

# DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN  
FINLAND, GREAT BRITAIN AND THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DURING THE AUTUMN  
OF 1941

HELSINKI 1942

PUBLICATION OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF FINLAND

# D O C U M E N T S

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I.

**Aide-mémoire of the British Government, handed on September 22nd, 1941, by the Norwegian Minister in Helsinki (at the request of the British Government) to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.**

AIDE-MÉMOIRE.

So long as Finland, in alliance with Germany, is carrying on an aggressive war against and on the territory of the ally of Great Britain, H. M. Government are bound to consider Finland to be a member of the Axis, since it is impossible to separate the war which Finland is waging against Russia from the general European war.

If, therefore, the Finnish Government persist in invading purely Russian territory, a situation will arise in which Great Britain will be forced to treat Finland as an open enemy, not only while the war lasts but also when peace comes to be made.

H. M. Government would greatly regret such a development in view of the friendship which has always existed between Great Britain and Finland. Although the Finnish Government have expelled the British Minister from Helsingfors [Helsinki], H. M. Government are ready to overlook this act of discourtesy, and would welcome an early restoration of normal diplomatic intercourse between the two countries. But the Finnish Government will realise that for this to be possible the first essential is that Finland should terminate her war against Russia and evacuate all territories beyond her frontiers of 1939. As soon as this had been accomplished, H. M. Government would be ready, for their part, to study sympathetically any proposals for the improvement of relations between Great Britain and Finland, even though the continued presence of German armies on Finnish soil might render impossible at first the restoration of full diplomatic relations and resumption of overseas trade on the same basis as existed so long as Finland was still neutral.

## 2.

**Aide-mémoire of the Government of Finland, handed on October 6th, 1941, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland to the Swedish Minister in Helsinki for transmittance to the British Government.**

## AIDE-MÉMOIRE.

On behalf of the Government of Great Britain an Aide-mémoire was handed to the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 22nd through the Norwegian Minister in Helsinki, with reference to which the Finnish Government wishes to draw attention to the following circumstances.

On November 30th 1939 the Soviet Union attacked Finland without cause and without provocation. On December 14th the League of Nations accordingly, Great Britain being a party to the decision, in conformity with Article 16 of the League Covenant proclaimed the Soviet Union an aggressor and expelled her from membership in the League of Nations. Finland was left to carry on the war alone, and the question was never raised of any method by which the aggressor was to make good the consequences of his aggression.

On March 12th 1940 Finland was compelled to conclude the dictated Peace of Moscow with the Soviet Union. In this connection Finland could not avoid ceding certain vital parts of her State territory to the aggressor, partly by a shifting of the frontiers, partly on the terms of a lease, in addition to which she had to consent to constructing for the benefit of the aggressor a strategic railway that constituted a threat to the security of Finland and the entire North.

Soon after the conclusion of peace a ruthless policy of extortion towards Finland together with interference in and penetration into Finnish political life from within was inaugurated by the Soviet Union. By these activities, an account of which is given in »Documents Concerning Finno-Soviet Relations II» (Finnish Blue-White Book II) published by the Finnish Government, the Soviet Union aimed at the same ultimate result, the annihilation of Finland, as by the armed aggression a little earlier.

On June 22nd 1941 the armed forces of the Soviet Union again embarked on hostilities against Finland, which included the bombing from the air of Finnish warships and a Finnish fort. The following day it was announced in the leading Moscow newspaper Pravda that »the Finns were to be exterminated off the surface of the earth». On

June 25th hostilities by the Soviet Union developed into a systematic extensive attack directed at tens of purely Finnish targets. Finding herself again the object of armed aggression, Finland did not, however, resort to active defensive measures until the beginning of July.

Finland's struggle against this attack, which began on November 30th 1939 and has continued in different forms without a break since then, has been and is selfdefence.

Important areas within the 1939 frontiers are still in the hands of the enemy, and these, in common with the areas beyond the said frontiers into which Finnish troops have advanced in the course of the fighting, have been utilized as bases for the attack on Finland. The Soviet Union has equipped these areas in the completest manner possible for attacks westward. It has now been possible to establish this ipso loco. The branch lines from the Murmansk railway leading in the direction of the Finnish frontier, of which five have been discovered up to the present, as well as the new highways constructed in the Carelian wilds solely for offensive purposes, and the numerous air fields, reveal beyond any doubt the aggressive plans of the Soviet Union and the untenable strategic position in which Finland had been placed by these preparations. An effective defence, Finland's right to which no one can deny, is possible to Finland only by transferring her defence into these very areas.

Moreover the said areas beyond the old eastern frontier are not »purely Russian«, for their population is primarily Finnish. According to the latest available Soviet statistics, of the year 1930, the population of the areas beyond the 1939 frontiers intended by the British Aide-mémoire, was between 93.4 and 99.2 per cent. of Finnish nationality. The districts in question belong to those areas to whose Finnish population the Soviet Government promised in connection with the Treaty of Tartu in 1920 to guarantee very extensive rights of selfdetermination, promises which she later failed to honour.

