

Considering Neutrality:
The Success of Small Nations in Guarding Their Sovereignty in the Midst
of Great Power Conflict

by

Sami Sillanpaa

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Department of Political Science
University of California, San Diego

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Chapter 1

After the defeat of Nazi Germany in Europe and imperialist Japan in the Pacific, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the clear dominant powers among the victors. As tensions began to rise between them in the late 1940s, the two emerging superpowers sought European allies to balance the threat posed by the other. These allies were integrated into either the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the west or the Warsaw Pact in the east. However, a number of countries wished to remain outside both of these alliances in order to avoid being forced into war in case the tensions between the two poles worsened to the point of triggering a war. A few states were successful in this attempt, while others were not. The goal of this paper is to shine new light on those countries which remained outside the formal frameworks of the two poles and understand how these more or less neutral countries bargained for themselves a degree of hierarchy which was less restrictive than most other European nations were able to achieve.

While there is a profusion of literature dealing with those countries that were part of either NATO or the Warsaw Pact, there has been less interest in the neutral European countries. Even on this topic however, a great deal has been written in country-specific papers which treat these neutral countries as singular exceptions to the rules of the game, each too dissimilar from the others to warrant joint analysis. Further, there has been no detailed work done on this area from within the theoretical framework of international hierarchies, which I believe will illuminate a new understanding of the neutrality equation in Cold War Europe. This paper seeks to close at least part of this gap, by examining those factors which determined why certain countries were able to remain neutral, or at least outside the strong hierarchies of the two

alliance systems.

In order to contain the size of the study, I will be using two sets of countries, one pair for each side of the alliance dichotomy. The smaller size of the sample will allow for a more in-depth analysis of the factors determining the outcomes for the various states. The first set will be Finland and Estonia, and the second Norway and Sweden. Each pairing is characterized by one side which was firmly enmeshed in one of the two opposing alliance networks (or in the case of Estonia full integration in the Soviet Union), and another part which remained outside the formal hierarchy of alliance but was still subject to lighter controls by the dominant states.

This paper will demonstrate that it is possible for small states to remain largely independent even during a great power conflict if they can achieve two things: a credible commitment to neutrality, and a credible ability and resolve to exact high costs from any state trying to force the small state into a more restrictive hierarchy through a military intervention.

In Hierarchy in International Relations, David Lake lays out both the theoretical framework of the theory of hierarchies in international relations and the determinants of how strategic interaction results in differing levels of hierarchy. In short, the theory of hierarchies in international relations attempts to build a new conception of how the international system works. In this conception, consistent with other theories of international relations, much of the international system is anarchic. However, in many areas, there exist hierarchies of power which to some extent determine interstate behavior. To put it another way, there exist dominant states which have a certain level of legitimate authority to command other states which are subordinate to these dominant states in a hierarchical relationship.

In order to fully understand what is meant here, it is necessary to unpack two of the core

concepts above. First is the idea of legitimate authority, which does not mean what it at first appears to mean. That is, it does not mean that the dominant state has a moral authority or a positive authority given to it by other state because it is a virtuous state. Instead, legitimate in this context means only that the dominant state has an authority recognized by both the dominant and subordinate state to command the subordinate state to do (or not do) certain things. Second, this legitimate authority does not cover all aspects of a subordinate state's policy. In fact, the range of legitimate authority that a dominant state exercises over a subordinate is often limited to only a few policy areas or even just parts of certain policy areas. It is this variation which describes the strength of the hierarchy between a dominant state and its subordinate; the more areas in which the dominant state can legitimately command its subordinate, the stronger the hierarchy.

How do these kinds of hierarchical relationships emerge? Generally, a dominant state has an interest in subordinating other states when there are gains to be had from a relationship that is more hierarchical than the existing one. These gains are usually in the form of security gains, particularly when there is a significant rivalry between two dominant states, as was the case in the Cold War. However, these gains must be measured against the costs that will be incurred in the process which produces the subordination of the smaller state. I do not say in the process of subordinating the smaller state because it connotes a more conflictual relationship than is necessarily true in some cases where a smaller state chooses to enter into a hierarchy with a more powerful state in return for certain concessions. That is, states will sometimes willingly choose to enter into a hierarchical relationship if the dominant state provides an incentive to do so, such as by extending military protection to the subordinate state.

A hierarchical relationship comes about when the costs to the dominant state of taking on a subordinate state at some level of hierarchy are outweighed by the benefits of doing so. These costs can be benign ones such as direct payoffs to the subordinate state in the form of military protection or even economic transfers, or they can be more conflictual, for example in the case of military invasion of a smaller state in order to force it into a hierarchy with the dominant state. The benefits are, as discussed above, usually in the form of security benefits, either from having an ally to help fight against an aggressor, from controlling territory which might otherwise be used as a staging ground for attack on the dominant state by another major power, or any number of other benefits accruing from controlling some parts of a foreign country's policy.

Another article by Lake, "The Domestic Politics of International Hierarchy: Indirect Rule in the American System" is helpful in understanding why some hierarchical relationships are more conflictual than others. It is easy for two states that have mostly compatible interests to be both in a hierarchical relationship and be democratic. However, Lake points out that in those cases in which there is greater divergence in national interests, American hierarchies tend to be oriented toward maintaining friendly autocratic regimes in power, because if these regimes were removed, a democratically elected government might well be opposed to participation in an American hierarchy. This is more widely applicable if one expands the scope to include the Soviet Union. Because the Soviet Union's interests were sharply divergent from the interests of most of Eastern Europe, in that the Soviet Union wanted control of Eastern Europe's security policy in order to ensure that no further invasions from the west would be possible, it was highly unlikely that democratic governments in Eastern Europe would have chosen to enter

into strong hierarchies with the USSR. Therefore, Moscow used its military presence in Eastern Europe to install dictatorships which were willing to subordinate themselves to the USSR in return for Soviet support for their regimes.

The theory of hierarchies describes a nuanced world in which people do not have all the information, and the interactions between nations are often better described as existing somewhere on a spectrum of possible relationships. It also recognizes that sometimes power is seen as legitimate, and that it can in fact be in a country's best interest to subordinate itself to a dominant power in return for certain advantages.

There are a number of variables which were determinant in the hierarchy outcomes for these countries in the Cold War. The first of these variables, and likely the most important, is the governance costs a dominant state (in this case, either the United States or the Soviet Union) would have to pay in order to force the subordinate countries into a hierarchy in which the subordinate did not wish to participate. Governance costs are split in two portions: intervention costs and ongoing costs. The intervention costs can be counted as the costs a dominant power would have to absorb in order to install a regime in a possible subordinate that would be willing to put that country into the level of hierarchy demanded by the dominant. This could include the material costs of a military invasion which ends in the installation of a puppet government, or, at the extreme, the complete annexation of a formerly independent country as a result of a war of conquest. Toward the other end of the spectrum are less violent forms of coercion, such as monetary support of a party friendly to the dominant state.

The ongoing governance costs are all of those costs which a dominant state incurs in order to maintain its dominant status in the hierarchy at a constant level. These costs include the

expected cost of punitive interventions, recurring payments made to “pay off” the subordinate into remaining within the hierarchy. Each of these should be considered in more detail. First, the expected cost of punitive interventions is calculated by multiplying the cost (both strictly material and costs associated with possible loss of legitimacy) with the likelihood that the subordinate will defect on its obligations to the dominant state¹. The second class of recurring costs are the costs required to maintain in power a group which does not necessarily represent the will of the country as a whole. This could be as little as monetary support for a political party which then uses that money to retain its power, as in the upfront intervention costs, or making payments or special trade concessions to a country in return for cooperation. At the extreme, these costs can include military support for a dictatorial regime, or even the cost of outright occupation of another country.

