



OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

Conference at Cairo and Teheran 1943. Pages 590 – 592

December 1, 1943

PRESENT		
UNITED STATES	UNITED KINGDOM	SOVIET UNION
President Roosevelt	Prime Minister Churchill	Marshal Stalin
Mr. Hopkins	Foreign Secretary Eden	Foreign Commissar Molotov
Mr. Harriman	Sir Archibald Clark Kerr	Mr. Pavlov
Mr. Bohlen	Major Birse	

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THE PRESIDENT then said he would like to take up the question of Finland. He said that he wished to help in every way to get Finland out of the war, and he would like to have the views of Marshal Stalin.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that recently the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Boheman, had inquired of the Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm¹³ as to what were the Soviet Union's intentions regarding Finland, saying that the Finns were afraid that the Russians intended to make good the Russian promise and destroy the independence of Finland, and added that the Finns would like an opportunity to talk to the Russians.

The reply from Moscow was to the effect that Russia had no designs on the independence of Finland, if Finland by its behaviour did not force Russia to do so. Also that the Soviet Government had no objection to the Finns coming to Moscow for conversations, but would like to have the conditions in [on?] which the Finns would negotiate, in advance.

He added that only today they had had word of a Finnish reply through the Swedish [*Swedes*], but did not yet have the full text. The gist of the reply was, however, to the effect that the Finns desired to take as a basis the 1939 frontier, and made no mention of disassociation from Germany. Stalin said in his opinion that this unacceptable reply indicated that the Finns were not anxious to conduct serious negotiations, since they knew that such conditions would be unacceptable.

THE PRESIDENT said that the Marshal's statement had been most interesting, but also unsatisfactory.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that the Finnish ruling groups obviously had hopes still of a German victory.

THE PRESIDENT inquired whether Marshal Stalin thought it would be any help if the United States suggested that the Finns send a delegation to Moscow.

MARSHAL STALIN said he personally had no objections.

THE PRIME MINISTER outlined the change in his own and British feeling that had occurred toward Finland from 1939 to the present as a result of the Finnish associations and the German attack on Russia. He said that Great Britain was at war with Finland, and the first consideration was that the city of Leningrad would be secure, and also that the position of the Soviet Union as the leading naval and air power in the Baltic Sea should likewise be secure.

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He said, on the other hand, he would greatly regret to see anything done to impair the independence of Finland, and would therefore welcome the Marshal's statement on that point. He went on to say that an indemnity would not be much good from a country as poor as Finland.

MARSHAL STALIN expressed disagreement, and said that payments in kind over a period of from 5 to 8 years, such as timber, paper and other materials, would cover some of the damage done by Finland during the war, and that the Soviet Government intended to demand such reparation.

MR. CHURCHILL developed at some length the reasons why he did not consider reparations, in regard to such a country as Finland, either desirable or feasible. And he said in his ears there was an echo of the slogan "No Annexations and No Indemnities".

MARSHAL STALIN laughed, and replied that he had already told Mr. Churchill that he was becoming a Conservative.

THE PRIME MINISTER stated that he attached a great importance to Finland's being out of the war and Sweden's being in, at the moment of the great attack in May.

To which **STALIN** expressed assent.

THE PRESIDENT then inquired whether Marshal Stalin thought that the Finns could expel the Germans from their country by their own efforts.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that there were 21 Finnish divisions on the Soviet front, and that while they were expressing their desire to negotiate, they had recently increased their divisions to this number from 16.

MARSHAL STALIN agreed on the desirability of getting the Finns out of the war, but not at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Union.

MR. MOLOTOV pointed out that for 27 months the Finns and the Germans had had Leningrad under artillery fire.

THE PRESIDENT said that according to his information the Finns were willing to remove the frontier a long distance from Leningrad, but hoped to have Vivorg [*Viborg*] (**MARSHAL STALIN** interrupted to say that this was impossible). **THE PRESIDENT** went on to say that Hango should be demilitarized and made into a bathing beach.

THE PRIME MINISTER said he did not wish to press his Russian friends, but he would like to know what their conditions were; that the British Government was leaving the initiative entirely in the hands of the Russians.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that in February the Soviet Government had told the United States Government what the conditions were, and the British Government had been likewise informed,

and that since the United States Government did not transmit these terms to the Finns it was obvious that it was not believed that the Finns would accept them.

THE PRESIDENT agreed that at that time it was felt that the Finns would not go along with any proposals.

MARSHAL STALIN said that the Treaty of 1940¹⁴ was broken and must be restored, but if Hango were belonging to the Finns he was willing to accept Petsamo instead, which would give them a common boundary with Norway. He added that Petsamo had been in the first instance a gift from Russia to Finland.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that the British Government desired first of all to see the Soviet Government satisfied with the border in the west, and secondly would like to see Finland remain independent.

MARSHAL STALIN thought that it was all right to let the Finns live as they wished, but they must pay half of the damages they had caused.

THE PRESIDENT asked if it would be helpful if the Finns would go to Moscow without any reservations or conditions.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that if there was no prospect of success, such a move might play right into the hands of the Germans, since the reactionary group in Finland would exploit such a failure and pretend that it was impossible to talk with the Russians. He added, however, that if the President insisted, let the Finns come to Moscow, but who could they send?

MR. CHURCHILL interjected that the British Government was not insistent on anything regarding the Finns.

MARSHAL STALIN said that allies could occasionally use pressure on one another, and repeated that if the President thought it was worthwhile, an attempt might be made.

THE PRESIDENT said that in his opinion the present Finnish Government was pro-German, and that nothing could be done with them, but that it might be possible to send other Finns.

MARSHAL STALIN replied that of course that would be better, that they had no objection to anyone the Finns wanted to send, even Ruti [*Ryti*], or even, he added, the devil himself. **STALIN** then outlined the Soviet terms, as follows:

1. The restoration of the Treaty of 1940, with the possible exchange of Petsamo for Hango. However, whereas Hango had been leased, Petsamo would be taken as a permanent possession.
2. Compensation for 50% of the damage done to the Soviet Union by the Finns, the exact amount to be discussed.
3. Break with Germany, and the expulsion of Germans from Finland.
4. Reorganization of the army.

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THE PRIME MINISTER and **MARSHAL STALIN** entered into a friendly discussion as to the advisability of reparations from Finland, and **MARSHAL STALIN** made clear his determination that Finland should pay. ¹⁵

The meeting adjourned until 6 o'clock.