Finland wages her defensive war free from all political obligations, but grateful that she need not this time fight alone. Finland cannot understand how Great Britain, with whom Finland has wished and wishes to retain peaceful relations, could regard herself, merely because Finland is not on this occasion alone in fighting the Soviet Union, as entitled nay, forced to treat Finland as an open enemy.

Helsinki, 6th October 1941.

## 3.

**Memorandum of the Government of the United States of America,  
handed on October 6th, 1941, by the American Minister in Helsinki  
to the President of the Republic of Finland.**

## MEMORANDUM.

The Secretary of State of the United States recently asked the Finnish Minister at Washington to inquire of the Finnish Government as to its intentions in respect of continuing military operations against the Soviet Union, and as to the relationship between these military operations and the statement of Minister Tanner on September 14. Minister Procopé accordingly called on the Secretary of State on October 3, 1941.

Mr. Hull informed the Finnish Minister that it was not necessary to discuss again the likes or dislikes of either the Government of the United States or of the Finnish Government with respect to Hitler and Stalin or Germany or the Soviet Union. Mr. Hull told the Finnish Minister that he was glad to see that Finland had recovered the territory lost in the war of 1939—40. The Secretary of State pointed out that the Government and people of the United States and he himself had proved their loyal friendship to Finland and were anxious that these fine relationships should continue; however, even this desire was quite apart from the dominant question of the hour.

Without contemplating the slightest injustice to Finland, the question which was of the utmost importance to the United States was the problem of the future safety of the United States and of all peaceful countries. The Secretary of State said that the American Government is profoundly convinced that Hitler through the practice of barbaric and loathsome methods is seeking to conquer the world. Under such conditions the United States is spending and stands ready further to spend 14, 25, 40 or even 75 billions of dollars to do its share in opposing and eliminating Hitler and the things for which he stands.

In consequence, the sole question now of concern to the American Government with regard to Finland is whether Finland has as her objective merely to regain her lost provinces and to stop at that point or whether Finland intends to go farther, if indeed she has not already gone farther. In that event the effect of such policy would be to array Finland on the side of Hitler and involve her in the general war between the Soviet Union and Germany as well as the other nations now involved.



In response to Minister Procopé's effort to show by maps that Finnish troops had advanced beyond the former borders of Finland only for strategic reasons to safeguard the legitimate frontiers of Finland and that Finnish forces have not taken part in any action against Leningrad, the Secretary of State said that in the opinion of the Government of the United States Finnish forces had indeed advanced beyond the limits that would appear necessary for mere protection of the former Finnish frontier, and that such action was not consonant with its understanding of Mr. Tanner's statement of September 14. Mr. Hull said in reply to Minister Procopé's interjection that such advances into Soviet territory were essential to protect Finnish territory, that this would be entirely meaningless at the peace conference following the war, and that the value of such safeguards would depend entirely on who wins the war.

Mr. Hull then told Minister Procopé that he desired the Finnish Government clearly and definitely to understand that should Finland persist in such a course, the American Government stands entirely with the British Government.

Mr. Hull pointed out to Minister Procopé that before the British note had been delivered to the Finnish Government on September 22, 1941, he had entertained the hope that Finland would take the initiative in announcing that it did not intend to advance materially beyond its former frontier, that its conflict with Russia had been solely to regain its lost territory, and that it had no intention of entering the general war on the German side. Unfortunately, said Mr. Hull, the Finnish Government made no such announcement but on the contrary its troops have progressed more deeply into Russian territory in a way which may affect seriously the position of the Soviet forces in the vicinity of Murmansk and to the east. This Finnish advance, he said, amounted to material aid to the German Reich.

In conclusion, the Secretary of State left two clear indications before the Finnish Minister: the first, the conclusion of the Government of the United States that Finnish forces had already advanced too far into Soviet territory to accord with any legitimate policy confined merely to recovering territory lost by Finland; and secondly, that the Finnish Government, whether it persisted in following this course of advance into Russia or not, must understand that the Government of the United States stood firmly beside the British Government.

The American Minister in Helsinki has been instructed by the Secretary of State to inform the Finnish Government that Mr. Hull

has under consideration the question of giving publicity to the attitude of the American Government toward Finland, as well as stating publicly the course of the conversations which have taken place between the American Government and the Finnish Minister in Washington in an effort, on the part of the United States Government, to assist in reaching a peaceful solution of the difficulties which now exist between Finland and the Soviet Union.

Helsinki, October 6, 1941.

To the  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland,  
Helsinki.

4.

**Note of the American Legation in Helsinki (in representation of British interests in Finland), transmitted on October 11th, 1941, to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.**

The American Legation in representation of British interests in Finland presents its compliments to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and, with reference to reports that the Norwegian Government was called on to transmit the British Note of September 22 to the Finnish Government because the United States Government had refused to do so, has the honor to communicate a message on behalf of the British Government to the Finnish Government, as follows:

«His Majesty's Government sent their message to the Finnish Government through the Norwegian Minister in Helsingfors [Helsinki] because the Norwegian Government spontaneously offered to deliver such a message. It was only natural that this offer from their ally should have been accepted by the British Government who had made no previous request to the United States Government to deliver such a message. The British Government have learned of the suggestion made by the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs that the action of the British Government in sending their message could only mean that they were seeking to justify an attack on Finland. The British Government wish to make it clear that their action, so far from being designed merely to provide a pretext for an attack on Finland, was on the contrary sincerely intended to indicate the means by which relations between Great Britain and Finland might be improved, while pointing out the very regrettable but inevitable consequences

that must ensue if the Finnish Government persisted in invading purely Soviet territory».

