacted by the Finnish belligerency with Germany. The second and most well-known factor is the shared anti-communist feelings among the Finnish and West. Vocal support from FDR, among others, was prevalent especially during the Winter War. Finland's choice of armed resistance is what separated it from its Baltic neighbors, and it is important to note that after the Baltic states allowed Soviet forces into their countries in the name of "security" they would not regain their independence until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition to this point, the United States acknowledged that the Finnish campaign against the Soviet Union was a separate war, not a part of the larger global conflict. Third, and most importantly, the economic relationship between Finland and the United States was central, as it was Finland's impeccable record of repaying its debt to the United States, its close association with private investors, and its abundance of natural resources in high

demand in the United States, that led to Finland maintaining its independence.

Due to geographic isolation, Finland struggled to fulfill its most basic needs, such as food stuffs, through trade with the West. This became especially apparent once Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, and left Finland with two choices, rely on the Soviet Union, or rely on Germany. The first choice was out of the question, and so the Finns sought aid from Germany. Finland's co-belligerency with Germany had the greatest impact on relations with the West, most notably with the British, but the United States remained friendly with the Finns. Germany during the spring of 1940 had taken over Denmark and Norway, a takeover that damaged Finland in two ways. First, the Finnish were unable to receive supplies from the West, as the Germans had controlled the approach to the Baltic Sea. Second, the stunning defeat sustained by the Allied forces in Norway led the Finns to lose the respect for the fighting skill and strength of the Allies. With the French capitulating months later, the Finns expected to lose British support, as they figured that the British would align themselves with the Soviet Union.<sup>174</sup> This shift was a complete reversal from months earlier, when Churchill proclaimed, "Only Finland, superb, nay sublime in the jaws of peril- Finland shows what free men can do."<sup>175</sup> Now these free men were forced to make a deal with the devil.

In the aftermath of the Winter War, Finland again sought to establish its neutrality and gain international recognition of its neutrality similar to that of Sweden. The Finns attempted to maintain peaceful terms with the Russians, and the Germans, who at the time were allied, by agreeing to ship raw materials to both. Under the terms of the agreement, the Germans would receive 60% of the nickel ore mined from Petsamo, while

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<sup>174</sup> Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice*, 21.

<sup>175</sup> Clements, *Mannerheim: President, Soldier, Spy*, 254.

the Russians would receive the other 40%, and these allocations would be after Finland had satisfied its own nickel needs. In his report to the Secretary of State, Minister Schoenfeld notes that this deal did not sit well with the British government.<sup>176</sup> By agreeing to this deal, the Finns attempted to do something that they had sought after all along, which was trading with their larger, more powerful neighbors while maintaining their neutrality. This neutrality, however, would not last long.

As 1941 drew closer, the fragile alliance between the Soviet Union and Germany began to show signs of strain, and Finland and its war material resources would soon become a cause for concern of both the Soviets and Germans. These rising tensions between the Germans and the Soviets caught Finland in a precarious position. While the Germans and the Soviets had a non-aggression pact in place, reports from American diplomats show a rising level of distrust. On August 19, 1940, the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) cabled the Secretary of State to inform him of the completion of Soviet troop movements, one that included twenty divisions along the Finnish border and another ten in Estonia.<sup>177</sup> Thurston speculated that the reason for the movement was a sort of preparation for Soviet action in Finland. This action would speculatively kick off when the Germans began their invasion of Britain; however, this seems to be pure speculation on the part of Thurston as no clear plans have been uncovered. Knowing that the Germans invaded and overtook the Norwegians in April 1940, and with Poland partitioned between the Nazis and Soviets, the picture becomes clear that Finland would

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<sup>176</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 29 July 1940, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1940*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), I: 344-345 (hereafter *FRUS*).

<sup>177</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State, 19 August 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I: 340.

soon become the next contested territory.

The Finnish government also knew that Finland was soon to be the site of contested territory, and again attempted to form a union, for purposes of unified neutrality and defense, with the Norwegians and Swedes. The Finnish government knew that by projecting strength, they would be able to stave off further attempts by foreign invaders to occupy their territory and drag them into the growing global conflict. This realization that strength was power was undoubtedly a motivator for Finland to seek and maintain friendly relations with the United States. In a cable to the Secretary of State, Minister Schoenfeld details a conversation with Finnish Prime Minister Ryti, where the latter discusses the planned union. He goes on to inform the Secretary of State that the plans were being kept secret, and out of the public for the time being, but that the Swedish government and military were seriously considering the proposal, according to the Prime Minister. Schoenfeld notes that he brought up during his conversation with Ryti the proposal brought upon by his predecessor, and the opposition that the Soviets gave to the idea of the Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns uniting in neutrality and defense. When Schoenfeld mentioned this to Ryti, the latter expressed regret that the plan had been made public.<sup>178</sup> The attempts of the Finns to form a union with their neighboring nations demonstrates their ultimate desire for neutrality, but also their acknowledgement that the Nazis and the Soviets respected the neutrality and military strength of the Swedes, strength that Finland knew it would need in the event of another conflict.

The Finnish government must have realized that the idea of a defensive alliance with Sweden, Norway, or both was futile, as a week after Schoenfeld reported to the

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<sup>178</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 5 September 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I: 341-342.

Secretary of State Finland's desire for neutrality, he sent another telegram to the Secretary informing him of the improving relations between Finland and Nazi Germany. The warming of relations between the Finns and Germans was only natural. The Finns would not align themselves with the Soviets, especially after the Winter War, and western allies like Great Britain and the United States were too far away to provide any direct assistance. It is also worth mentioning that the German U-boat campaign being waged in the Atlantic on allied shipping limited any possible availability of ships to bring aid to Finland. In this telegram, Schoenfeld discussed how the relations were quickly warming up between the two nations, including Hitler directing German athletes to compete against Finnish and Swedish teams in a friendly meet in Finland. He also noted that the Finnish government had done well to suppress the anti-German feelings that were prevalent only a year prior when the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was signed. Schoenfeld also casually warned the Secretary that it was very reasonable to conclude that Germany was not going to let the Soviets have a free hand in Finland as they had during the Winter War.<sup>179</sup> This warning is important in two ways: the first is that it shows that despite Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union being allies, the two are on a collision course for conflict. The second way that this warning is important is that it shows that the Germans were seeking to spread their influence in the same way that they did in 1918 with regards to Finland, and that they again would be a rival to the influence of the United States in Finland.

The relationship between the Finns and the Germans quickly blossomed past the point of simple commercial agreements. This budding relationship would arouse Soviet

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<sup>179</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 5 September 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I: 342-343.

suspicious of Finland's true intent and would eventually lead to Britain to side with the Soviets (as a means to keep them engaged with the Germans). However, the United States, while suspicious, would continue to seek ways to draw Finland away from Germany and back to the western allies. On September 26, 1940, Schoenfeld cabled the Secretary of State informing him of an agreement between the Germans and Finns that allowed Germany to use Finnish ports and railways to transport its soldiers and equipment to northern Norway. He also stated that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had told him that Finland had hoped that the United States would not take a negative view of this agreement.<sup>180</sup> On cables dated October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Schoenfeld reported to the Secretary of State that the Germans had planned to station four divisions in northern Norway (double the originally thought number) as a precautionary measure against the Soviet Union, and the Finnish military had rebuilt a new defense line said to be far superior to the Mannerheim Line. He added that Germany had delivered equipment, including a hundred anti-tank guns ordered before the outbreak of the Winter War, and the equipment and ammunition ordered from the United States had also arrived.<sup>181</sup> The Finnish and German governments continued to build closer ties, and by 1941, the Finnish fears of a Soviet invasion drove them deeper into German arms.<sup>182</sup>

In some ways, the United States is responsible for the Finns becoming friendlier with the Germans. Finland had been open with the US government in its shortage and need for food and other basic necessities, but the United States was slow to act and find a

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<sup>180</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 26 September 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I: 348.

<sup>181</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 3 October 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I:348-349; The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 3 October 1940, *FRUS, 1940*, I: 349-350.