The other important variable in determining the degree of autonomy retained by the various countries in this study has to do with strategic interactions between nations. The degree to which the countries could reliably commit to neutrality in the Cold War period had a significant effect on whether they were able to attain that neutrality. That is, if the subordinate state was able to carry out a costly action which demonstrated its commitment to neutrality, it could more successfully negotiate for increased autonomy from the dominant power. This is because, if the subordinate could show that it would not, if granted greater autonomy, work against the dominant state. If, on the other hand, the dominant state expects that a grant of greater autonomy will increase the probability that the subordinate will attempt to defect, there will be a greater incentive for the dominant to maintain or even increase the level of hierarchy it

1 For a thorough treatment of the expected costs of punitive actions, see Lake, 2011

exercises over the subordinate.

There are other theoretical frameworks which also describe the international system, but they do not fully explain the outcomes seen in Norden in the Cold War. The interactions considered here have to do with partial transfers of sovereignty from subordinate states to dominant states, which is an impossible occurrence within the realist framework of international relations. However, it is quite clear that this is precisely what happened, to greater or lesser extent, in all of the states in Europe during the Cold War. In the examples used in this paper, the divisible nature of sovereignty is equally clear. While it is true that, at the extreme, Estonia gave up its sovereignty entirely in becoming part of the Soviet Union, none of the others were annexed by other nations. Nonetheless, there were important transfers of sovereignty from all of the remaining states. It was clear to all that Finland could not, during the Cold War, even contemplate a military alliance with any country other than the Soviet Union. That Finland was not part of the Warsaw pact meant that it was not a formal ally of the USSR, but neither was there doubt that the Soviet Union would take drastic action were Finland to attempt to make an alliance with the Western powers. Norway was a NATO member, which means that it gave up a certain amount of its military independence, as did all of the NATO countries, which recognized the United States as the final decision maker in the alliance. In the realist sense this would have either been seen as cooperation between equals from which Norway could withdraw at any time, or as a cession of Norwegian national sovereignty. However, it would have been difficult for Norway to leave NATO on a whim, and it retained freedom of action in all other parts of its foreign policy. As a result, realist theory falls short of explaining the spectrum of outcomes one sees in Norden during the Cold War.

Liberal theory comes much closer in explaining the outcomes in northern Europe in the Cold War, but it nevertheless falls short of seeing the full picture. The two-stage liberalism that Andrew Moravcsik describes in his “Liberal Theory of International Politics” describes well the origins of the national interests of the different players, while leaving space for the strategic interactions which finally determined the outcomes in northern Europe.² The first stage, in which the theory shines because it shows how states’ interests come about, does an excellent job, as realist theory ignores the role of specific national interests in determining where states place their attention.

However, the theory shows a considerable degree of weakness in the second stage, which focuses on the strategic interactions which are decisive in translating differing – and often conflicting – national interests into international relations outcomes. Moravcsik admits that liberal theory does not predict the outcomes of strategic interaction well in many cases, and that in these cases realist and constructivist schools of thought can be more applicable.³ Unfortunately, this means that liberalism does not encompass a single theory of international relations which can successfully predict the outcomes of future rounds of bargaining between countries, because that would require successfully choosing the correct strain of international relations theory to use in the analysis of the strategic interaction. That this can be done is not apparent. In contrast, I would suggest that the theory of hierarchies in international relations can provide the theoretical basis for the analysis of the second stage of Moravcsik’s two-stage theory. It is this second stage which interests me in this paper, although there will be some

2 Moravcsik, 544-546

3 Moravcsik, 544

discussion of the first, at least to some extent.

The Countries

It is true that taking only two sets of countries from one region of Europe sacrifices breadth of study in favor of greater depth. However, the advantages of this approach seem to outweigh the disadvantages. The greatest difficulty with a large scale study would be the measurement of variables. The nature of the variables necessary for this study is that they are ambiguous: they cannot easily be seen, and can only be approached obliquely, with careful study. What this means, operationally, is that if I wished to do a comprehensive, empirical study of all the European countries, one of two things would be required. The first option would be for there to be a breakthrough in the measurement of governance costs for countries coerced into joining a strong hierarchy as well as for costly demonstrative actions by possible subordinate states. If these indicators were easily measurable, and further, if it were possible to accurately quantify the degree of hierarchy in a relationship between a dominant and a subordinate state, then it would be a relatively simple task to determine the relationships between levels of hierarchy and the costs borne by both dominant states during and after coercive actions and by subordinates trying to demonstrate their neutrality. The second possibility for expanding the study to encompass all of Europe would simply be to do the same kind of in-depth study presented here, but for each country in Europe. However, this would quite clearly be a massive undertaking far beyond what can be accomplished in these pages, and would occupy a researcher for a number of years. Therefore, it seems prudent to limit the study to a more manageable number of countries.

However, it should be clear that the choice of countries was made carefully so as to

maximize the validity of the results. The countries in each pairing are geographically close to each other but also at similar distance from the two alliances, mitigating the effects of location on the differing strategic outcomes within the two pairs. Finland and the Baltic states both shared their largest borders with the Soviet Union, while Sweden and Norway share a massive common border but are separated from continental Europe by water, and are therefore both somewhat physically removed from the core of NATO interest. Geographical similarity and proximity reduces the geostrategic divergence between the countries being tested. That the two sets of countries are also physically near each other is important as it allows for easier comparisons between the sets, which is desirable if we wish to be able to find the similarities between the two alliance systems, and thereby the constants present in all international hierarchies.

The paired countries are also culturally and linguistically quite similar, and had somewhat similar experiences in the interwar period. Norway and Sweden speak languages that are more or less cross-comprehensible, and have a long shared history. Both countries had a tradition of neutrality stretching back into the 19th century and continuing through the interwar period, only to be disrupted for Norway first by the Second World War with the Nazi invasion and then in the Cold War by Norwegian participation in NATO. In the case of Finland and Estonia, they speak closely-related languages, and both have a long history of subjugation to the great powers around them. Finland was part of Sweden for centuries, and gained its independence from tsarist Russia only with the Bolshevik Revolution after a century as the Grand Duchy of Finland. The same is also true for Estonia, which had not yet been independent since it had emerged as a distinct cultural and geographic region. During World War II, both

countries were invaded by the Soviet Union, although only Finland successfully resisted the assault and avoided occupation.

The Variables

In order to compare the results among these countries, there must be measures which can be compared. Here, I will try to present those measures, which are the variables.

First, the dependent variable is the level of hierarchy which a given country experiences with its dominant state. There is no real measurement possible for this in objective terms, although, as Lake points out, there is a continuum along which some approximations – and most certainly comparisons – can be made. The determinants include: the areas of policy in which the dominant state has authority, whether that authority is a positive or negative authority (can the dominant order the subordinate to do something, or only *not* to do something), how many and how substantial the specific areas in which the dominant states has authority over are, and how strongly the dominant state reacts when the subordinate looks to be acting against the dominant state's interests in those areas of authority.

