

## **June 26, 1944**

### **The Finnish Situation**

#### **Citation:**

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#### **Summary:**

Stalin and Harriman discuss Finland and the strategy for Finnish withdraw from the war.

#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

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Transcript - English

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44 6-26 Stalin Harriman  
Molotov Conversation re Finnish Situation  
June 26, 1944. (1)

**Present:** The American Ambassador, Mr. Harriman  
Mr. Edward Page, Second Secretary of  
Embassy

~~Marshal Stalin~~  
Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar  
for Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Pavlov, Soviet interpreter

**Subject:** The Finnish Situation.

After Mr. Johnston had withdrawn from the room, I had an opportunity to bring up with Marshal Stalin the question regarding Finland raised by the Secretary of State in a recent cable (Department's No. 1850, June 24, 10 p.m.) and I asked him whether in his opinion there was anything the President could do which might be helpful in facilitating the Finnish withdrawal from the war. The Marshal stated that he did not believe that any action on our part would be of any value at the present time. He said that the controlling members of the Finnish Government were Fascists, were agents of Hitler, and were under the complete domination of the German Government. They were not interested in the welfare of the Finnish people but only in keeping themselves in power.

The Marshal continued that at the instigation of the Finns, Boheman had approached Madame Kollantai in Stockholm and had stated that the Finnish Government desired to resume peace negotiations and to send representatives to Moscow. The Soviet Government had replied that if it received a written statement from the President of Finland or from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Finland was prepared to capitulate, the Soviet Government would receive the representatives and would open peace negotiations. This had happened a week ago and no reply had been received from the Finnish Government.

I said that we had heard from our Chargé d'Affaires in Helsinki that there was a possibility of a change in government under Ramsay's leadership. Stalin replied "these are only rumors" and are typical of the policy of deception which the Finnish Government has been carrying on. For example, the Finns are continually deceiving the Swedes who, although honest, unknowingly mislead other

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people. Marshal Stalin did not appear to place any credence in the report that Ramsay was endeavoring to effect a change in the government; in any event he did not believe that Ramsay would be successful in ousting the "fascist group" which made up the majority of the Finnish Government.

In reply to my further question, Marshal Stalin indicated that he did not feel that assurances either to the Finnish Government or over its head to the people of Finland that the Soviet Government did not intend to swallow up Finland would be of any avail at the present time. At one time in the conversation Stalin stated that it was of course for the President and the United States Government to decide what course of action they wished to take regarding Finland. He added that he did not even believe that a rupture in American-Finnish relations would cause the present Finnish Government to change its position in so far as a Finnish withdrawal from the war was concerned.

In spite of the Marshal's pessimism, I obtained the impression that he would not resent or object to our giving informal indications to the Finns of our understanding of Soviet policy toward Finnish independence and as reiterated by Marshal Stalin in our last conversation.

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THE AMBASSADOR

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Conversation.

Moscow, June 26, 1944

Present: The American Ambassador, Mr. Harriman  
Mr. Edward Page, Second Secretary of Embassy

Marshal Stalin  
Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar  
For Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Pavlov, Soviet interpreter

Subject: The Finnish Situation.

After Mr. Johnston had withdrawn from the room, I had an opportunity to bring up with Marshal Stalin the question regarding Finland raised by the Secretary of State in a recent cable (Department's No. 1550, June 24, 10 p.m.) and I asked him whether in his opinion there was anything the President could do which might be helpful in facilitating the Finnish withdrawal from the war. The Marshal stated that he did not believe that any action on our part would be of any value at the present time. He said that the controlling members of the Finnish Government were Fascists, were agents of Hitler, and were under the complete domination of the German Government. There were not interested in the welfare of the Finnish people but only in keeping themselves in power.

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I said that we had heard from our Charge d'Affaires in Helsinki that there was a possibility of a change in government under Ramsay's leadership. Stalin replied "these are only rumors" and are typical of the policy of deception which the Finnish Government has been carrying on. For example, the Finns are continually deceiving the Swedes who, although honest, unknowingly mislead other people. Marshal Stalin did not appear to place any credence in the report that Ramsay was endeavoring to effect a change in the government; in any event he did not believe that Ramsay would be successful in ousting the "fascist group" which made up the majority of the Finnish Government.

In reply to my further question, Marshal Stalin indicated that he did not feel that assurances either to the Finnish Government or over its head to the people of Finland that the Soviet Government did not intend to swallow up Finland would be of any avail at the present time. At one time in the conversation Stalin stated that it was of

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