<sup>182</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 4 April 1941, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1941*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958), I: 18, (hereafter *FRUS*). accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1941v01>.

viable solution. Most importantly, the United States did not assist Finland with military supplies necessary to help the Finns rebuild in the aftermath of the Winter War by including them into the Lend-Lease program. With Finland fearing further Soviet aggression, and the United States and Britain subsequently unable or unwilling to act, it was only natural that they sought out a powerful ally to preserve their independence. In a telegram to the Secretary of State, Schoenfeld spoke of the Finnish government's desire for \$7 million in loans for food; however, he noted that the Finnish Minister in Washington, Hjalmar Procopé, had publicly stated that there was little chance of the loan materializing.<sup>183</sup> *Life* magazine noted in a February 1941 issue that the reason for the denial of the Finnish loan was that there were suspicions that the Finns were letting food pass to the Germans. The magazine denounces this claim, noting that the Finns had a very low supply of food, and had sent 100,000 men to cut 17,000,000 cubic meters of wood as a replacement for coal, which the Finns lacked. They also noted that Petsamo, Finland's northernmost port, was blockaded and the only imports allowed in were for Sweden and Finland.<sup>184</sup> U.S. suspicions were nothing new with American foreign policymakers, especially with regards to Finland; the same hesitations taken by the Americans in 1917 and 1918 led to the Finns aligning with Germany. Similar to the events following the First World War, the smaller nations of Europe were facing starvation. Herbert Hoover in 1940 had set up a Committee on Food that focused on the five small democracies of Europe (Belgium, Holland, Poland, Norway, and Finland), however the British had refused to allow Hoover to send food through the British Naval

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<sup>183</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 15 January 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 3-4.

<sup>184</sup> "The Brave Finns Face the Peace," *Life Magazine*, February 17, 1941, 80-81.

Blockade.<sup>185</sup> Unlike 1919, when Hoover had sailed food through the British blockade under American naval protection, this time he did not have the strength of the American Navy to rely on, as the US had yet to enter the war. *Life* brought the plight of the small democracy and its starving people to the American public and was critical of the American assumption that Finland was passing food to the Germans. The editor also wrote an article that details his support for feeding not only the people of the small democracies, but those in unoccupied France as well.<sup>186</sup>

In what could have been detrimental to long-term US-Finnish relations, the Germans took advantage of the lack of aid to the Finns and quickly escalated their relationship with Finland. Ambassador Steinhardt cabled the Secretary of State on April 8, 1941, relaying information from his informant that a large number of Germans arrived in civilian clothes, and that Finland requested to become a signatory of the Tripartite Pact, but the Germans had denied that request, claiming the timing was not favorable.<sup>187</sup> Minister Schoenfeld on April 26 painted a clearer picture for the Secretary of State about the nature of the German-Finnish relations when he reported: “It is strengthened as previously reported by deep and abiding distrust felt here for the Russians as result of historic experience of Finnish people and by belief that if they must choose between accepting German domination and that of Russia, former is to be preferred since Finns feel that their ethnic unity on their own soil would at least be preserved with hope for the future, whereas in latter event they expect their population would be deported and

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<sup>185</sup> “Hunger is a Weapon,” *Life*, March 24, 1941, 32-33.

<sup>186</sup> “Hunger is a Weapon,” *Life*, March 24, 1941, 32-33.; “Food: We could eat less; Other men and women and children are starving,” *Life*, March 24, 1941, 34.

<sup>187</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 8 April 1941, *FRUS, 1941, I*: 19.

dispersed.”<sup>188</sup> This quote shows that Finnish nationalism was just as strong as it was during the 1918 independence and subsequent civil war.

The Finnish public soon grew to embrace its country’s relations with the Germans, due largely to the Soviets’ aggressive policy towards Finland following the end of the Winter War. Certain key officials within the Finnish government were concerned with this growing sympathy among their people, as they were trying to maintain neutrality in the event of conflict between the Germans and Soviets. To this end, they were inquisitive as to whether the United States would be able to encourage Ambassador Steinhardt to persuade the Soviets to adopt a friendlier tone towards the Finns.<sup>189</sup>

The Soviets did nothing to ease the Finnish fears, and it didn’t take long before the Germans exploited the Finnish fears, while also flexing their muscle on the Finns. In a cable dated June 9, 1941, the Minister in Sweden, Sterling, reported on a conversation that he had with “the Finnish Minister” (presumably the Minister of Foreign Affairs), whom he reported as being “extremely nervous and depressed.” The reason for the Minister’s concern was that the German government had demanded a larger German troop presence in Finland, and while Finland desired to maintain neutrality, he feared that they would be dragged into conflict with the Germans should one break out between Germany and the Soviet Union. The State Department replied back to Sterling informing him that this piece of information “...has been very helpful.”<sup>190</sup> In the days that followed, Finland began calling up its reservists, and by June 12, 1941 they had a total of 100,000 troops in active service, with the bulk of the force being stationed in the southern part of

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<sup>188</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 26 April 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 22-23.

<sup>189</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State, 16 May 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 27-28.

<sup>190</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State, 9 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 31-32.

the country as a precaution to a Russian attack.<sup>191</sup> On June 18, Schoenfeld reported to the Secretary of State that the number of German forces in Finland numbered 30,000 to 35,000 including fighter aircraft and light tanks. On the Russian side, between 15 and 16 divisions had massed, which led to Finland continuing to call up its reserve forces.<sup>192</sup> The following day Schoenfeld reported that a Finnish reserve officer that was connected with the Finnish General Staff told him that Finland did not plan to partake in any offensive operations should war breakout between Germany and Russia, and their mobilization of forces was purely a defensive precaution.<sup>193</sup>

Geography played a key role in the decision taken by the Finnish government to ally themselves with the Germans, and this must have been realized by the British and US governments as well. When the Nazis seized Norway, they effectively cut Finland off from receiving any supplies from allied nations, via a land route through Norway. The German U-boat menace that lurked beneath the waves of the Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean, and North Sea wreaked havoc on allied shipping, and with the British fighting for their survival against the German Luftwaffe, the options for Finland to receive the supplies she needed were very limited. While the United States would do everything possible to try to keep Finland out of war with the Soviet Union, it was unable to provide Finland with the desperately needed supplies due to geographical distance. Furthermore, Finland sought to regain the territory that it lost during the Winter War.

The peace between the Soviet Union and Finland would be short lived, as hostilities soon resumed between the two sides. On June 22, Russia again attacked

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<sup>191</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 12 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 33-34.

<sup>192</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 18 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 36-37.

<sup>193</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 19 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 37.

Finland, this time by dropping bombs on two Finnish coastal defense battleships and islands in western Finland. When transmitting this information to the Secretary of State, Schoenfeld informed him that there was no indication that Finland would retaliate; however, if they were dragged into the conflict, they would seek to regain the territory lost at the end of the Winter War.<sup>194</sup> The Finnish Foreign Affairs department informed Schoenfeld on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June that they had shot down sixteen Soviet aircraft throughout the country that day, with Soviet plane formations numbering up to fifty aircraft, the targets of their bombs being populated areas. As a result, civilian casualties were high. Schoenfeld reported that the Finnish Foreign Affairs ministry informed him that the Soviets blamed Finland for the aggression, and that it would be met by 200,000,000 Russians at a to-be-determined date.<sup>195</sup>

The following day, in a memorandum of conversation, the U.S. Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles noted that the Minister of Finland informed him that the Finns had been forced into taking defensive measures against the Soviets and the Minister told him off the record that he had hoped his country's policy would be one of neutrality with the Germans and the British.<sup>196</sup> Two days later, in another memorandum of conversation, Welles was able to get more clarity from the Finnish in the form of a declaration read to him by the Minister of Finland which said, "The Government of Finland desires to maintain unaltered its relations with Great Britain. The Government of Finland is a co-belligerent with Germany solely against Russia."<sup>197</sup> The English, however, were not pleased with the renewed hostilities between the Finns and the Soviets, and even less

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<sup>194</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 22 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 40-41.

<sup>195</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 25 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 42.

<sup>196</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State, 26 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 43.