There are two independent variables, as outlined above. The assessment of these variables, like the dependent variable, is subjective, but there are important comparisons that can be made. Governance costs can be estimated to some degree by looking at a few different things. First, the level of military spending can give an idea of the ability of the country to resist invasion. If, as in the case of Finland, Estonia, and Norway the country was actually invaded in World War II, the level of resistance to the invasion also suggests a certain capability and determination to resist a coercive dominant state. Third, transfers of military equipment from the dominant state to the subordinate can be seen as a non-coercive payoff to the subordinate in

exchange for authority. Finally, the number of foreign troops present on the territory of the subordinate state can be counted as part of the governance costs necessary to keep a subordinate in line in a coercive situation.

A country's credible commitment to neutrality must be joined by the concept of non-alignment against the dominant state which the subordinate state has to deal with. This is perhaps the most difficult of all to assess, since it is something of a nebulous concept, as any country can declare its neutrality but there is no objective measure of when that declaration is credible. However, some attempt must be made to assess it, and there are a few indicators one can look at. First is degree to which the country has a history of neutrality, as well as the historical diplomatic relations between the subordinate and dominant states. For example, Sweden had a long history of committed neutrality beginning in the early 19th century which is upheld through two World Wars. Also, Norway had a history of marginal neutrality tempered by a close relationship with the United Kingdom and Western Europe in general. A state can also establish a credible commitment of non-alignment against its dominant state by taking costly actions which demonstrate this commitment. For example, Finland did not join several economic unions such as the European Community in the 1950s until it had asked for and received explicit permission from Moscow, because it wanted to assure the USSR that it was not taking actions which would endanger the Soviet Union or move Finland into the western camp.

Chapter 2: The Eastern States: Finland and Estonia

The year 1918 bore witness to, among other things, the birth of two nations on the shores of the Baltic Sea. For the next twenty years, these two states, Finland and Estonia, independent for the first time, went through similar processes of nation-building. World War II caused a severe divergence in the paths they were to follow for the rest of the twentieth century. Finland remained independent, if somewhat constrained by the Soviet Union, while Estonia was absorbed by the USSR, to reemerge as an independent only with the breakup of the Soviet empire in 1991. In hierarchical terms, Finland was subject to a weak hierarchy with Moscow in which the Soviet Union had the legitimate authority to prevent certain Finnish diplomatic actions, but could not command internal Finnish policy in any real way. Estonia on the other hand was in the strongest possible hierarchical relationship with the Soviet Union, as it was completely under Soviet control for nearly 50 years.

According to the predictions of hierarchy theory, Finland was able to achieve the weak hierarchy it maintained throughout the Cold War because it was able to credibly commit to non-alignment against the Soviet Union and demonstrate its ability and willingness to exact a high governance cost from any state trying to force it into a more subordinate position. Estonia, on the other hand, was annexed by the Soviet Union because it was unable to do either of these things effectively.

As a result, the historical record of Finnish actions before, during, and after the Second World War should show strong resistance to invasion and a sustained series of acts which demonstrated Finnish commitment to not ally with others against the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Estonia likely would have had a foreign policy which did not establish a record of

commitment to neutrality, and weak military resistance when faced with a challenge to Estonian sovereignty.

Finland

In order to understand the nature of the relationship between the USSR and Finland, we must go back to the foundation of Finland as an independent state in the midst of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Grand Duchy of Finland had been part of the tsarist empire since the early 19th century, when Sweden had relinquished control of the region to Russia. Since then, it had been granted a certain degree of autonomy in determining internal laws, although this was a privilege that could be (and was) intermittently violated by the tsar.⁴ When the Bolshevik Revolution broke out, there was a significant struggle for power that took place in Finland, which would be decisive in securing the country's independence.

As the Russian empire dissolved into civil war, the Finnish socialist parties at first supported national autonomy for Finland, although until early 1918 they were opposed to outright independence, while the more conservative parties quickly began to call for independence from the forming Bolshevik government in Russia.⁵ By January 1918, the Social Democrats had switched to supporting full independence as well. This change was largely due to the ideological differences present between Finnish socialists, who were mostly concerned with the rights and needs of rural Finns, and Russian Bolsheviks, who saw industry and collectivization as the only possible way forward. However, the Finnish Communists still laid plans for a seizure of power in order to install a proletarian government run exclusively by a

4 See Paasivirta (1962) for a thorough treatment on the history of Finland during tsarist rule.

5 Kirby 159-162

legislative assembly similar to the ideal soviet that never truly materialized in the Soviet Union.

The Communist attempt to seize power was expected by the newly installed government headed by Pehr Svinhufvud, and the situation quickly deteriorated into a civil war which, while only lasting a few months, left cleavages in Finnish society that would not heal for a generation.⁶ In the aftermath, it became clear that despite the differences between the socialist and non-socialist blocs of voters, only a few Communists had seriously supported union with the Bolshevik Russian government. In fact, it had been the Social Democrats who had secured for Finland the Soviet government's recognition of independence in early 1918.⁷

What is most important to note about Finnish independence is that it was never seriously contested by the fledgling Soviet Union, as there was no attempt at military intervention in Finland during this time. The reason for this has to do with the nature of the fighting between Red and White forces during the Revolution. Much of the fighting took place near the city of Leningrad/St. Petersburg, which is near the Karelian city of Viipuri. The Karelians are a Finnish-speaking population that had been politically separated from Finland for hundreds of years. In 1918, Finnish forces moved into the Karelian Isthmus in an attempt to unify all the Finnish-speaking peoples of the region.⁸ However, these forces were pushed out of Karelia by White forces which included British and French troops, as the Whites thought the Finns would end up Communist. Since the area around St. Petersburg had one of the highest concentrations of White forces during the Revolution, the Red Army was not able to take advantage of the chaos caused by the Finnish civil war, and so Finland slipped from the Soviet

6 For more on the Finnish civil war and its societal implications, see Luostarinen (1998) and Toivonen (1998)

7 Kirby, 161

8 Allison (1985), 5

grasp.

Throughout the 1930s, Finland pursued a number of different defense frameworks in an effort to guarantee support in the case of a Soviet attack. Unfortunately, the first series of talks, between Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland fell apart because of Norwegian and Danish unease over the aggressive Third Reich, While Sweden and Finland were more concerned with the Soviet Union. Later bilateral talks between Finland and Sweden also fell apart, this time because of outrage from Moscow over the proposed re-militarization of the Aland Islands. Finally, negotiations for a possible merger between Finland and Estonia on the basis of their shared cultural and linguistic heritage fell through because of Finnish insecurities about having to defend Estonian territory against the USSR. In fact, Finland did not even have an official policy of neutrality until 1938, because it felt that such a policy would contradict Finland's continued active participation in the League of Nations. However, once the League had shown itself to be unable to cope with aggressive fascist states and the aforementioned alliance talks had failed, Finland officially declared its neutrality concurrently with Sweden's similar declaration.