Helsinki, October 11, 1941.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland,  
Helsinki.

5.

**Memorandum of the Government of the United States of America,  
handed on October 27th, 1941, by the American Minister in Helsinki  
to the President of the Republic of Finland.**

MEMORANDUM.

The American Minister in Helsinki had the honor to inform the Secretary of State of the United States of his conversation with His Excellency the President of the Republic of Finland on October 23, 1941, at which time His Excellency stated in confidence that it was the intention of the Finnish Government soon to demobilize a great part of the Finnish Army. The Secretary of State has informed the American Minister that the statement of His Excellency the President of Finland on that occasion provided the first intimation that the military operations in which the Finnish Army was engaged on the territory of the Soviet Union might cease. The Secretary of State has directed the American Minister to make it clear that, if such cessation of military operations does not take place, the official as well as the economic relations between Finland and the United States are certain to be influenced both at present and in the future.

The Secretary of State has informed the American Minister in Helsinki that the strong offensive nature of Finnish military operations far beyond the frontiers of Finland has without any doubt influenced the course of the Russo-German war and hence, as the Secretary of State informed the Finnish Minister at Washington on October 3, Finland must be regarded as carrying out a course diametrically opposed to those policies the United States has undertaken to follow.

The Government of the United States desires to recall to the Government of Finland that on August 18, 1941 Mr. Sumner Welles, the Under Secretary of State, said to the Finnish Minister at Washington that the Government of the United States had learned of the readiness of the Soviet Government, in the event the Finnish Govern-

ment were so disposed, to negotiate a new treaty of peace between Finland and the U.S.S.R. which would involve concessions of territory to Finland by the Soviet Union. The Finnish Minister on that occasion suggested a number of obvious points with regard to guarantees and other matters. The Under Secretary of State said in reply that in the opinion of the Government of the United States the questions raised by the Finnish Minister need be discussed only in case the Finnish Government desired to explore the possibilities suggested and that it was essential first to ascertain what the attitude of Finland towards these possibilities might be.

The American Government has received no reply from the Finnish Government as to its attitude in regard to this matter, nor has the Finnish Minister in subsequent conversations with officers on the Department of State of the United States made any direct reference to such possible negotiations with the Soviet Union.

However, the Government of the United States not long after the conversation on August 18 between the Finnish Minister and the Under Secretary of State was informed that certain high officers of the Finnish Government, as well as the press in Finland and in Germany, had emphasized that Finland would not conclude a peace with the Government of the U. S. S. R. as now constituted.

The American Government in its future relations with Finland must hold the Finnish Government responsible for its failure even to indicate that it has explored this possible means of settling its just grievances against the U. S. S. R. by peaceful negotiations. In the view of the American Government the Finnish Government of its own volition, and in a manner and to an extent which are quite opposite to the American view of what constitutes legitimate self-defense, has therefore been associating itself with a policy of world aggression.

Although the American Government understands that the presence in Finland of large masses of German troops threatens Finland's freedom of action, the American Minister is instructed to state to the Finnish Government specifically that, if it is the desire of Finland to retain the friendship of the United States both at present and in the future, satisfactory assurances must be given the Government of the United States that the Finnish Government intends at once to discontinue all operations of an offensive character against the territory of the Soviet Union and that Finnish troops will promptly be withdrawn in principle from territory of the Soviet Union to a line corresponding to the border of 1939 between Finland and the Soviet Union.

Should materiel of war sent from the United States to Soviet territory in the north by way of the Arctic Ocean be attacked en route, either presumably or even allegedly from territory under Finnish control, in the present state of opinion in the United States such an incident must be expected to bring about an instant crisis in the relations between Finland and the United States.

Helsinki, October 27, 1941.

6.

**Memorandum of the Government of the United States of America,  
handed on October 30th, 1941, by the American Minister in Helsinki  
to the President of the Republic of Finland.**

MEMORANDUM.

The American Minister has the honor to refer to his conversation with His Excellency the President of Finland on October 27, 1941, and under instructions of his Government to draw to the attention of His Excellency certain factors which in the opinion of the American Government should be borne in mind by the Government of Finland before a definitive reply is made to the Memorandum which he had the honor to leave with His Excellency on October 27.

The American Government by friendly representations has endeavored strongly to impress upon the Government of Finland, before decisions of an irremediable character are taken, that in the opinion of the American Government recent military operations on the part of Finland have given and are giving infinitely valuable military assistance to the cause of Nazi world aggression. Without contributing to the future security of Finland itself, these operations have become in fact a direct threat to the security of the United States. Therefore it must be clearly understood that, if Finland does not immediately discontinue this course of action, the friendly support of the United States, in future difficulties which will inexorably arise as the consequence of such a decision, must be forfeited by Finland.