<sup>197</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State, 26 June 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 44.

pleased that the Finnish government recognized that they were co-belligerents against the Soviets. As a result, the British began restricting food exports to Finland, which played into German hands as Germany filled the gap and began supplying Finland with the food and other materials they so desperately needed. The Finnish President, and people, believed that their war with the Soviet Union was one that would help rid the world of Bolshevism, which they believed was in the best interest of the world.<sup>198</sup>

Unlike the Americans, the British did not recognize that Finland was fighting a defensive war, but instead viewed the Finnish as aggressors through the same lens that they viewed the Nazis. In fact, *Life* published in its July 7, 1941 issue that “Finland would be foolish to refuse Nazi aid to get back what Russia took last year.”<sup>199</sup> This shows that not only did the US government believe that the Finns were fighting a separate war, but there was sympathy among the American press with the Finnish cause and no anger that they were seeking to reclaim territory that they had lost.

The British government’s decision to reject Finnish claims that Finland was not engaged in a separate war outside of the European conflict, as the United States government had, meant that the Britain and Finland would soon be at odds with one another. It also demonstrated the level of commitment that the United States held towards Finland, as they would continue to seek out solutions to get Finland out of their war with the Soviets. The British blockade of Petsamo led to their severing of ties with Finland, which occurred on August 1, 1941, and which Minister Schoenfeld reported to the Secretary of State the following day. In his telegram, Schoenfeld goes into great detail about the causes for the severance of ties, as well as providing a bit of fact checking of

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<sup>198</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 4 July 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 48.

<sup>199</sup> “War in Russia,” *Life*, 7 July 1941, 40.

the British claims. This is interesting in light of the American-British alliance, but also demonstrates how the US government felt towards Finland. He notes that the British claimed that the blockade was put in place due to Germany using Finland as a base of military operations, but counters the British claim by pointing out that it had been in place prior to the outbreak of German-Russian hostilities by more than a week.<sup>200</sup> He also points out that the British had been interfering with traffic originating from Petsamo, which was a key mining region for Finland, since July 1940, a region whose output was sought by all nations in the conflict. He says that this interference caused Finland difficulty in acquiring food and other necessary daily commodities, and while the overall aim of the British blockade was to hinder German troops, the real casualty of the blockade was the Finnish people.<sup>201</sup> The most scathing allegation that he makes against the British is that they had maintained relations with Finland despite their co-belligerency with Nazi Germany not because they were concerned with breaking off their “long-standing friendly relations” but rather because they were conducting information gathering, feeding the results to both their own government and the Soviets.<sup>202</sup>

The US government, having been a key contributor to Finnish aid at the end of their Civil War in 1919, clearly understood how and why Finland would side with a nation that promised food and other basic necessities. Unlike the end of the Finnish Civil War, the United States was in no position to send food supplies and credits to Finland due to the predation of its shipping by German U-boats. Despite this, the United States never stopped searching for a solution to bring peace to Finland once again. A little over two

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<sup>200</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 2 August 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 54-55.

<sup>201</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 2 August 1941, *FRUS, 1941*, I: 55.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

weeks after the breaking of diplomatic ties between Britain and Finland, the Finnish ambassador to the United States called upon Under Secretary of State Welles for a meeting. In his memorandum of conversation, the Under Secretary noted that he relayed a desire from the Soviet government to make a separate peace with Finland to give territorial concessions. He noted that in this conversation he relayed that every indication the Americans had from the Soviets was that they were doing just fine militarily, and expected to soon gain the upper hand against the Germans.<sup>203</sup> It is clear that the Soviets wished to make a separate peace with the Finns so as to reallocate manpower to focus on the Germans. Welles notes that he told the Finnish ambassador that the Soviets were perhaps willing to make territorial concessions to Finland, should Finland agree to come to the negotiating table.<sup>204</sup> Welles also includes a note that he received from the British ambassador, who arrived after Welles had begun to meet with the Finnish ambassador, and in it Welles wrote: “I have told Eden [Anthony Eden, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs] the difficulties you foresaw the Finns must feel in cutting clear of the Germans, quite apart from the Communist implication...”<sup>205</sup> This note demonstrates that while there were no ties formally between the Finnish and British, the concern for Finland was still on the minds of some within the British government. The bulk of Welles' memorandum covers the two questions posed to him by the Finnish ambassador:

“what guarantees would Great Britain and the United States offer Finland that any peace treaty which the Soviet Union might now be disposed to negotiate would be maintained? And what assurance would Finland be given that, in the event that

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<sup>203</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 18 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 56.

<sup>204</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 18 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 56; The offer by the Soviets would have been the best opportunity for Finland to regain territory lost at the end of the Winter War, however Finland and the allies were in no position to challenge Hitler's military might at this point in 1941..

<sup>205</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 18 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 57.

Germany was defeated and the Soviet Union were to become the predominant military power, Russia would respect any promises which Great Britain or the United States might have made and would not again undertake to seize Finland and drive the Finnish people of their independence?"<sup>206</sup>

Welles replied to the Finnish ambassador that those questions only deserved discussion when Finland was ready to come to the negotiating table, but told the ambassador that should Germany lose the war "she (Finland) would have many extremely powerful friends on her side."<sup>207</sup> Welles' memo showed that not only the United States, but Britain was willing to ensure that Finland remained an independent nation, despite her co-belligerence with Germany. It shows that the US and Britain planned to keep communism in check once World War II ended and sought prevent communism from spreading into a pre-war nation in which the United States had economic interests.

Unfortunately, the political situation was far more complicated, and Finland was at the mercy of the Germans. On August 21, 1941, Schoenfeld cabled the Secretary of State expressing his disappointment in press reporting of the Atlantic Charter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Witting, which the Finnish press perceived was directed at Finland. In the cable, he included the current wishes of the Finnish government. The Finns were hopeful that they would be able to exit the war as soon as their military aims were achieved, and while these were not specifically stated, Schoenfeld hypothesized that the Finnish exit from the war would coincide with the German occupation of Stalingrad, and that the Finnish were preparing for an armed peace similar to what occurred between 1918 and 1921.<sup>208</sup> He also noted Witting's skepticism that this desire would actually

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<sup>206</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 18 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 56

<sup>207</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 18 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 57.

<sup>208</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 21 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 58-59.

come to fruition, as there was a concern that Germany would not allow Finland to withdraw from the conflict. Due to a lack of capital and foreign exchange, some 75% of Finnish businessmen said the Finnish economy would need to be converted to the German system. In this exchange Witting expressed concern that if the Germans were to be defeated, it would open the door to Bolshevism. Schoenfeld reassured the Minister that the United States planned to prevent the spread of Bolshevism and was already undertaking preparations to meet the supply demands of the European population at the end of the war.<sup>209</sup>

The question as to whether the Finnish people were also tiring of warfare, with the Finnish Military Attaché allegedly telling the American press that “Finland would drop out of the war (against the Soviet Union) as soon as it got its borders protected,”<sup>210</sup> was a hotly contested one. Schoenfeld repeatedly sent dispatches to the Secretary of State informing him that the Finnish press and government officials were saying that Finland was not ready to cease fighting, and reports that Finland was willing to end the fight were baseless rumors.<sup>211</sup> Ambassador Steinhardt’s cable to the Secretary of State on September 6 seemed to reinforce the suspicion of Soviet propaganda among some Finnish officials as reported by Schoenfeld earlier. Steinhardt’s cable reported on a press conference held by Solomon Lozovsky (Lozovski), the Assistant People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs. When Lozovsky was asked by an American correspondent the truth of a Soviet/Finnish truce, mediated by the United States, he replied: “this report is not in accord with the facts, but certain Finnish newspapers are raising the question of peace for Finland

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<sup>209</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 21 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 59.

<sup>210</sup> The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld), 30 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 60.

<sup>211</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 29 August 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 59-60; The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 1 September 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 61.

because of the heavy Finnish losses on the front, the bad food situation in Finland, the growing desire of the Finnish people for peace, and their increasing hatred of Hitlerite Germany.”<sup>212</sup> While the United States was not officially in the war, policymakers faced a difficult diplomatic situation, as on one side the Soviets were beneficiaries of Lend-Lease material. On the other side, Finland was the darling of the American public and many politicians for not only its stand against the Soviets less than a year before, but also its promptness in repaying its outstanding debt to the United States.<sup>213</sup> The decision was made by US policymakers that the best action was to keep applying pressure to Finnish diplomats.