Soviet-Finnish relations began to deteriorate in the 1930s, when Carl Mannerheim, the prominent Finnish general and statesman, accepted an invitation from Hermann Goering to go hunting in the Third Reich. The Soviet unease with Finland's ties to Germany was only exacerbated when a German U-boat squadron visited Helsinki in 1937. Both of these actions caused Moscow to believe that Finland was falling into the Nazi sphere of influence, and because of the basic conflict between Communist and fascist worldviews, this made Finland seem threatening as an avenue for invasion of the Soviet Union. At this same time, talks

between the Nordic countries about a possible defensive alliance collapsed due to diverging interests among the parties and Danish insecurity over its land border with the aggressive Third Reich.⁹

In 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union gave Stalin free reign in the Baltic, which meant he no longer needed to worry about German intervention in a war of conquest against Finland. Stalin believed the Finnish army incapable of putting up much of a resistance, so at the end of November 1939, the Red Army crossed the Finnish border and began the Winter War, which would last until March 1940. This was a much longer war than Moscow had planned for, as the Finns defended their borders far more effectively than expected. In the end, the Soviet superiority of numbers and equipment began to grind down Finnish resistance, and the Finnish government sued for peace. The war ended with the cession of Karelia and the Gulf of Finland islands to the Soviet Union, as well as the lease of a military base at Hanko.¹⁰

After the end of the Winter War, the Finnish government actively sought the support of the Nazi regime, largely due to the inability of the western Allies to send military aid to Finland during its first war with the Soviet Union. While it is not clear how much the British and French governments were actually committed to helping Finland in its war against the Soviet Union, they did appear sympathetic. There had been talk of sending troops to Finland through Norway, although this may have been planned more as a ruse to occupy Norway to keep it out of German hands than as an actual aid to Finland. However, it is important to note that at this

9 Allison (1985), 6-9

10 Häikiö, 65-88

point the USSR was not allied with the western democracies against the Third Reich, and therefore it was somewhat feasible to contemplate material aid to Finland.

As a result of the Finnish alignment with the Third Reich, as well as Finnish resentment over the harsh terms of the peace treaty of 1940, Finland went to war once again in June 1941, when Germany launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union. Finland considered itself a co-belligerent rather than an ally, and the war was known in Finland as the Continuation War¹¹. In this war, Finland at first successfully pushed Soviet forces out of Karelia, after which the Finnish government began to try to figure a way out of the war while maintaining the territorial gains it had made and also not angering its German associates. When the war turned against Germany in 1944, this need to end the Continuation War became acute, as Finland knew it could not stand alone to the full strength of the Soviet Union for long.¹² After a sustained assault on Finnish lines in September of 1944, the Moscow Armistice ended the war, but at great cost to Finland. In addition to restoring the borders to their 1940 positions, with Karelia in the Soviet Union, Finland was also required to pay \$300 million worth of goods in war reparations to the Soviet Union by 1953, to lease the Porkkala military base, situated on a peninsula less than 50 miles from the Finnish capital, to the USSR, and allow the Soviet air force unlimited access to Finnish air bases for use in air raids against German cities. Finally, Finland was required to quickly expel all remaining German troops from Finnish territory¹³. This last requirement led Finland into the Lapland War, which would run from October 1941 through April 1945, at the same time as the Finnish army demobilized as required under the armistice

11 Kirby 218-222

12 Trommer in Scandinavia during the Second World War, 258-268

13 Kirby 229-232

agreement.

In the immediate aftermath of the Continuation War, with Finland successfully carrying out the requirements of the armistice, and the Second World War continuing in Germany, the Soviet Union did not express a strong interest in interfering with the internal workings of Finland beyond ensuring compliance with the armistice. Why it did not later take action similar to that seen in Czechoslovakia or Poland in order to ensure its hegemony over Finland, or take further military action to incorporate Finland into the Union, as it had done with Estonia, shall be discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter. For the moment, it will suffice to examine the nature of Soviet-Finnish relations in the first decade or so of the Cold War.

The diplomatic process of ending the Continuation War between the Soviet Union and Finland did not reach its conclusion until 1947 with the Paris Peace Treaty, which laid out the specifics of the peace treaties officially ending the Allied wars with Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland. In this treaty, the territorial concessions of the Finnish-Soviet peace treaty from 1945 were reaffirmed. In addition, the Finnish army was limited to 34,400 men, the navy to a maximum of 10,000 tons, and the air force to no more than 60 aircraft. Perhaps most importantly, however, it reinforced the clauses of mutual assistance in case of hostilities that had been included in the 1940 peace treaty¹⁴. This treaty formalized, in an international sense, the Finnish obligations to the Soviet Union.

In 1948, Finland and the Soviet Union concluded a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (FCMA), which stipulated that Finland would defend itself against any attack made against it by Germany or its allies, particularly when the goal of the attack was an

14 Allison 17

invasion of the Soviet Union. In short, the treaty was meant to assure the USSR that Finland would not allow any forces hostile to the Soviet Union to transit through Finnish territory. However, there are several important ways in which this treaty was different from the mutual assistance treaties that the Soviet Union had concluded with the eastern European nations that would later become part of the Warsaw Pact¹⁵.

Unlike in the eastern European cases, Finland had proposed a mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union in 1946. The USSR did not approve the idea at the time because the peace treaty negotiations were still ongoing in Paris, and it wanted a conclusion to the intricacies of establishing the postwar order before moving on to any further talks with Finland. As a result of the early Finnish overtures, however, when Moscow indicated renewed interest in a treaty of mutual assistance, Finland had a well-defined platform to negotiate from. The earlier Finnish proposal had also been put forward by President Mannerheim, who had in the past been a staunch White, and his acceptance of a mutual assistance treaty was seen as an indicator that Finland was now attempting to credibly commit to non-alignment with the USSR's enemies.¹⁶

The treaty itself was significantly different from the treaties the USSR concluded with Czechoslovakia and Poland. The Fenno-Soviet FCMA treaty was strictly limited to the military field, whereas the other treaties were more comprehensive and dealt to a significant extent with the eastern European states' foreign policy. The military clauses in the FCMA were also less ominous with regard to Finnish independence. This becomes apparent in the articles of the treaty:

15 Allison 19-20

16 Allison 20-21

Article 1

In the eventuality of Finland or the Soviet Union through Finland, becoming the object of an armed attack by Germany or any state allied with the latter, Finland will, true to its obligations as an independent state, fight to repel the attack. Finland will in such cases use all of its available forces for defending its territorial integrity by land, sea and air, and will do so within the frontiers of Finland in accordance with obligations defined in the present treaty and, if necessary, with the assistance of, or jointly with, the Soviet Union.

In the cases aforementioned the Soviet Union will give Finland the help required, the giving of which will be subject to mutual agreement between the Contracting Parties.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties shall confer with each other if it is established that the threat of an armed attack as described in Article 1 is present.¹⁷

As the clauses above state, Soviet forces would only assist Finnish forces against an aggressor when there is mutual agreement over such military aid between the contracting parties. Similar clauses in other treaties gave the Soviet Union far more leeway to decide when the other state was under threat, thereby allowing it to intervene militarily without mutual agreement. Finally, the treaty stated that Finland and the Soviet Union would “not conclude any alliance or join any coalition directed against” the other, furthering the Finnish commitment to non-alignment with the Soviet Union’s enemies¹⁸.

¹⁷ Allison, 22-23

¹⁸ Allison 21-23

As important as the treaties Finland did sign during the Cold War are the treaties and agreements it did not enter into with other nations. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was serious talk among the Nordic states of a mutual defense alliance. However, the talks foundered partly on Finnish refusal to join such a framework due to Soviet insecurities about the possible dangers presented by such an alliance. Finland also declined to join the Nordic Council at its foundation in 1952, although it did join in 1955 after seeking Soviet approval. Finland also did not join the European Economic Community, although it eventually negotiated a preferred trading status for itself with the community, again after explicit Soviet acceptance.¹⁹

On the whole then, Finnish relations with the Soviet Union were far more cordial and cooperative in the postwar era than they had been in the interwar period. We now turn to the analysis of how this state of affairs, in which Finland retained its independence, if not complete autonomy, in the shadow of a paranoid state.