It is the desire of the American Government that the Finnish Government be informed in unequivocal terms of the alternatives it faces so far as the United States is concerned before a final decision has been reached. The Finnish Government should fully appreciate that the demands of the defense of the United States of America

make necessary steps which, though taken with regret, are no less imperative for that reason.

Helsinki, October 30, 1941.

## 7.

**Telegram of the Secretary of State of the United States of America, sent on October 30th, 1941, to the American Minister in Helsinki. A copy of this telegram was handed by the American Minister to the President of the Republic of Finland on October 31st, 1941.**

It is desired that you call on His Excellency President Ryti at once and inform him that, in view of the speed at which matters are now developing, I desire that a reply to the representations which you made to him on October 27 may be given at the very earliest possible time. You should add that in pressing His Excellency in this manner it is our sincere belief that we are acting in the vital interests of Finland itself because it is felt that the Finnish Government, by delaying its answer to your representation or by making an unresponsive answer, will weaken to an immeasurable extent the efforts which are still being made by us with great difficulty to protect the future interests of Finland in so far as this is possible under circumstances that now can be foreseen.

HULL.

## 8.

**Memorandum, with Appendix, of the Government of Finland, handed on November 11th, 1941, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland to the American Minister in Helsinki.**

## MEMORANDUM.

With reference to the Memoranda of the Legation of the United States of America dated October 27th and 30th 1941, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has the honour to state the following.

## I.

In its Memoranda the Government of the United States calls on Finland to terminate hostilities and withdraw her troops to a line corresponding to the border of 1939 between Finland and the Soviet

Union. They contain no mention of a cessation of hostilities on the part of the Soviet Union, nor do they say whether compliance with the request presented to Finland would entail the withdrawal also of Soviet troops from the areas within the 1939 frontiers of Finland which they still continue to occupy. These areas are the Finnish part of the Fisher Peninsula, which enables enemy artillery to threaten Petsamo, Finland's sole ocean harbour, further the outer islands in the Gulf of Finland, and Cape Hanko, which dominates maritime routes in the Gulf of Finland.

The character of the struggle between Finland and the Soviet Union is known to the Government of the United States. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs wishes to refer in this respect to the recent exchange of Aide Mémoires between the Governments of Great Britain and Finland, and to the publication of the Finnish Government »Finno-Soviet Relations II». These show point by point, retracing the development of events from November 30th 1939 onward, how the position of Finland as a neighbour of the Soviet Union has been one of incessant self-defence against imperialistic strivings on the part of the Soviet Union. The first attack by the Soviet Union ended in the dictated Peace of Moscow. A feature of this peace was the occupation of such areas from which the attack could be resumed in the most favourable circumstances. In addition, the Soviet Government compelled Finland, inter alia, to construct a continuation, linking up with the Finnish railways, of a railway laid from the Murmansk railway to the Finnish frontier to provide the Soviet Union with a convenient access to Northern Finland and onward to the Atlantic. The peace terms also included the occupation of Hanko, which was to serve the Soviet Union as a naval base, but where, immediately after the conclusion of peace, a strong garrison with tanks and other equipment was stationed. From Hanko air attacks are still being launched on the cities and civilian population of Southern Finland. Hardly had the Peace of Moscow been concluded, before the Soviet Union presented new unjustified demands, inter alia compelling Finland to permit transit traffic on her railways to Cape Hanko at the rate of two pairs of Russian trains per day. The Finnish authorities had not the right to inspect the trains. The Soviet Union also interfered in an unscrupulous fashion with Finnish domestic affairs and attempted to organize street demonstrations. The Soviet Union established a Legation in Helsinki with a staff of 150 persons, a large proportion of whom were active in purely espionage work. The Soviet Union forbade the fortification of the Aaland Islands, and compelled Finland to submit to the opening in a city in these islands of a Con-

sular Office with a staff of forty persons. A corresponding Consular Office was founded for purposes of espionage also in Petsamo.

The peace of Moscow thus denoted for the Soviet Union merely an armistice for preparations for a final conquest. This phase then terminated in a new military attack by the Soviet Union, which compelled Finland to resume her self-defence by the use of arms; the character and purpose of the attack is reflected in the proclamation by the leading Moscow newspaper Pravda, in its issue of June 23rd 1941, that »the Finns are to be exterminated off the surface of the earth.»

In these attacks the areas beyond the old Finnish frontier have been systematically utilized as advanced bases against Finland. The Soviet Union has equipped both these areas and those acquired by the Peace of Moscow in the completest manner possible for attacks westward. It has now been possible to establish this ipso loco. The branch lines from the Murmansk railway leading in the direction of the Finnish frontier, of which six have been discovered up to the present, as well as the new highways constructed solely for offensive purposes, and the numerous air fields, reveal beyond any doubt the aggressive plans of the Soviet Union and the untenable strategic position in which Finland had been placed by these preparations. An effective defence, Finland's right to which no one can deny, is possible to Finland only by transferring her defence into these very areas, and in this respect no distinction can be made between the areas ceded under the terms of the Peace of Moscow and the other areas now occupied by Finland.