The Americans continued their attempts to pressure the Finnish diplomats into breaking their co-belligerency with the Germans, while also clearly defining the American stance towards Finland, with an emphasis on its place in the post-war world. In his Memorandum of Conversation dated September 8, 1941, Secretary Hull spoke at length with the Finnish ambassador, elaborating U.S. support for Finland, even going so far as to congratulate Finland on regaining the territory lost in 1940.<sup>214</sup> The Finnish ambassador also told Secretary Hull during this conversation that Finland had advanced into Russian territory, but in the name of protecting Finnish territory. Secretary Hull told the Finnish ambassador that the United States would not only continue to resist communism but was committed to stopping Hitler. He attempted to reiterate to the ambassador that Germany would lose the war, and it would be best for Finland not to be

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<sup>212</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State, 6 September 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 61.

<sup>213</sup> Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State, 13 November 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1933*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), I, 864

<sup>214</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 8 September 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 62.

on the losing side of the conflict. Finally, he told the ambassador that once Hitler was stopped, the United States would take a greater interest in Finland than it had at any time previously.<sup>215</sup> This conversation showed that despite the lack of a U.S. state of war with Germany, the United States was clearly making preparations to enter the war in the very near future, and that after dealing with Germany it was making future preparations to resist the spread of communism. Ambassador Schoenfeld reported to the Secretary of State the following day that the Finns had no plans to participate in the impending siege of Leningrad. Three days later he reported that the Finns had no military agreement in writing for cooperative Finnish-German operations, but Finland and Germany had military advisors working closely together. He also reported that the Finnish army was ending its offensive operations and making preparations to hold its line by force, much as it had done between 1918-1921. More importantly, he reported that because Germany controlled the economic flow in the Baltics, Finland's economy was heavily dependent on the Germans.<sup>216</sup>

The United States understood Finland's precarious economic position and the US government was more than tolerant with its military policy and strategy during the early phase of Finland's war with the Soviets (known as the Continuation War, 1941-1944). US tolerance of Finland's military policy, however, would soon wane. The Finnish army continued to take territory in Russia, a move that upset not only the British, but also the United States, leading the Secretary of State to give a stern warning to Finland that the United States stood with Britain in its objections to the continued Finnish aggression.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 8 September 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 63.

<sup>216</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 11 September 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 64-66.

<sup>217</sup> The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld), 4 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 75.

This warning did cause worry among the Finnish government, which began to inquire with the allies as to how far its forces must withdraw from the current positions to regain favor with the British and Americans. It is interesting to note that Finland viewed the British position as one of bullying, but seemed to have no qualms with the Americans despite the two nations having the same stance on Finland's continued incursion into Russian territory.<sup>218</sup> The Finnish government decided it was best to maintain its stance that the actions were the result of self-defense, and relayed a long message to the British government that was repeated by Minister Schoenfeld. In the message as evidence for their actions, Finland asserted that it was the Soviets that attacked them on June 22, and referenced an article in the Soviet paper *Pravda* written the following day that called for the extermination of the Finnish people. They also claimed that the territory that they were forced to cede in 1939 was not predominantly Russian, as the Soviets claimed, but rather between 93-99% Finnish. In the closing paragraph of their statement they wrote that "Finland wages her defensive war free from all political obligations, but grateful that she need not this time fight alone."<sup>219</sup> This line was no doubt a slight towards the British for their lack of support to Finland during the Winter War. It is worth noting that on November 12, 1941 Finnish Foreign Minister Witting delivered to Ambassador Schoenfeld a lengthy memorandum that justified Finland's actions and reasons for war against the Soviet Union. In the memorandum, the Finns expressed gratitude towards the United States for material aid during the Winter War, but more importantly the "understanding and moral support which the American people lent Finland in her struggle

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<sup>218</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. L. Randolph Higgs of the Division of European Affairs, 6 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 76-77.

<sup>219</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 7 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 78-79.

against the Bolshevik invasion. ”<sup>220</sup> The Finnish attempt to ease US concerns was unsuccessful, as an important allied supply line was threatened.

What concerned the United States the most about Finland’s incursion into Soviet territory was not the fact that Finnish forces were pushing into Karelia, a region that Finland had always wanted to claim due to ethnic similarities, but rather the threat posed to the Murmansk railroad. This railroad and its connecting networks were the lifeline of Soviet supplies received from the United States. The Finns’ success in cutting it off would effectively cut off any military aid to the Soviet Union, thus providing an opportunity for Germany to knock the Soviets out of the war early and turn their focus towards the allies to the west. President Roosevelt, while publicly supporting the Soviets in their war effort by providing supplies, in private was still very skeptical of the Soviet Union and realized that any assurances he gave about their conflict with Finland could only be taken at face value. Naturally, the Finns were also wary of the Soviets, which is why they sought to retake their lost lands, and hopefully be able to exit the war against the Soviets with their gains intact.<sup>221</sup>

Finland’s military success alongside the German military in Western Russia created a sense of uneasiness among the Allies. Not only was the Murmansk railroad threatened, but the British were under pressure from the Soviets to declare war on Finland. The U.S. Secretary of State, in a cable to Schoenfeld on October 25, 1941, confirmed that Finland was unwilling to make peace with the current Soviet government, and in a Memorandum of Conversation four days later noted that Russia had desired that

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<sup>220</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 13 November 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 91-93.

<sup>221</sup> R. Michael Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception* (Helsinki: SHS, 1987), 139-140.

Britain declare war on Finland.<sup>222</sup> The United States recognized the diplomatic nightmare that a declaration of war would have on U.S. relations with Finland, and the Secretary of State and other diplomats worked tirelessly to come up with a solution. Ray Atherton, the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs noted on October 30 that while a British declaration of war would be a measure to appease the Russians, but not provide any military impact, it would unite the Finnish people (whom he notes were divided politically) against Britain, and thus drive them deeper into the German alliance.<sup>223</sup> The United States was unsuccessful in its attempts at mediation, and the British on November 28, 1941 gave Finland an ultimatum to cease hostilities against the Soviet Union by December 3, or Britain would declare war.<sup>224</sup> On the morning of December 3, Ambassador Schoenfeld cabled the Secretary of State informing him that the Finnish government found it difficult to give a reply that would appease the American and British governments while not angering the Germans, and the Finns preferred that the United States and Britain have hostility towards them rather than Germany, Finland's main supplier of food, war materials, and other basic necessities. This feeling among the Finnish government was based simply on the fact of geographic proximity. Schoenfeld also stated the concern among Finnish officials that if the British were to cut off Finnish food imports from Sweden that it would be a huge political propaganda gain for Germany, as then Hitler could claim that Germany stood ready to prevent Finland from

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<sup>222</sup> The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld), 25 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 82; The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld), 28 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 85.

<sup>223</sup> Memorandum by the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Atherton), 30 October 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 87-88.

<sup>224</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 27 November 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I:108.

starving.<sup>225</sup>

While it may appear on the surface that Britain had no qualms about declaring war on Finland, the truth was that the matter was very bothersome to Winston Churchill, who penned a personal note to Field Marshal Mannerheim, the leader of the Finnish army, whom he had known for many years. Mannerheim returned to Churchill a handwritten reply, through Ambassador Schoenfeld, to which he reiterated the Finnish position that the war was one of self-defense, but was very thankful that Churchill had taken the time to write him personally, and was deeply saddened at the prospect of a declaration of war.<sup>226</sup> In his memoir, Mannerheim said that he recognized that the British declaration was a result of Soviet pressure, and because he recognized that his reply would be repeated to Moscow, he was unable to inform Churchill that he had ordered his men in October to halt their advance at Karhumäki, of which they were in the vicinity by December 1941.<sup>227</sup> Ordering his men to halt demonstrated that Mannerheim and the Finnish government realized that they were playing a delicate diplomatic game, and they did not want the United States to get the impression that their supply shipments traveling along the Murmansk Railroad would be threatened, and worse, fall into German hands.