Finland Analysis

We have now seen the evolution of Fenno-Soviet relations between Finnish independence and the first fifteen years or so of the Cold War. How did the interactions between Finland and the Soviet Union (and between each and the rest of the world) determine the nature of their postwar relationship? There are three separate historical periods in the evolution of this relationship between 1918 and 1960, each of which is important for an analysis of how hierarchy theory can explain the level of Fenno-Soviet hierarchy in the Cold War. These three periods are: the interwar period, World War II, and the postwar era.

During all three of these periods, it can be assumed that the benefit to the Soviet Union

¹⁹ Nordstrom (2000), 338

of subordinating Finland remained somewhat constant, while the costs of doing so fluctuated in important ways, which explain why the Soviet Union waited until 1939 to invade Finland and did not attempt to attack again after the defeat of Germany.

The benefits of subordinating Finland remained constant over time for several reasons. First, there was no appreciable change in the size of the Finnish population, territory, or economy. Therefore, the material benefits of forcing Finland to work for the Soviet Union against its enemies remained more or less constant, and because of the short time period considered here could not conceivably have changed significantly in any case. Strategically, Finland was not in itself ever a large aggressive threat to the Soviet Union, and therefore Soviet consideration of Finland as a strategic target had mostly to do with its location on the western border of the USSR. In all three periods under discussion, the major benefit the Soviet Union would have garnered from subordinating Finland was in the form of closing a vulnerable border to invasion, thereby protecting the Soviet core from Western (either German or later American) invasion.

The costs of subordinating Finland did change, and these changes were, I argue, the major determinant in the differing Soviet attitudes toward Finland in the mid-20th century. First, the governance costs of forcing Finland into the Soviet hierarchy compared to the USSR's ability to pay those costs went through several evolutions in this period. At the time of Finnish independence, the new Bolshevik government was dealing with a plethora of military actions in order to both defeat the Whites attempting to reassert the power of the tsarist regime in Russia itself, as well as a number of other nationalist movements in the disparate portions of the former Russian territory. It was physically unable to send a significant expeditionary force to Finland

because a large portion of the White resistance to the Red Army, bolstered by Western European forces, took place in the Karelian Isthmus near Leningrad/St. Petersburg. Concurrently, the Soviet government had no resources to send in support of the Finnish Communists, very few of whom were Bolshevik Communists in any case, and therefore were seen as enemies of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In the 1930s, as the Soviet Union began to look outside its borders again after a period of closure, the strategic situation had changed. Germany was, after 1933, recovering its former strength very quickly, and it seemed that Finland was actively courting German assistance against a possible attack from the East. At the same time, the USSR was still militarily unprepared for a major war, and an invasion Finland would have drawn both international condemnation and possible hostile intervention by the Third Reich. Therefore, the expected costs of invasion when compared to the USSR's ability to pay such costs would have been high.

This same expectation of possible German intervention would have an important role to play in the subsequent deterioration of relations between Finland and the Soviet Union that would ultimately lead to war. Due to the fact that Finland had maintained such friendly relations with the expansionist Third Reich throughout the 1930s, the Finnish official policy of neutrality appeared highly suspect to the Soviet Union. Rather than taking actions to credibly commit to neutrality, Finland had acted in ways which seemed to put it in the German camp as lines were drawn at the end of the 1930s. As a result, when the secret provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact gave the USSR free reign over the Baltic States (including Finland), Finland had no credible commitment to neutrality that would have reduced the cost of *not* invading. That is, had Finland been credibly committed to its neutrality policy, the cost to

the Soviet Union of the increased insecurity of having an independent state on its border as a possible route for invasion would have been mitigated.

That same Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which put Finland into such a compromising position modified the Soviet Union's costs of intervention significantly enough to make an invasion appear beneficial. Since the non-aggression pact ensured to some extent that Germany would not interfere in a Soviet attack on the Baltic States, the cost of such an invasion against Finland were significantly reduced. The Soviet Union only had to factor in Finland's native ability to resist invasion and eventual occupation when calculating the costs of intervention. Stalin clearly estimated that these costs would be negligible, as he ordered the attack to begin with far fewer forces than would eventually be arrayed against the Finnish army.

Throughout the two wars fought between Finland and the Soviet Union, it became apparent that Finland's ability to resist attack was far greater than Moscow had expected, and as a result, a peace treaty was negotiated both times. To be sure, the peace treaties of 1940 and 1945 were harsh and difficult for the Finns to accept, but they were not capitulations and preserved Finnish independence, and avoided a Soviet occupation of Finnish territory.

In the postwar period, the costs of intervention shifted once again. Starting with the clauses of the peace treaty of 1945, which stipulated that all German troops had to be expelled from Finnish territory, Finland began to commit itself to non-alignment against the Soviet Union. It repeatedly demonstrated its goodwill toward Moscow. Because of this commitment to not ally against the Soviet Union, Moscow could be more secure in having Finland as an independent neighbor it could be reasonably sure would not become a danger. In other words, since Finland had credibly committed to a policy of non-alignment against the USSR, there was

less danger to the Soviet Union from allowing Finland to retain its independence and position in a weak hierarchy with Moscow.

In addition to the effects of Finland's credible commitment to neutrality, the governance costs of subjugating Finland would have been calculated differently by the Soviet Union in the postwar era. Because of Finnish success in defending the nation against the Soviet invasion during the Winter and Continuation Wars, Finland had demonstrated that it was willing and able to inflict significant costs on any state attempting to subjugate it. As a result, the Soviet Union's expected governance cost of subordinating Finland were both clearly demonstrated during the wars, and would have been seen as being considerably higher than had been expected in the 1939 lead-up to the Winter War. This resolve to defend Finnish territory against hostile invasion would also likely have increased the perceived ongoing governance costs the Soviet Union would have had to pay in the event that it did successfully invade Finland. Because the resistance to actual invasion had been great, it would have followed that resistance to occupation (the only possible mechanism by which the USSR would have been able to enforce its dominance) would have also been significant. Protests, insurgency, and outright rebellion might have occurred had the Soviet Union attempted to govern Finland in a strong hierarchy, even after a successful invasion and occupation of the country.

There are other costs the Soviet Union would likely have had to pay had it tried to subordinate Finland during the Cold War. One of these would have been the loss of Finland as an example of Soviet ability to live peaceably with a neighboring country which operates with a very different political system. Finland in this capacity played a somewhat important role in the Soviet Union's propaganda efforts to improve its image around the world. Furthermore, a clear

loss of Finnish sovereignty to the Soviet Union would have further fed fears in the West of a Soviet takeover of Europe, possibly triggering a diplomatic crisis between the two major powers. In fact, a part of the reason such a crisis did not reach critical levels during the Soviet subjugation of Czechoslovakia in 1948 was that Moscow had recently concluded the Fenno-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, which demonstrated that the Soviet Union was not only interested in forcibly subjugating all countries that it could. In short, while a Soviet takeover of Finland likely would not have triggered an armed conflict between East and West, it would have eroded the Soviet Union's international standing and made it more difficult for the détente of the 1960s to go forward.