No documents can give a lifelike picture of the wretched state these areas — both those beyond the 1939 frontier and those ceded under the peace — had been brought. It has been possible, however, for the members of the staff of the United States Legation in Helsinki and for several American journalists to acquaint themselves on the spot with conditions in the areas occupied during the present military phase by Finnish troops, which is indeed the only method by which an accurate idea can be gained of them. Neglected cultivations, buildings allowed to fall into ruins or destroyed, desecrated churches and graveyards, and a population living in bottomless misery, ravaged by murders and mass deportations, reveal to what pitiable state the Finnish people would have been condemned under Soviet rule, insofar as they had not, in conformity with the fate that befell Estonia and other states annexed by the Bolsheviks, been partly or wholly physically liquidated. All this serves to show the fate that would befall Finland if she neglected the proper care of her security.



It is for this reason that the men of Finland elect rather to fall in a defensive war than passively await the execution of their families and themselves.

It is understandable that it has been extremely difficult for the United States to conceive the situation Finland is in, especially as the United States have never directly experienced the danger Bolshevism constitutes to a community built up on Western principles.

The character of Finland's struggle is not altered by the circumstance that, on the grounds of her natural views of her own security, Finland is striving to render innocuous and to occupy the enemy's offensive positions also beyond the 1939 frontier. Precisely the same considerations would have made it urgently necessary for Finland, in the interests of the effectivity of her defence, to undertake such measures already in 1939—40 during the first phase of the war, if only her strength had been equal to the task. On that occasion there would hardly have been any doubt as to the justification of these Finnish military operations.

For the appreciable material aid Finland received from America during the Winter War, the Finnish people feel the greatest gratitude, but this is[t] still more the case in regard to the understanding and the moral support which the American people lent Finland in her struggle against the Bolshevist invasion. On that occasion the unjustified attack on Finland by the Soviet Union aroused great indignation in the United States.

Finland notes with satisfaction that the Government of the United States has intimated its willingness to continue to lend its support to the vital interests of Finland. The Finnish Government fails, however, to see how the said noble principle actuating the Government of the United States could be reconciled with the demand that the Finnish Army should withdraw from the areas it has, for reasons of security, occupied beyond the 1939 frontier, which the Soviet Union would then immediately be in a position to utilize again for aggression on Finland. On the contrary, Finland is compelled to establish that the measures recommended by the Government of the United States would be fateful to the security of Finland and accordingly in conflict with the vital interests of Finland.

The attitude of the Finnish Government in regard to the war begun by the Soviet Union has been and is, that Finland is desirous of terminating the struggle as soon as the danger threatening her existence has been averted and guarantees created for a continuous security. If it is being assumed that Finland has any wider aims than these, then Finland's conception of her own resources is being exaggerated.

## II.

During the military phase of 1939—40 proposals for the mediation of peace made by the United States did not, any more than those from other neutral sources, prevent the Soviet Union from pursuing her attack on Finland. The Soviet Union replied to those proposals that she had already concluded a treaty of assistance and friendship with a Government alleged to represent Finland, a puppet Government, which the Soviet Government had itself appointed, in which connection areas settled by Finns beyond the 1939 frontier — areas which Finnish troops have now occupied — were amalgamated, as being Finnish, with Finland.

The population of the areas beyond the 1939 frontier now occupied by Finnish troops, areas which have been under Bolshevik administration for 23 years, has been and is for by far the most part Finnish. Depending on historical circumstances part of the Finnish nation has been left to live outside of the frontiers of Finland, and the areas in question belong to the dwelling-areas of just this part of the nation. In connection with the Peace of Tartu in 1920 the Soviet Government promised to guarantee this Finnish population considerably wide rights of national self-determination, which promises she has meanwhile left unfulfilled.

To what pitiable state the measures recommended by the Government of the United States would reduce the civilian population that has remained behind in these areas, the history of the Bolshevik regime provides frightful examples. This consideration too supports the view that there is cause to keep the areas in question occupied by Finnish troops, in order that freedom and security can be guaranteed to this population. Taking into account the national composition of the population of these areas, this would be in conformity with the principles enunciated in the declaration given by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain on the Atlantic Ocean on August 14th 1941.

## III.

The Government of the United States has intimated that it must hold Finland responsible for not even having attempted to explore the possibilities of peace held out by the information given by Mr. Sumner Welles on August 18th 1941 to the Finnish Minister in Washington.