The personal minutes of Winston Churchill verify Mannerheim's account of their dealings; however, what he does not detail is the swing in mood that he felt towards Finland. In a minute dated July 5, 1941, Churchill stated that Finland had entered the war on Germany's side, and deserved severe treatment, but also that he saw no need to

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<sup>225</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 3 December 1941, *FRUS 1941*, I: 111-112.

<sup>226</sup> Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, trans. Eric Lewenhaupt (New York: Dutton, 1954), 435-436.

<sup>227</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, 437.

declare war.<sup>228</sup> A personal minute dated November 29, 1941 shows that Churchill was willing to declare war on Finland, Romania, and Hungary if Stalin still desired that the UK do so. “If he still wishes it” was underlined in the document.<sup>229</sup> This shows that Churchill did not desire to declare war on Finland, Romania, and Hungary, but knew he had to stand in solidarity with his ally to the east. It was obvious to Churchill that he needed to keep Russia in the war, much as the Allies had desired to keep Russia in the First World War, so that he would not have to face the entirety of the German army.

Despite being in a state of war with a former friend, 1942 began by looking bright for Finland. On January 20, 1942 the British Embassy sent a message to the US State Department informing them that their Minister in Sweden learned from his Soviet counterpart that the Soviets were willing to enter into peace talks. The Soviet ambassador to Sweden also informed the British Minister in Sweden that the terms of such peace would be more advantageous to Finland than they would be in the future.<sup>230</sup> Schoenfeld reported back to Secretary Hull on January 30 a conversation that he had with former Finnish Foreign Minister Erkko, in which the former Minister told him that the Finnish people were ready for hostilities to end, but the question plaguing the Finnish leadership was how and when to withdrawal. Erkko also told Schoenfeld that if the Finns could be assured that the Soviets would be prevented from occupying Finnish soil, and if basic necessities like food could be supplied, that the Finnish government may be willing to break their ties with Germany. In addition, he also informed Schoenfeld that there was

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<sup>228</sup> Winston Churchill, “Prime Minister’s Personal Minute,” CAB 120/523, 5 July 1941.

<sup>229</sup> Winston Churchill, “Prime Minister’s Personal Minute,” CAB 120/523, 29 November 1941.

<sup>230</sup> The British Embassy to the Department of State, 20 January 1942, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1942*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), II: 28, (hereafter *FRUS*), accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1942v02>.

growing tension among the Finnish and German soldiers, as the former were becoming more and more frustrated at their ability to repel Soviet attacks, whereas the latter could not.<sup>231</sup> The United States and Finland were well aware of the serious hurdle that prevented an immediate end of hostilities against the Soviet Union by Finnish troops. Without the ability to guarantee Finland food stuffs and security from German retaliation, there could be no successful end to the Continuation War.

Germany's declaration of war on the United States placed Finland in a precarious position. The United States was now officially at war with a Finnish ally. It meant that US public opinion and favor of Finland could soon turn sour. The United States still sought to get Finland out of the war, but economic aid was still a deciding factor in Finland's decision to continue the fight. Secretary Hull noted that the Finnish government's lack of resistance towards the German presence would negatively affect its relationship with the United States. Schoenfeld, at the direction of Secretary Hull, spoke with the Finnish Foreign Minister Witting, who informed him that Finland was dependent on Germany for 93% of its imports. Foreign Minister Witting attempted to liken Finland's position to that of Iceland and claimed an inability to do anything about the German presence, much like the Icelandic government couldn't do anything about the Allied presence in its country. Schoenfeld relayed that this analogy was untrue, as Finland was actively engaged in the war.<sup>232</sup>

The military situation began deteriorating for Finland in February of 1942, with the ambassador in Sweden (Johnson) reporting that if the Russians were to push hard

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<sup>231</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 30 January 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 32-33.

<sup>232</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 3 February 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 34-35; The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 4 February 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 35-36.

towards Finland with an offensive, and if that offensive were to come close to the Swedish border, it may cause internal pressure on the Swedish government to come to the aid of Finland. Swedish aid would make it difficult to reach a peace deal between the Finnish and Soviet Russia, a concern that was admitted by the Soviet Minister in Sweden in private conversation.<sup>233</sup> Despite increased American political pressure to cease the hostilities between Finland and Soviet Russia, the Finnish government maintained its position that it was acting defensively in this conflict. The Finns were not ready to cease hostilities, due largely to the military situation that they viewed out of their control, which hints at a fear of German reprisal. The Finns also pointed, again, to the fact that Finland was almost entirely dependent on Germany for economic survival.<sup>234</sup> This point was later reinforced in a cable Schoenfeld sent to the Secretary of State on February 28, in which he stated that Finland was entirely dependent on Germany for its food supply and the only way to influence Finland was to replace Germany as the primary source of food imports.<sup>235</sup>

The American declaration of war on Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria on June 5, 1942 caused a great deal of concern for the Finnish government, which immediately asked the US whether Finland would soon find itself facing a declaration of war. Under Secretary of State Welles answered the Finnish concerns by saying that the American attitude towards Finland had been made very clear, meaning the Americans had no intention, or desire, to declare war with Finland, but instead to ensure that they were able to maintain favorable ties with the Finnish government and people. Welles did warn the

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<sup>233</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 9 February 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 36-37.

<sup>234</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 16 February 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 41-43.

<sup>235</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 28 February 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 46.

Finns that if they were to give open and direct aid to Germany that the American position would drastically change.<sup>236</sup> This is important because it shows that the Americans were more than willing to look the other way in Finland's fight against their "ally" Soviet Russia, as long as Finland did not openly aid Germany in its fight, such as cooperating in joint offensives against Soviet forces. Little did Finland know, however, that U.S. patience was growing thin, and drastic measures were soon on the horizon.

The United States soon put pressure upon the Finnish government in an attempt to get the Finns out of the war by reducing their economic access to US markets. The United States ordered the withdrawal of its consuls from Finland (July 1942), and requested that Finland withdrawal its consuls from the United States, a move that had a great impact on Finland, especially with the loss of its consulate in New York, on which it relied on for advancing Finnish economic interests. The U.S. request also caused concern among Swedish officials that a complete severance of diplomatic relations and declaration of war by the United States on Finland was on the horizon.<sup>237</sup> The Swedish concern demonstrates that while Sweden was neutral in the war, it was very much invested in the fate of Finland, and was in favor of the United States maintaining relations with Finland. The US move seemed to be an effective one, as Schoenfeld reported that the Finnish public had hoped that there would be no break in diplomatic relations between the US and Finland. Schoenfeld noted that the Finnish government had refused to move its troops from their current lines, which, according to Schoenfeld's informant, prevented Germany from extending its lines. Schoenfeld's informant also expressed that

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<sup>236</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 5 June 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 63-64.

<sup>237</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), 22 July 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 74-75.

the Finnish people's belief in their "sisu" was still very high and the Finnish people appeared to have no fear of the Germans.<sup>238</sup> Schoenfeld did report that there was concern among the people in Finland that the United States was succumbing to Soviet pressure, and that if the Soviets were victorious in the war the United States would not come to the aid of Finland. He recommended that the United States establish a Scandinavian base for its radio broadcasts, as he noted that the broadcasts coming from Boston were not reaching the country.<sup>239</sup> This seemed to imply that the Finnish people's concerns would be eased if the radio broadcasts were able to reach Finland.

The United States spent much of early 1943 attempting to bring about a peace between Finland and the Soviet Union but was unable to accomplish that goal. While the United States recognized that Finland was held at the mercy of the Germans, the US government was still hopeful that a solution could be found that would save Finland's autonomy, and appease the Soviet Union. In April 1943, Secretary of State Hull recommended to President Roosevelt that the United States sever diplomatic relations with Finland, due to the pressure exerted on Finland by the Germans. Prior to making this recommendation, the United States did consult with the Soviet Union, who agreed that this move would be advantageous to both the Soviets and the United States, because it would put immense pressure upon the Finnish government.<sup>240</sup> The decision to break relations was postponed for almost a year, until the United States finally broke diplomatic

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<sup>238</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 31 August 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 79-80.