The Finnish commitment to neutrality can be seen in the actions and non-actions of the Finnish government starting even during the Continuation War and continuing throughout the Cold War. Finnish aims in the Continuation War never included the complete destruction of the Soviet Union, as Finland was more interested in gaining East Karelia, a Finnish-speaking region east of the official Finnish border. As a result, the Finnish government knew that it would have to deal with an existing Soviet Union in the future as well, and therefore it took pains to highlight the fact that it was only a co-belligerent with the Third Reich and not an ally. In this vein, the Finnish army refused a German demand that Finland siege Leningrad, which was for a time largely undefended and very near the Finnish front in the Karelian Isthmus. Finland also declined to attack the Archangel-Murmansk rail line which was an essential supply line for Western Allied war materiel to the Red Army. These two episodes demonstrate the Finnish perspective that it was not allied with Germany and likely helped convince the Soviet government that a separate peace with Finland was possible. It also set the stage for a less-

aggressive foreign policy toward Finland because Finland had demonstrated that it was not interested in the ultimate destruction of the Soviet Union²⁰.

The conditions of the peace treaty also helped assure Finnish commitment to friendlier relations with its eastern neighbor, as it successfully drove the remaining German troops out of Finnish territory while at the same time quickly demobilizing its armed forces. In the aftermath, Finland also continued to successfully deliver its war reparations payments, and in fact was the only country which fought in World War II to actually pay all of its reparations.

In the postwar era, Finland also declined from taking a number of actions that would have, in Soviet eyes, defeated Finland's credible commitment to neutrality. In the late 1940s, there were talks between Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark about forming a northern European defensive alliance. However, Finland withdrew from the talks after Norway and Denmark joined NATO and it became clear that adherence to such an alliance would have appeared threatening to the Soviet Union. In 1952, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden formed the Nordic Council to facilitate cooperation between the Nordic states. Finland was invited to join, but refrained from doing so until it received express permission from the Soviet Union in 1955. Finland also did not ask for Marshall Plan reconstruction loans in order to avoid arousing Soviet suspicions, although it was able to secure a number of smaller loans from the U.S. government²¹. The pattern of Finnish refusal to join organizations which seemed pro-Western unless the Soviet Union had expressly given permission continued with Finland's involvement in the European Economic Community. Finland never joined the EEC, although it

20 Allison 13-14

21 Allison 35

negotiated a treaty with it in 1977 which lowered trade barriers between Finland and the EEC. This treaty only took form once permission had been obtained from the Soviet Union for Finland to put greater emphasis on its western European economic ties.

In 1956, Finland and the USSR renewed their FCMA treaty for another twenty years. The negotiations for this extension once again demonstrated to the Soviet Union Finland's commitment to not ally against it. More importantly, the changes made to the treaty during the extension negotiations highlight the success of Finland's strategy of credible commitment to neutrality. The treaty ended the lease of the Porkkala military base to the Red Army, which meant that after the treaty was renewed, there were no longer any Soviet troops anywhere on Finnish territory. The Soviet Union clearly trusted that Finland would not attack the USSR, but also that it would resist an attack by an aggressor trying to use Finnish territory as a jumping-off point to the east.

Because of Finnish commitment to neutrality, and the demonstrably high governance costs of a hostile subordination of Finland to the Soviet Union, Finland was able to retain a position of weak hierarchy in the Soviet sphere during the Cold War.

Alternative explanations

The position of Finland in the Cold War world was a hotly contested one in academic circles, as there was never a real consensus on how Fenno-Soviet relations could and should be characterized. I will attempt to review the more common threads of thought, and demonstrate that there is something missing in each of them.

There were those who believed that Finland was largely a puppet of the Soviet Union which Moscow allowed to have the appearance of independence as a propaganda tool, and that

if push came to shove, Finland would fold to any and all demands made by the Soviet government. This was largely the realist viewpoint, which took a highly pessimistic view of the chances of Finnish survival as even a semi-independent state in the long run. In this view, the FCMA treaty was only different from the mutual assistance treaties the Soviet Union signed with Eastern European countries in its wording, but not in its effects on Finnish sovereignty. Finnish concessions to Soviet complaints, such as Finland's decision to drop out of talks for a Nordic security framework, were seen as further proof of Finland's loss of sovereignty to the Soviet Union.

This viewpoint misses some important aspects of Fenno-Soviet relations, however. The FCMA treaty that was agreed to was nearly entirely written by the Finnish delegation, with very few substantial inputs by the Soviets. As a result, the wording is far less aggressive than that seen in similar agreements between the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries which came under direct and absolute Soviet domination. It left a great deal more space for independent action by Finland, and did not allow the presence of Soviet troops except in the case of an attack or imminent attack against Finland. Even then, Soviet troops could only enter Finnish territory if Finland specifically requested help. This is quite different from the treaties concluded with Eastern European countries, which gave Moscow more wide-ranging powers to determine for itself when military intervention was necessary in these countries. It is also important to remember that Finland retained its liberal democratic institutions and basically capitalist economic organization throughout the Cold War. None of the truly Soviet-dominated states were able to do this to any significant degree, and when they tried, as Czechoslovakia did, they were restrained by rapid and strong reactions by the Soviet Union. Neither were any

of the Eastern European countries able to even contemplate joining a body such as the Nordic Council, nor could they have kept the majority of their economies oriented toward Western Europe as Finland did. None of these actions would have been acceptable in any of the countries that were actually under Soviet domination, as the historical record shows when they tried. Therefore, Finland was in no way in a similar position, as its limitations were more in the realm of things it was forbidden from doing in terms of its foreign policy, and even those limitations were not comprehensive or absolutely destructive to Finland's ability to conduct an independent foreign policy.

Others would claim that it was primarily Finland's military capability in defending itself against the Soviet invasion during World War II that allowed it to remain outside of Moscow's direct domination. This view is somewhat correct in that it acknowledges the importance of Finland's ability to defend itself against invasion. However, it does not take into account why the USSR did not later move to take over Finland when it was no longer restrained by its need for troops to fight in Germany. It was clear during the late 1940s that the United States would not militarily involve itself in any Soviet attack on Finland, but would rather only support Finnish independence to the extent that it could do so in the context of the United Nations. In other words, Finnish independence was never guaranteed by the West, and the threat of war with the West if the USSR invaded Finland in the early Cold War was very slight. Therefore, the purely military explanation for Finland's survival lacks a vital aspect. It does not account for the importance of Finland's credible commitment to non-alignment against the Soviet Union to explain why the USSR was not willing to pay the costs of more strongly subordinating Finland.

Finally, there are those who advocated the central importance of the Paasikivi-Kekkonen

Line in limiting the influence of the Soviet Union. They would claim that it was due to the successful foreign policy efforts of the two long-running Finnish Presidents, Juho Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen that Finland was able to retain its position of weak hierarchy. This line of foreign policy was centered on the concessions to the Soviet Union discussed earlier, and as a result is largely synonymous with my argument for a credible commitment to neutrality.

However, this vein of thought does not include a military aspect to it, which I believe ignores an important factor in the determination of the final outcome in relations between Finland and the Soviet Union.

While there are other explanations that attempt to explain Finland's position in the Cold War, these explanations generally miss other facets of Fenno-Soviet relations. As a result, they are incomplete and only form part of the more complete picture this paper attempts to build.

Estonia History

Like Finland, Estonia gained its independence from Russia in the midst of the Bolshevik Revolution. However, the story of Estonian independence is somewhat more complex and more directly intertwined with the fate of the nation in World War II and its loss of independence from 1940 to 1991. At the outset of the revolution in Russia, Estonia did not immediately declare independence. Instead, it declared autonomy for itself, while still remaining in the Soviet Union. However, when the Soviet Union attempted to enforce collectivization on Estonian farmers, and with the prospect of German invasion becoming imminent, the Estonian Maapäev (parliament) decided to declare independence. The declaration happened on February 24, 1918. This did not stop the German army, which had been steadily advancing against the disorganized Russian troops, for several months. In fact, German forces occupied Tallinn, the capital, on February 25,

making the declaration of independence a merely symbolic action²².

