

4. FINLAND : MILITARY PROVISIONS(1) Introduction

In revenge for her treatment by the U.S.S.R. in the War of 1939-40, Finland entered the Second World War on June 9th, 1941, as a co-belligerent of Germany. Participation was carefully limited, with the Finnish Government refusing to enter into a closer alliance with Germany in 1942. In that same year a United States observer in Finland described the attitude of the Finnish people as "resignation through necessity to plodding wearily along at the side of Germany". Almost a year later another United States observer described a high Soviet official as saying. "As the Finnish Forces gave the Red Army little trouble, it did not matter whether the Finns went on fighting or not." Subsequently Soviet leaders were incensed at the Finnish stubbornness in concluding an Armistice over which negotiations dragged on over a period of seven months. Previous to the actual signature of the Armistice on September 19th, 1944, the U.S.S.R. were willing to conclude a peace treaty, but on further consideration with the United Kingdom, agreed to the Armistice mentioned above. On the whole, terms of the Armistice can be said to be consistent with Stalin's dictum as reported in a conversation of the Big Three, that in making peace with satellites of Germany, "the spirit of revenge or redress for injuries was a bad adviser in politics". It should be noted that at no time were the United States, France or China at war with Finland and that the peace terms with Finland are, therefore, a question of primary consideration for the U.S.S.R. and the British Commonwealth. By the terms of the Armistice, Finland undertook to disarm German troops within her borders, a task which subsequently led her to declare herself at war with Germany on September 15th, 1944. Finland also agreed to place her Army on a peace-time footing within 2½ months of the date of signature of the Armistice. A Russian news agency report of January 16th, 1945, stated that Finland had fulfilled this obligation. The present strength of the Finnish Army is 26,000, while the Navy which consists of 3 gun boats, 7 motor torpedo boats, 3 mine-layers and 5 submarines, has about 4,000 personnel. The Finnish Air Force consists of 6 Fighter Squadrons (180 aircraft) and 3 Bomber Squadrons (54 aircraft). Its personnel is approximately 7,000.

(ii) The Future Role of the Finnish Armed Forces

Since Finland has no frontier difficulties with her neighbours other than the U.S.S.R., it is not necessary to measure the strength of her Armed Forces against those of a neighbour such as Sweden or Norway, as was thought advisable in the case of Italy. Consequently, the strength of her Armed Forces need only bear some relation to their role in maintaining internal tranquillity, although it might be in the interest of the United Kingdom that they should not be of sufficient strength so as to be a source of military potential for Russia. When Finland is admitted to the United Nations her Government will then be called upon "to make available to the Security Council on