According to the information in the possession of the Finnish Government, Mr. Welles stated in the conversation that took place

between him and Mr. Procopé on the said date, that he had been asked to convey to the knowledge of the Finnish Government that »the Soviet Government would be disposed to make territorial concessions and negotiate a new peace treaty». On Mr. Procopé's asking whether the Soviet Government had requested the Government of the United States to transmit this information, the answer was in the negative, Mr. Welles amending his statement as follows: »I know that the Soviet Government would be disposed to discuss a new peace treaty with Finland through which territorial concessions would be made». He added that his statement was not a recommendation on the part of the United States, but information. To Mr. Procopé's question as to what territorial concessions might possibly be intended, Mr. Welles was unable to reply. Equally unclear remained the views of the Government of the United States as to what guarantees would exist that the Soviet Union did not again attack Finland. Mr. Welles stated, however, in this connection that at the end of the war the Soviet Union would be the preponderant power in Eastern Europe. When in this same connection Mr. Procopé asked whether the clause relating to disarmament in the well-known declaration by Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill referred also to the Soviet Union, Mr. Welles stated that the question was a hypothetical one and that up to 1939 the Soviet Union had been a state striving for peace and international order.

In the early days of September Mr. Procopé, acting on instructions received by him, explained in the Department of State of the United States the attitude of his Government in regard to Finland's defensive war. In the ensuing conversations the grave doubts of Finland, based on many bitter experiences, regarding the trust that can be reposed in promises given by the Soviet Union, were explained to the Government of the United States on behalf of the Finnish Government. To the observations made by Finland regarding the essential promises for an eventual peace, no elucidation[h]as been forthcoming from the Government of the United States. In particular, no guarantees of security have even been offered to Finland as a pledge of a new peace between Finland and the Soviet Union.

In the view of the Finnish Government, Mr. Welles's statement to Mr. Procopé on August 18th 1941, was not intended as an offer of peace by the Soviet Union or as an offer of mediation or even a recommendation on the part of the United States, but merely as a piece of information on the basis of which Finland was to sue for peace. In the circumstances the Finnish Government, at that stage of the military operations, when even Viipuri had not yet been taken, continued to await the development of events.

While these conversations were in progress, a spate of unfounded rumours began to be apparent in the Press abroad to the effect that Finland intended to conclude a separate peace with the Soviet Union, and that certain prominent Finns had been conducting negotiations to that end with the Governments of third Powers. On the 5th of the present month of November the British Broadcasting Corporation circulated reports of peace terms in detail alleged to have been brought to the knowledge of the Finnish Government in the aforesaid conversation on August 18th 1941. Neither these nor other offers of peace terms were made to Finland through the Government of the United States on August 18th or later. Nor have such peace terms been proposed to the Finnish Government from any other quarters.

#### IV.

The Government of the United States, in its Memorandum of October 30th 1941, has intimated that it regards recent military operations on the part of Finland as a direct threat to the security of the United States. Finnish troops cannot threaten the United States, which constitute a mighty Power protected by two oceans and secured by numerous bases, of which some are situated thousands of miles beyond the frontiers of the United States. Nor can the Finnish Government either see that the occupation by Finnish troops of certain areas from which the security of Finland is permanently threatened, could conflict with American interests in regard to security. Nevertheless the anxiety felt by the United States for her own security gives Finland the right to expect from the Government and people of the United States understanding for Finland's strivings to protect her existence, to secure her future and to defend her ancient democratic freedom after being subjected on two separate occasions within the space of less than two years to unjustified armed attacks on the part of a mighty Bolshevist terrorist state, with neither United States nor any other country able either to prevent them or to provide guarantees that such attacks would not be renewed. Finland hopes that the great American nation will recognize the right also of a small nation to live and to defend itself. During the course of centuries Finland[s] has indeed been compelled to make abundant use of the right of self-defence in shedding her blood in defensive wars on her eastern flank, the aggregate term of which in Finnish history exceed one hundred years.

It is probably difficult for a nation of 140 millions living on the other side of the globe, whose resources of money and industrial capa-

city are illimitable, to understand the position, from the military point of view, of a nation of 3.8 millions with a coastline 1 500 kilometers long, exposed to attack, and a 1 000-kilometers long land frontier against a neighbour of two hundred millions, regarding whose inimical intentions there is not the slightest doubt.

It is almost inconceivable that the great American democracy can demand of a small nation which has again been attacked by its fifty times bigger neighbour and is fighting for its existence, that it should, while hostilities are in progress, withdraw to await a new attack within frontiers the defence of which, if the advantages gained are given up for the benefit of the enemy, may easily, in view of the resources on each side, become an overwhelming task.

In the Memorandum of October 27th and in other connections the assumption has been made by the Government of the United States that Finland's freedom of action and even her independence are imperilled by Germany. Finland herself has no reason to assume that she is in any such danger. Finland is desirous of conducting her own affairs in the shelter of that national unity, based on a centuries-old farmer and citizen democracy, which especially in the war periods of recent years has proved to be a dependable force also in the defence of the nation.

The significance to Finland of the circumstance, now that she has been drawn into a resumed war of defence against the Soviet Union, that Germany is simultaneously at war with this enemy of Finland, is obvious. When the offensive preparations directed against Finland by the Soviet Union, to which that country again resorted after the Peace of Moscow, carrying them out at even accelerating speed, are taken into account, and also the fact that the enormous industries of the Soviet Union had been directed almost entirely to the production of war material, there can be no doubt but that a new war, if Finland had again had to stand alone, would have denoted the doom of Finland and of the entire North.