The German occupation, which only lasted until November of the same year, had several important effects on prospects for Estonian independence. First, when German troops left Estonia, many of the old German nobility that had been in Estonia for centuries left with them, mostly due to fear of the revolutionary intent of the Soviet Union, which would have seen the nobles at the very least stripped of their property, if not their lives. This allowed ethnic Estonians to become the dominant voice in the nation. More importantly, the German forces had forced the Soviet military out of Estonian territory, and when the Germans left, there were no Soviet troops on Estonian soil. The Germans had also largely expelled the native Estonian Bolsheviks, who might have been able to seize power in the aftermath of the German retreat had they been present. As it was, Estonia suddenly had no non-Estonian military units on its soil, which gave it precious time to organize a response to the impending Soviet attack.²³

When the Soviets did begin their attack, the Estonian line held, and over the next year, Estonian forces, aided by supplies and some troops from the western European powers fighting against the Red Army, eventually won the war. The war officially ended in 1920 with Soviet recognition of an independent Estonia.

The inter-war years saw both the development of the Estonian nation as well as a growing unease with the geostrategic situation the nation found itself in. It was a micronation of little more than a million people, sitting on the border of a massive empire that would become increasingly paranoid about threats to its sovereignty from abroad. It was also bounded to the

22 Raun 104-105

23 Sullivan in *The Baltic States in Peace and War*, 31-42

west by the Baltic Sea, and had a history of invasion from the south by the Germans.

To combat this vulnerability, Estonia attempted to find security partnerships in several directions. To the north and west, across the Baltic Sea, Estonia tried to engage the interest of Sweden and Finland in a joint security organization, which fell through largely because of disagreements between Sweden and Finland over the Aland islands. There was also talk of union between Finland and Estonia, which share a common cultural and linguistic history, which also amounted to nothing, partly because of Finnish worries about trying to defend Estonian territory against an aggressive Soviet Union. Estonia was further thwarted in its attempts to improve its security by the failure of the League of Nations to carry out its mandate of preventing war and promoting self-determination. Finally, Estonian attempts to establish a security framework with the other eastern Baltic states, Latvia and Lithuania, fell through because of tensions having to do with border conflicts.²⁴

During the Estonian attempt to get League of Nations support for Estonia as a security guarantee, Estonia actively courted the major players in the League, the UK and France.²⁵ This did nothing to help Estonian relations with the Soviet Union, which remembered all too clearly that Estonia had only gained its independence in the first place thanks to aid from the western democracies. Estonian trade relations were also clearly oriented toward the west, as very few Estonian exports were to its eastern neighbor. All in all, it was clear that Estonia was not a neutral country, despite its official policy as such.

This isolation which Estonia found itself in at the end of the 1930s put it in a difficult

24 Anderson in *The Baltic States in Peace and War* 126-138

25 Crowe in *The Baltic States in Peace and War*, 110-119

strategic situation, caught as it was between the expansionist Nazi regime and the Soviet desire for a buffer zone between it and Germany. The Third Reich had an expressed interest in the Baltic states because of the historical ties the region had to Germany. At the same time, the Soviet Union concluded the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in which the secret clauses gave the USSR free reign over the Baltic region, including Estonia.²⁶

The Estonian government received word of these secret clauses within a few days of the treaty's signing. As a result, there may have been a window of opportunity during which the Estonian military could have mobilized to counter a Soviet attack, but because of the lack of military cooperation between the Baltic states, no single state was willing to take the risks a full mobilization of forces would have presented. In September 1939, the Estonian government concluded a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union which mandated the placing of 25,000 Soviet troops at a number of military bases on Estonian soil, and allowed free access to Estonian airspace and coastal waters to the Soviet air force and navy, respectively²⁷. While the treaty explicitly stated that the Soviet Union would continue to honor Estonian sovereignty, it was immediately clear that the treaty put Estonia in an extremely precarious position. Estonian autonomy, if not complete independence, continued for approximately one more year, during which time the Estonian government continued to govern, and the Soviet troops mostly stayed at the prescribed military bases leased to the USSR under the mutual assistance pact.

In June 1940, the situation changed. Nazi Germany had successfully overrun France in a matter of weeks, and the Soviet Union began to prepare for a possible German move eastward.

26 Dallin in *The Baltic States in Peace and War*, 97-109

27 Raun 140-141

It presented a harsh ultimatum to Estonia, requiring the formation of a new government that would be able to establish friendly relations with the Soviet Union. In the ultimatum, Moscow accused Estonia of collaborating with Latvia and Lithuania in a military alliance against the USSR, a claim which Estonia could only have wished had been true a year earlier. As it was, with hostile troops already on its territory, the government capitulated to the demands, and a further 90,000 Soviet troops entered the country on June 17th, thereby making Estonia a fully occupied country.²⁸

In the aftermath, the Soviet government placed a number of ethnic Estonians who had been born within the borders of the USSR, in positions of power in Estonia. These Soviet Estonians were picked because they were both committed Communists and far more supportive of the Soviet takeover of Estonia than native Estonian Communists were. This new government was confirmed by an election in mid-July in which there was only a single Communist candidate in each district. In the aftermath, this new government forced the resignation of President Päts, and passed a law declaring the Estonian wish to join the Soviet Union as the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic²⁹. So ended Estonian independence until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

However, there was some hope of a restoration of Estonian independence due to the turmoil of World War II. After all, it had been the turmoil resulting from the end of the First World War between the Soviet Union and Germany that had given Estonia the window of opportunity it needed to declare itself independent and muster enough forces to defeat a

28 Dunn in *The Baltic States in Peace and War*, 149-158

29 Raun 144-146

Russian army bent on reconquest. Unfortunately, things would be different this time. Although the Third Reich eventually occupied Estonia for several years as the result of Operation Barbarossa, the aftermath of German occupation was a successful counteroffensive by the Red Army that pushed German troops out of Estonia and left the country once again occupied by the Soviet Union. Under these circumstances, there was no chance for an independence movement or military organization similar to the one in 1918 to coalesce. There was no governing body comparable to the one that had existed in Estonia in 1918, as Estonia had by this point been governed for several years first by a foreign group of Communists from the USSR and later by a military governor under the Third Reich. By contrast, Estonia had had a relatively autonomous and certainly natively represented governing body at the time of the end of hostilities between the fledgling Soviet Union and Germany in 1918. As a result, there were no serious move for independence with the retreat of the Wehrmacht from Estonian territory in 1945.³⁰

This lack of real resistance to Soviet authority in Estonia would remain the case for the remainder of Estonian subjugation to Moscow. While there were a small number of nationalist guerrillas operating in Estonia for a few decades after the end of World War II, they were never numerous or successful in garnering much attention from anyone. There were no notable mass protests of Soviet governance during this time. Most likely, this was due largely to the Soviet program of deportations of prominent Estonians from the interwar era. Many of these statesmen were sent to Siberian camps, and even those few who were allowed to return in the late 1940s were strong evidence of the kind of repression that would take place if there were any

30 Shtromas, 86-92

serious attempt to question Moscow's authority.³¹

Estonia Analysis

What were the costs to the USSR associated with subjugating Estonia? In 1939, the Soviet Union did not have to pay any significant costs of intervention as the Estonian government decided to cave to Soviet pressure and allow the mutual assistance pact which brought a large number of Soviet troops onto Estonian territory. Even had the Estonian military attempted to resist, the small size of both the Estonian population and territory would have made it a futile effort. With little more than a million people in 1939, Estonia simply did not have the populace or economy with which to resist a major attack by the vastly larger and more populous Soviet Union. Due to its location sandwiched between the USSR and the Baltic Sea, Estonia had no ability to stage a strategic retreat that might have bought sufficient time to change the course of events, as Finland had done in the Continuation War. In the event of a Soviet determination to attack Estonia, there was never much of a chance that Estonia could have prevailed.