<sup>239</sup> The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State, 3 September 1942, *FRUS 1942*, II: 81.

<sup>240</sup> The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, 19 April 1943, *Foreign Relations Papers of the United States 1943* (hereafter *FRUS*), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), III: 269, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1943v03>.

relations with Finland on June 30, 1944.<sup>241</sup> The cause for the delay was the hope among American officials that they could mediate a peace between Finland and the Soviet Union, but after it became clear to the United States that the Germans exerted an unshakeable control of Finland's political leadership, US officials felt there was no other option; Switzerland was left to manage the interests of the United States in Finland.<sup>242</sup>

Despite the diplomatic break, the United States was very aware of the image that Finland still maintained among the US public, both for its debt repayment and its governmental form. This favorability among the American public, and by the United States as a lender, was a crucial reason why despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations, Finland was still viewed as important by the United States. Discussions amongst members of the Treasury Department and the State Department recognized this predicament, and they were able to work out an agreement that would prevent Finland from defaulting on its loan debt.<sup>243</sup> The US government also realized that in order to get Finland out of the war it needed to guarantee it food and peace, both of which were unavailable due to the United States and the Allies not having the manpower to conduct an operation in Finland; however, Minister Shoensfield did propose the idea.<sup>244</sup> Ultimately, no invasion would be planned to free the Finns from German influence, but the United States still sought other avenues to assist Finland.

The reversal of fortunes for the Germans in the war, coupled with the Americans severing of diplomatic ties, pushed Finland into seeking a peace deal with the Soviets in

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<sup>241</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, 28 June 1944, *Foreign Relations Papers of the United States 1944* (hereafter *FRUS*), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), III: 606, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1944v03>.

<sup>242</sup> The Secretary of State to the Finnish Chargé (Thesleff), 30 June 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 608.

<sup>243</sup> Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception*, 230-231.

<sup>244</sup> Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception*, 242.

1944. The efforts of the US State Department to push Finland out of the war seemed to have worked, though the weakening of the German military strength due to losses on both the eastern and western fronts also allowed Finland to seek a break from its “occupiers.” The United States observed intently, and its Ambassadors and other officials kept the government in the loop with the progress of the negotiations, which concluded on September 19, 1944. The following day, the US ambassador in Sweden cabled the Secretary of State that his informants had provided him details about the peace treaty, which included Finland being controlled by the Russian Commission, a group that would control all facets of the Finnish economy.<sup>245</sup> In addition to the establishment of the Russian Commission, the Finns agreed to break relations with the Germans, and give them an ultimatum to leave peacefully, otherwise Finland would have to use force to push them out. Finland also agreed to withdraw to the 1940 borders, giving the Russians a 50-year lease on Porkkala for a naval base. Finally, Finland agreed to cede the Pechanga region (depriving Finland of an Arctic port), and \$300,000,000 in reparations, to be paid via goods over a period of five years. Finally, Finland agreed to reduce the size of its military to its peacetime strength within ten weeks.<sup>246</sup> This no doubt was a cause for concern among American officials, who acted quickly to reestablish diplomatic relations, appointing Maxwell Hamilton as the United States Representative in Finland on November 14, 1944.<sup>247</sup> It would be nearly a year before relations were normalized, as the United States and Finland formally re-established diplomatic relations on August 31,

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<sup>245</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 20 September 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 623.

<sup>246</sup> Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice*, 317-319.

<sup>247</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan), 14 November 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 626.

1945.<sup>248</sup>

On the last day of the Tehran Conference in 1943, Roosevelt approached Stalin requesting that Finland escape harsh punishment at the conclusion of the war, and that they were to stay free and independent. The long standing, favorable economic relationship between the United States and Finland was the central reason why the United States sought Finnish independence. Not only had they proved themselves to be a worthy borrower, but there was a high level of favorability among the American media and public. At first Stalin objected, but when Churchill backed up Roosevelt, Stalin backed off of his objections and agreed.<sup>249</sup> Stalin, however, may have been playing a purely political game with the allies, as the Soviet Union would have had to realize that to completely subdue Finland would be an extremely taxing task, both in manpower and material. This seems to be backed up by a statement made by Foreign Minister Molotov decades after the war in which he said, “People are very stubborn there [in Finland], very stubborn. We were smart not to annex Finland. It would have been a festering wound.”<sup>250</sup> Having secured Finland’s survival at the Tehran Conference in 1943 also helps explain why the United States was willing to break diplomatic ties with Finland in 1944 as a means of getting Finland out of the war.

While the Soviets had given their word to Churchill and Roosevelt that Finland would remain free, that assurance did not stop the Soviet military from flexing its

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<sup>248</sup> The Secretary of State to the United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton), 22 August 1945, *Foreign Relations Papers of the United States 1945* (hereafter *FRUS*), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), IV: 654, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1945v04>.

<sup>249</sup> Bohlen Minutes- Tripartite Luncheon Meeting, 1 P.M. Roosevelt’s Quarters, Soviet Embassy, 1 December 1943, *Foreign Relations Papers of the United States The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran 1943* (hereafter *FRUS*), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961): 590-593. Accessed October 30, 2016, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1943CairoTehran>.

<sup>250</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 62.

military muscle against its stubborn neighbor. The Soviets did attempt an offensive to break the Finnish lines prior to conducting peace talks, but the Finns fiercely resisted. At dawn on June 9, 1944 the Soviets launched an offensive against Finnish forces which by June 20<sup>th</sup> had included 20 infantry divisions, five to six armored regiments, and four artillery regiments; however, despite the overwhelming numerical and technical superiority, progress was slow and despite some gains, overall the offensive began to stall out and on June 23 the Soviets signaled that they were willing to open up peace negotiations.<sup>251</sup> The Soviets attempted to continue their offensive in July, and again while they made some small gains, overall they were beaten back repeatedly by the defending Finnish soldiers and by July 20 the offensive ceased and the Soviets began moving their soldiers to the Baltic front.<sup>252</sup> In his memoirs, Mannerheim claimed that the Soviet offensive in Finland took the Allies by surprise, and they were pessimistic that Finland would prevail. He stated that while the United States wished to prevent the Soviet occupation of Finland, US officials also realized that influencing the Soviet Union not to occupy Finland was impossible, as the Soviets were now well aware of their strength.<sup>253</sup> Mannerheim, however, was unaware of developments at the Tehran Conference (1943) that secured his country's freedom.

The United States knew that the peace between Finland and the Soviet Union would be harsh towards the Finns, and the US government formulated plans to assist. Chief among these plans was economic assistance by means of loans and trade deals. The peace treaty's economic impact on Finland was immense, especially with Finland having

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<sup>251</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, 475-482.

<sup>252</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, 483-485.

<sup>253</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, 488.

to withdraw to their 1940 borders. As a result, Finland lost 20% of its sawn timber woodworking industry, 23% of its plywood industry, and 25% of its wood pulp board and chemical wood pulp industries. By losing control of the Saima Canal, Finland lost transport facilities accounting for 13% of its sawn timber exports, and 13.5% of their pit props and pulpwood exports. The loss of other ports led to between 6.5% and 31% of various other timber industry related exports, which was Finland's primary industry and income source.<sup>254</sup> Ambassador Hamilton was well aware of this economic impact, and upon his arrival in Finland met with Finnish government representatives to address the needs of their country, and was vocal to his superiors at the advantages he thought the United States could have by conducting trade with Finland. In a meeting with Prime Minister Paasikivi on March 9, 1945, Hamilton reported that the Finnish looked to the United States to furnish them with items, such as metals, as they believed the United States to be the only country that could meet their needs. In return they offered to supply the United States with certain wood products for which there was a high demand in the United States.<sup>255</sup> Other officials in Finland, such as the Chargé in Finland (Hulley) recognized Finland's ability to prioritize its economy, and no doubt remembered Finland's track record of repaying loans in the interwar period, recommending that the United States extend credits to Finland because they were the most likely to repay their obligations should they remain sovereign.<sup>256</sup> On December 14, 1945 the Export-Import Bank extended a \$35 million credit to Finland (in addition to the \$25 million outstanding

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<sup>254</sup> The Chargé in Finland (Gullion) to the Secretary of State, 7 March 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 572.