The President of the Republic of Finland stated to the Minister of the United States on October 23rd 1941 that the Finnish nation, which has not violated the rights of any other party and has not asked for more than to be allowed to live and work in peace, will continue her war with the Soviet Union only until her security and working peace have been achieved. The President added that the Finnish Government hoped that it would be possible before long to release on leave a certain number of men from the Army for work on the home front.

This is indeed the case, but Finland in her fight for existence cannot enter into any engagements that would denote an imperilling of the national security by the artificial suspension or annulment of fully justified military operations.

Viewing the immense trials and sufferings mankind now has to endure, and then observing in the prevailing situation the Government of the United States fixing its attention on the individual fateful problems of a small nation, the thought arises that the supreme task which Providence, at the present juncture, has assigned to the United States, for the remedying of the prevailing conditions and ensuring the existence of millions of human beings, would be the achievement of a permanent state of law between the nations that would enable also a small nation to feel its existence secure.

Helsinki. November 11th 1941.

#### APPENDIX.

##### *Railways.*

Prior to the year 1937 the Soviet Union had not a single branch railway leading from the Murmansk Railway towards the Finnish frontier even under construction. In 1937 work was begun on a branch railway leading from the Louhi railway station in the direction of Kiestinki, and on another from the Kotshkoma railway station to Rukajärvi. Even these railways were far from complete in the autumn of 1939, when the Soviet Union embarked in East Karelia and the Kola territory on the construction, on an extensive scale and in feverish haste, of a system of communications. This program, work on which was continued without a halt right up to the present war, comprised at least six branch railways from the Murmansk Railway in the direction of Finland, and further, a railway linking up the Murmansk Railway with the Archangel-Vologda railway, which by the turn of 1940—41 had reached a stage of completion allowing of temporary traffic. The construction of the Petroskoi—Suojärvi railway was begun in the autumn of 1939, and the line was brought into trafficable condition in the summer of 1940. In the case of the railway to Rukajärvi, which had been left incomplete, work was begun in the summer of 1940 on its speedy extension from Kuutsjärvi onward. The Louhi—Kiestinki railway was completed during the war of 1939—40 right to Kiestinki. Work on the Rutshi—Salla railway was begun in November 1939. About 100,000 convicts were employed in its construction, and the line was completed right to Salla in April 1940. During the winter of 1940—41 work was begun on the construction of a railway from the Pinozero railway station north of Kannanlahti towards the Finnish frontier. During the present war the railway has been complete as far as Kouterojärvi, near the Finnish frontier. The northernmost of the branch railways running in the direction of the Finnish frontier runs from the Kuola railway station to the Tulemajoki power station and onward from there along the River Tulemajoki in the direction of Ristikenttä.

The roads completed before the Winter War served as the Soviet Union's main routes of attack on Finland. They included, on the sector of the front north of Lake Ladoga, one road at the height of Käsänäselkä, and two roads at the height of Suojärvi, all extending right to the Finnish frontier. From Porajärvi to Ilomantsi three roads had been completed, also right to the frontier. From Lentiera a road had been made to the frontier, which linked up at Inari with the Lieksa—Hattuvaara road in Finland. With Repola as a starting-point a road branching off in two directions was completed, the southern fork leading to the terminus of the Lieksa—Kivivaara road in Finland, the northern in the direction of Kuhmo, where a second road also leading to the frontier was completed before the Winter War. All these roads were branch-roads running transversely from the highway running south to north from Porajarvi to Repola parallel to the Finnish frontier. From Vuokkiniemi a road was completed linking up with the Raate road (Finland) and from Uhtua a road to Juntusranta (Finnish frontier). Farther north a road, had been completed from Pistojärvi to the Finnish frontier at Kuusamo.

*Highways.  
Roads completed before  
the war of  
1939—40.*

During the years 1940—41 road construction was confined chiefly to the northern districts, the Soviet Union having come into possession of the old Finnish road network in the Karelian Isthmus and Ladoga Karelia. In this area too, however, there is to be mentioned the road running parallel to the Finnish frontier from Kuolismaa to Korpiselkä. In the Kuusamo rural commune three roads leading towards the new political frontier were constructed for the Soviet Union in the ceded territory. From Kannanlahti a highway was constructed as far as Alakurtti, where it links up with the Finnish road network in this area. Parallel to this road, a highway skirting the railway leading from the Pinozero railway station in the direction of the Finnish frontier was completed, and another similar highway skirting the Murmansk—Tulemajoki Ristikenttä railway the highway extending to the Finnish frontier. In the Kola Peninsula specially extensive road construction schemes were undertaken. Thus, during the years 1940—41 a main road was completed running from Murmansk via Sapadnaya Litsa to Titofka, where it branches out in a north-westerly direction to the Isthmus of the Fisher Peninsula, and in a south-westerly direction along the north-west bank of the River Titofka to the Finnish frontier.

*Roads built  
after the Peace  
of Moscow.*

In the area beyond the Finnish frontier north of the Ladoga region, extending eastward from the Moscow frontier to a depth of about 200 kilometers, the existence has been established of altogether ninety airfields. Among the most important of the new airfields constructed in the vicinity of the Finnish frontier may be mentioned the Alakurtti airfields along the Kotshkoma—Repola main road, the Kuutamolahti airfield in the Porajärvi sector, and the airfields at Vitele, Läskelä and Helylä. In the Uhtua sector it has been possible to establish the existence of several airfields, of which some are under construction. In the Kola territory too, there are a considerable number of airfields near the Finnish frontier. These numerous airfields in East Karelia, a great proportion of which have been constructed after the Peace of Moscow, were an essential factor in enabling the Soviet Air Force to carry out without difficulty at any point destructive flights across the whole of Finland.

*Airfields*

Together, the East Karelian railways, roads and airfields constitute, as the experiences both of the Winter War and the present war have borne out, a gigantic military base constructed with a view to striking a blow at Finland and Scandinavia.

9.

**Note of the American Minister in Helsinki (in representation of British interests in Finland), dated November 28th, 1941, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.**

The American Minister presents his compliments to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and at the request of His Britannic Majesty's Government has the honor to transmit to the Finnish Government the attached communication from the British Government:

»On September 22 the Norwegian Government delivered to the Finnish Government on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom a message to the effect that if the Finnish Government persisted in invading purely Russian territory a situation would arise in which Great Britain would be forced to treat Finland as an open enemy not only while the war lasts but also when peace comes to be made; but that if Finland should terminate her war against Russia and evacuate all territories beyond her frontier of 1939, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be ready to study proposals for improvement of relations between Great Britain and Finland.

The Finnish Government's reply shows no disposition to respond to this overture, nor have they ceased to pursue aggressive military operations on the territory of the U. S. S. R., the ally of Great Britain, in closest collaboration with Germany. The Finnish Government have sought to contend that their war against Soviet Russia does not involve participation in the general European war. This contention His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in these circumstances find it necessary to inform the Finnish Government that unless by December 3rd<sup>1)</sup> the Finnish Government ceases military operations and further withdraws from all active participation in

<sup>1)</sup>On the following day, the American Minister informed the Finnish Foreign Ministry that the British Government desired that the date should be changed to read »5th».



hostilities His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will have no choice but to declare the existence of a state of war between the two countries.»

Helsinki, November 28, 1941.

His Excellency  
Rolf Witting,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,  
H e l s i n k i .

10.

**Note of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, dated December 4th, 1941, to the American Minister in Helsinki (in representation of British interests in Finland).**

The Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs has the honour to request the Minister of the United States to transmit to His Britannic Majesty's Government the following communication from the Finnish Government.

»The Finnish Government have received on November 28th 1941 through the Minister of the United States in Helsinki a communication to the effect that unless by December 5th the Finnish Government cease military operations and withdraw from all active participation in hostilities, His Britannic Majesty's Government will have no choice but to declare the existence of a state of war between the two countries.

In reply to the previous communication of the British Government received on the 22nd day of last September, the Finnish Government showed that Finland's military operations are defensive warfare dictated by vital considerations of her own, relating to her existence and security. With reference to this definition of their attitude and also to the Memorandum they handed to the Government of the United States on November 11th, with which the British Government is doubtless acquainted, the Finnish Government repeat their statement that the struggle Finland is waging has no other aims than the safeguarding of the existence and security of the Finnish nation, which have been threatened with total destruction. The Finnish people possess a sense of reality and are aware of their limitations, and do not strive any further in their pursuit of the war than is essentially demanded by their own aims.

On this basis there is cause in the present situation to establish that the Finnish Army is not far from the achievement of its strategic

aims, namely the liberation of the parts of Finland's state territory lost under the terms of the Peace of Moscow and the rendering harmless of the areas from where the enemy had been preparing to destroy Finland.

The Finnish Government find it difficult to conceive that there is anything in their attitude which could give the British Government cause to declare the existence of a state of war between the two countries. It would be to Finland's deep regret if that were to happen.

Helsinki, December 4th 1941.

His Excellency  
Arthur Schoenfeld  
Minister of the United States of America,  
H e l s i n k i .

#### 11.

#### **Note of the American Minister in Helsinki (in representation of British interests in Finland) dated December 6th, 1941, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.**

The American Minister presents his compliments to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Finnish Government and, at the request of His Britannic Majesty's Government, has the honor to transmit to the Finnish Government the attached communication from the British Government:

»On November 28th His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom conveyed to the Finnish Government through the United States Minister in Helsingfors [Helsinki], a message to the effect that unless by December 5th the Finnish Government had ceased military operations and had in practice withdrawn from active participation in hostilities against the U. S. S. R., His Majesty's Government would have no choice but to declare the existence of a state of war between the two countries. Since the reply of the Finnish Government makes it clear they have not complied with the above conditions and do not intend immediately to do so a state of war will exist between the two countries as from 12:01 a. m. Greenwich mean time on December 7th.»

Helsinki, December 6, 1941.

His Excellency  
Rolf Witting,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,  
H e l s i n k i .