<sup>255</sup> The United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton) to the Secretary of State, 10 March 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 641-642.

<sup>256</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Finland (Hulley), 12 December 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 659.

balance) totaling \$60 million in general credit. In addition, the bank approved \$5 million for cotton credit that would allow for 40,000 bales of cotton to be shipped to Finland.<sup>257</sup>

Finland's ability to maintain its independence between 1939 and 1945 was nothing short of a miracle. Finland's ability to survive two wars against the Soviet Union can be attributed to its close relationship with the United States, which was constantly seeking diplomatic resolution to the conflicts despite long periods of Finnish resistance, and to a small extent the military materiel received from Germany during the period of Finnish-German cooperation.<sup>258</sup> Finland was also a beneficiary of sheer luck at times, such as facing poor Soviet military leadership during the Winter War, and the successes of the Allied forces on the Western front, which led the Soviets to end their offensive in 1944 and reallocate forces to the Eastern front in order to ensure that they adhered to the Tehran agreement.<sup>259</sup> Finland's close economic ties with the United States, specifically its swift repayment of inter-war debt, and its resistance of Communism dating back to the 1917 declaration of independence from the Soviets secured Finland a special place in American opinion, that no doubt played a role in their survival.

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 489-490.

<sup>259</sup> Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 488-489.

## VI. CONCLUSION: FINLANDIZATION

For the second time in six years, Finland had found itself bloodied, but still standing as an independent nation at the end of war with the Soviet Union. The previous chapters have detailed the wartime struggles of Finland, and the diplomatic conversations that ensured that it would remain a free, independent nation. Despite this, Finland was still not in the clear as it had to figure out how to pay its war reparations to the Soviet Union and evict the now unwelcome German army. Finland's government also had to figure out how to relocate its displaced citizens. Most importantly, the country had to figure out how it was going to survive in an ever-changing geopolitical landscape, one that saw the rise of two superpowers- the Soviet Union and the United States. What emerged, was a policy that became known in the West as Finlandization. This policy was criticized by western diplomats initially, however it showed that countries like Finland could peacefully coexist with neighbors that had vastly different ideologies.

Finland and the Soviet Union agreed to a cessation of hostilities on September 4, 1944. As a part of their agreement, the Finns broke diplomatic relations with the Germans, and had to ensure that they were out of Finland by September 15, or else they were to be disarmed and handed over to allied forces and considered prisoners of war.<sup>260</sup> What followed was known as the Lapland War, and while the war remains an unknown and understudied area of history, this chapter will only briefly cover it as it deserves more attention under a further study. The Finnish military shifted forces from its eastern border and slowly moved units towards Lapland, where German forces were concentrated. The

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<sup>260</sup> The Minister in Sweden (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 4 September 1944, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1944*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), III: 615 (hereafter *FRUS*).

Germans, feeling betrayed by the Finns, laid waste to Lapland on their way towards the Norwegian border, burning buildings and destroying land as they moved out. While the Germans were eventually forced out, the damage they left in their wake only added to the cost of Finnish recovery. The Finns lost around 16,500 buildings, 233 rail and 516 road bridges, nearly the entire road network in Lapland, and almost half of the local reindeer population, which was a key industry for the residents of Lapland.<sup>261</sup> American diplomatic correspondence does not make any mention to the Lapland War until a cable from the US Representative in Finland dated April 28, 1945. A footnote in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* page containing the correspondence notes that the Finns had not declared war on Germany until March 1, 1945, despite having waged a campaign to expel the Germans since September 15, 1945.<sup>262</sup>

The Americans had greater concerns on their hands, rather than worry about a war that Finland was waging on the Germans in accordance with their treaty with the Soviet Union. The Americans sought to retake control of their citizen and material interests in Finland. When the US broke off diplomatic ties with Finland, they had asked the Swiss to look after their interests, and after the peace between the Finns and Soviets, the American policy makers became concerned that the Soviets would not respect the Swiss looking after the American interests.<sup>263</sup> This shows that the United States had very little trust in their “ally” and were keen to secure their interests, before they lost them with minimal compensation. The British, more specifically the Canadians, knew all too well what

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<sup>261</sup> Vesa Neye, Peter Munter, Toni Wirtanen, Chris Berks, *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941-45* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016), 316-317.

<sup>262</sup> The United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton) to the Secretary of State, 28 April 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), IV: 614 (hereafter *FRUS*).

<sup>263</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, 1 November 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 626.

happened when the Soviets seized property. When Finland ceded the Petsamo region to the Soviets, they lost the valuable nickel mines that were operated by a Canadian mining company. While this company valued the mine at \$50 million, the Soviets were only prepared to offer \$20 million for it, as foreign companies were not allowed to operate in the Soviet Union.<sup>264</sup> Recognizing this, the Americans quickly made plans to re-establish a representative in Finland.

When President Roosevelt approved the nomination of Maxwell Hamilton as the United States Representative in Finland, with the rank of Minister, acting Secretary of State Stettinius made it clear that this appointment was not a re-establishment of diplomatic or consular relations with Finland, but merely so that he could protect American interests in Finland. In the interim, the US sent Randolph Higgs, the number two diplomat in Sweden, to re-open the US mission in Finland.<sup>265</sup> The appointment of Hamilton, and his rank, seem especially odd for someone that was not serving as an official diplomatic representative, especially when the staff had the ability to send encrypted messages. It becomes clear that the US saw Finland as one of its interests, one that must be protected against any Soviet plans to interfere in the sovereignty of Finland. While the US was interested in protecting the sovereignty of Finland, they were cautious to not take up a position that was counter to the Finnish-Soviet treaty.

Despite not having formal diplomatic ties with Finland, the United States kept a close eye on the internal developments in Finland. In accordance with their armistice

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<sup>264</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, "Armistice with Finland," W.P. (44) 542, CAB 66/55/42, 24 September 1944, 229.

<sup>265</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan), 14 November 1944, *FRUS 1944*, III: 626-627; Despite not officially having relations with Finland, the US wanted to ensure that Hamilton and Higgs would have all rights afforded to diplomatic representatives.

agreement, the Finns were required to arrest and charge “war criminals” that is, Finns that the Soviets saw as conspiring with the Germans to take actions against the Soviet Union during the Continuation War. The Finns viewed these individuals in two categories, actual war criminals, and politicians that had advocated for pro-war policies beginning in 1941. The Allied Control Commission had given the Finns a list of 100 or so names and arrests were subsequently made.<sup>266</sup> Some politicians, despite being charged, still planned to run for office during the upcoming Finnish elections. Naturally, this worried the Finnish government, and Higgs was approached by former Foreign Minister Erkko who attempting to solicit the United States into exerting its influence to get the Finnish politicians that were deemed war criminals or advocates dropped from the ballot of the upcoming election.<sup>267</sup> Higgs recommended to the Secretary of State that the United States make a public statement in support of the removal of the accused politicians from the ballot, citing the chance of improving Finnish-Soviet relations, however this recommendation was rejected by the Secretary of State as it was “not regarded as within the limited purview of our mission.”<sup>268</sup> Despite the official rejection, it seems very likely that Higgs would have relayed the US concerns about the Finns keeping accused politicians on the ballot, as the Assistant Chief of the Division of Northern European Affairs cabled the Assistant Secretary of State on February 1, 1945 indicating that it was likely that in unofficial conversation that Higgs would relay the concerns of the United

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<sup>266</sup> The Secretary of Mission in Finland (Higgs) to the Secretary of State, 25 January 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 598-599.

<sup>267</sup> The Secretary of Mission in Finland (Higgs) to the Secretary of State, 28 January 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 600-601.

<sup>268</sup> The Secretary of Mission in Finland (Higgs) to the Secretary of State, 30 January 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 601-602; The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Mission in Finland, 3 February 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 602-603.

States.<sup>269</sup>

In addition to monitoring the political situation in Finland, the United States kept an eye on the economic situation. Upon his arrival in Finland, Minister Hamilton established contact with both the British and Soviet members of the Control Commission and seemed to enjoy open communication. He reported back to the Secretary of State that there were minimal Soviet troops stationed in Finland, and that the British had figured that Finland could meet its reparation requirements, however they may be in need of some assistance from “abroad” which while broad meant that Finland would first look to the United States.<sup>270</sup> Internally, the State department had prepared a memorandum for the President in late December 1944 discussing the question of financial assistance to Finland in order for it to meet its reparation payments. In this memo, the department recommended that the United States not provide financial assistance to Finland that would be used for direct reparation payments.<sup>271</sup> The United States remained firm, allowing Finland to suffer the consequences of their defeat at the hands of the Soviets, consequences that the United States had warned Finland were coming. Despite the American government not coming to aid Finland directly, the US Treasury removed Finland from its list of enemy occupied or controlled countries, which allowed US

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<sup>269</sup> The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Mission in Finland, 3 February 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 603, 605; The memorandum mentioned in text above is cited as footnote 17 in *FRUS*. The Finns did not kick the accused off of the ballot, however they did remove themselves, cited in footnote 23 on page 605.

<sup>270</sup> The United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton) to the Secretary of State, 3 March 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 605-606; <sup>270</sup> The United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton) to the Secretary of State, 5 March 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 606.

<sup>271</sup> Memorandum for the President, “Financial Assistance to Finland in Meeting its Reparations Obligations to the USSR”, 29 December 1944, Online, Accessed 30 October 2016, [http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/\\_resources/images/msf/msf01296](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msf01296).

businesses to trade with their counterparts.<sup>272</sup> Although trade was soon allowed with Finland, the United States still withheld a formal re-establishment of diplomatic ties.<sup>273</sup>

The United States would come to the economic assistance of Finland, but that would come after formal ties between the nations were re-established. The US realized that Finland was in a deep trade hole given the amount of reparations that were owed to the Soviet Union, and the State Department supported the Finnish request for a loan from the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank. The approved amount of the loan was \$35 million, plus the total of \$25 million already outstanding, for a total loan debt of \$60 million. The Ex-Im Bank had actually recommended to the State Department that the loan total should be \$110 million, which was the full amount that Finland had requested, however this was shot down by the State Department as it did not stay in line with other loans during that period.<sup>274</sup> There is no doubt that the previous payment history of Finland, and its reputation as a reliable borrower influenced the decision of the Ex-Im Bank to support the Finnish request for the full loan amount.

The lack of an official diplomatic relationship between Finland and the United States did not stop Finnish leadership from reaching out to the American mission to inquire about the plausibility of attaining financial support. While Hamilton followed State Department instructions, he also made pleas to the department to reconsider their position. These pleas echo the pleas of Thornwell Haynes, who in 1918-1919 plead with the State Department to abandon its cautious policy towards Finland and recognize the

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<sup>272</sup> Footnote 10, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 633; While Finland was no longer considered occupied or in enemy control, there still existed a list of prohibited individuals/firms with whom trade was prohibited except when under license.

<sup>273</sup> The United States re-established official diplomatic ties with Finland on August 31, 1945. The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Mission in Finland (Hulley), 20 August 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 632.

<sup>274</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Finland, 12 December 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 659.

opportunity that Finland gave the US. In Hamilton's case, he noted that any credit extended to Finland could be used to gain wood products, which were in high demand in the United States. He argued that coming to such an arrangement could prove to be extremely advantageous to the United States.<sup>275</sup> Unfortunately for Hamilton, and similar to 1919, the United States was slow to act.

While the government was slow to act, charitable organizations, including the American Red Cross were ready to provide aid to Finnish citizens in need. As early as January 1945, private organizations in the US and the American Red Cross were making inquiries to the British Foreign Office regarding the possibility of providing aid to Finland.<sup>276</sup> While the private organizations that made the inquiries were not listed, it shows that within the US sympathies for Finland still existed. During the early communications between American diplomats and the Secretary of State, Higgs makes mention that the head of the Finnish Aid organization is a Rockefeller Foundation man.<sup>277</sup> This piece of information shows that deep ties existed between the Finns and influential Americans, and in this case specifically the most influential American family in modern US history. As with the aid in 1919, there was a long delay in approval by the American government, and it would not be until August that aid was approved.<sup>278</sup>

The aid by the United States and the Ex-Im Bank was vital to helping Finland recover and survive economically in the early years of paying reparations to the Soviet

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<sup>275</sup> The United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton) to the Secretary of State, 10 March 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 641-643.

<sup>276</sup> The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State, 6 January 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 635.

<sup>277</sup> The Secretary of Mission in Finland (Higgs) to the Secretary of State, 27 Jan 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 638-639.

<sup>278</sup> The Secretary of State to the United States Representative in Finland (Hamilton), 22 August 1945, *FRUS 1945*, IV: 654.

Union. While Finland was beginning to be on solid economic footing, they still faced a challenge of showing the Soviet Union that they could peacefully coexist, despite having different political philosophies. Things did not get off to a good start, as in July 1945, a weapons cache was discovered and increased tensions between Finland and the Soviet Union even more. Interestingly, this incident is not discussed in Mannerheim's memoirs, in-depth by the Americans, nor is it heavily discussed by the British. In a memo from the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in Moscow, the British chalk up the incident to a few "hot head" officers that wanted to conduct a coup d'état or create a disturbance. They recognized that the Finnish government was extremely nervous about the aesthetics of the situation, however they were under the impression that the Russians take care of the situation internally.<sup>279</sup> While the Finns did take care of the situation internally, a British communication from F.M. Shepherd of the Helsinki Legation informed the British government that the Finnish stockpile of arms was larger than originally thought. It was found that there were arms stockpiles in all 34 Finnish military districts, showing that this was the work of more than hot headed officers.<sup>280</sup> While it may not have been wise, it is completely understandable why the Finns would want to be ready for war against the Soviet Union, especially having been attacked without warning once, and engaging in two wars in less than 10 years against the Soviets.

Luckily, for all parties involved, there would be no war between Finland and the Soviet Union. Instead, relations would warm between the two countries, thanks to a policy that became known as "The Paasikivi Line." This policy was named after the Finnish President J.K. Paasikivi, who undertook a two part policy of convincing the

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<sup>279</sup> British Foreign Office to British Embassy Moscow, 15 July 1945, FO 181/997/3: 82/26/45.

<sup>280</sup> British Legation, Helsinki (Shepherd) to the Foreign Office, 18 February 1946, FO 181/1016/3, No. 32.

Soviets that the Finnish democracy and liberal economic methods did not pose a threat to them, and to convince the Finnish people that recognition of Soviet security concerns did not mean that Finnish independence was threatened. This policy was successful, and continued by Paasikivi's successor, Urho Kekkonen, who held the presidency from 1956-1982.<sup>281</sup>

With the success of "The Paasikivi Line" Finland was able to achieve what it had long desired- live peacefully amongst its neighbors and have their neutrality recognized. Both the Soviet Union and the United States signed trade deals with Finland in the aftermath of World War II, and the United States extending most favored nation status to Finland, which it did not do for other European neighbors in the Soviet Union.<sup>282</sup> While Finland ended up paying a heavy cost in material and manpower to secure their independence and recognition of neutrality, it would not have been done without the backing of the United States. Finland's ability to repay its debts to the United States, especially when others would not, struck a chord with the American public, one that they would not forget. Finland's status as a Constitutional Republic was also very relatable in the eyes of the US public, and the media's ability to paint Finland as a defender of Western values and democracy against the Soviets ensured that the American public would put pressure on their leaders to not abandon Finland. Finally, Finnish "sisu" was a national motto that Finland survived as an independent nation. Had the outnumbered,

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<sup>281</sup> Berry, *Finland and the United States*, 59; The "Paasikivi Line" policy was a part of "Finlandization" as it was known in the West.

<sup>282</sup> Berry, *Finland and the United States*, 66-68.

outgunned Finns not bloodied the Soviets so badly during the Winter War, and during the Continuation War, Finland surely would have ended up like its Baltic neighbors- Soviet puppets.

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