Nor would Estonia have been capable of exacting high ongoing governance costs from the occupying Soviet Union. Here again Estonian demographics and geography cause difficulties. The majority of the population at this point was overwhelmingly rural, and as a result the urban centers were not large enough for significant underground resistance movements to arise. Moreover, compared to the size of the Soviet Union, it did not require a large application of Soviet troops to ensure order in Estonia, and Estonia's proximity to the USSR's heartland made it all the more vulnerable to quick action by the Red Army in case of trouble.

31 Shtromas, 92-97

Beyond the considerations of pure costs of subjugation we must consider why the Soviet Union felt sufficiently threatened by an independent Estonia to subjugate it. This largely has to do with the location of Estonia as a possible launch platform for invasion of the USSR by another, larger country, and because of Estonia's failure to credibly commit to not being such a launch platform. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Estonia's foreign policy was largely oriented towards the West and against the Soviet Union. Although the USSR and Estonia signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in 1932³², Estonia actively courted alliances with the other Baltic States, with Norden generally, and with Germany as guarantees of its sovereignty in the face of aggression from its eastern neighbor. However, these plans did not fall through because they would have represented a break from an Estonian attempt to credibly commit to neutrality, as Estonia had no such policy³³. Instead, other factors contributed to the failure of these talks. The Baltic security talks failed because of conflicts that existed between the three states, largely over territory, and partly because no one country wanted to be the first to show a strong front against the Soviet Union, and the framework they did agree upon did not provide a way to solve this collective action problem. Security talks with Norden failed largely due to Estonia's position on the fringes of the region, which would have required a projection of power some distance away if the other Nordic states were to attempt to defend Estonia against Russian aggression. Finally, Germany was more interested in its immediate proximity during the 1930s and by the beginning of the Second World War, Germany wanted territory in the east, not allies, as embodied in Hitler's famous lebensraum argument. As a result

32 American Journal of International Law, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct. 1933)

33 Raun 123-125

of these overtures, it was clear to the Soviet Union that Estonia was seeking military aid against a possible Soviet attack, and therefore Estonia would be a possible staging ground for future attacks against the Soviet Union. In fact, Estonia and Germany concluded a non-aggression treaty in June 1938, confirming Soviet suspicions of Estonian collusion with the Third Reich. Unfortunately, this treaty had no real power and did nothing to secure Estonia's position in a military sense while in fact making Estonia's diplomatic position far more precarious³⁴.

The core problem for Estonia in the interwar period was that its foreign policy fluctuated a great deal. Estonia extended itself in too many directions in too short a period of time to have an established policy toward its neighbors. It was not committed to neutrality, alliance with Germany, alliance with its small neighbors, or willing to accommodate Soviet security concerns.

Alternative Explanations

There is one major alternative explanation for why Estonia was subsumed by the Soviet Union. This line of thought would say that Estonia was entirely a victim of its location; it lacked the ability to withstand either of the two great powers which came into conflict in Eastern Europe during World War II, and as a result was always destined to be subjugated by one or the other between Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. In this view, Estonia's fate was sealed from the beginning, and its independence in the interwar period was an historical accident which was corrected in the 1940s.

It is certainly true that Estonia's size and location made it an easy target for the two totalitarian states which together took over nearly all of Eastern Europe in the time before they began hostilities with each other. But this does not explain why Estonia was not able to regain

34 Kirby in *The Baltic States: The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* 70

its independence after the war, even to the small extent that Poland was able to recover most of those territories taken by the Soviet Union prior to the breaking of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

Despite all of this, it is unlikely that Estonia would have been able to remain independent after the war, since it almost certainly would have been occupied by the Soviet Union no matter what it had done. In this case, the location (and therefore the security benefit to the USSR of annexing Estonia) and inability of Estonia to resist the USSR in any meaningful way would likely have far outweighed even the most clear and credible commitment to neutrality it could have made.

Conclusions

There are two basic conclusions that can be drawn from this pair of countries: ability to resist invasion is crucial to the survival of a small neutral country, and commitment to neutrality is central if such a country wants to avoid having to demonstrate its willingness to fight for its independence. Both Finland and Estonia were subject to invasion by the Soviet Union. Finland successfully resisted the invasion long enough to negotiate a peace treaty with Moscow, while Estonia capitulated to Soviet pressure without any significant armed resistance. Finland moved on to create a credible commitment to non-alignment, and was awarded by no further aggression or threats from the Soviet Union during the Cold War, although of course there were periods of strained relations between the countries. Without this commitment, Finland would very likely have fallen into the Soviet sphere to an extent similar to the Eastern European states like Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Chapter 3: Sweden and Norway

The two western states have a much longer history of neutrality than the two eastern states could claim. Sweden has not fought a war since the early 19th century, and Norway was also a neutral in all of the conflicts since then, until it was invaded by the Third Reich in 1940, after which it chose to join NATO in 1949. The positions of these two countries on the spectrum of hierarchy are considerably different from the experiences of the two eastern countries. Sweden was the closest to true neutrality in the Cold War out of the four countries considered here. It did not depend on either of the superpowers for military protection against the other, as it manufactured most of its own armaments. It was fully in control of its foreign policy, and there was no question over its sovereignty in terms of domestic policy. Norway was in a slightly more restrictive hierarchy with the United States, as it was a member of the undoubtedly US-led NATO. However, it still retained full control of domestic policy, as well as over its foreign policy in most areas, including the economic and political spheres. In reality, Norway was only constrained in terms of security policy by the decisions of NATO central command.

Hierarchy theory predicts that Sweden's neutrality was a result of a successful commitment to neutrality combined with a military strong enough to exact considerable costs from any invader. The light nature of the Norwegian hierarchy with the United States suggests that it was subject to light coercion by the United States, or it was in essence paid off in return for a cession of some small part of its sovereignty to the NATO command structure.

Sweden History

Swedish history is remarkable in that it has not been involved in any war since the early 19th century. It successfully avoided involvement in the wars of the mid-19th century; it managed

to stay out of two World Wars, and was never dragged into the hot wars that intermittently sprung up throughout the Cold War.

Sweden fought its last wars at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1809, it lost a war against Russia and Napoleonic France which forced it to give up ownership of Finland.³⁵ It fought on the winning side against Napoleon, Denmark, and Norway in 1813-1814, thereby winning control of Norway until the beginning of the 20th century. Throughout the rest of the 19th century, Sweden remained aloof from, but interested in, the Great Power conflicts. It remained neutral during the Crimean War, despite attempts to draw it into the war with promises of a return of the Aland Islands to Swedish control. Despite near participation in the Slesvig-Holstein Wars of 1848-1852 and 1863, anti-war sentiment in Sweden was strong enough to stop the monarchy from actively pushing Sweden into the war.³⁶

However, despite the military non-participation in foreign wars during this period, Sweden maintained a significant military establishment throughout the century. This included conscription and mandatory military service for most males, although the upper classes could of course send a surrogate in their place.

The way in which Sweden reacted to conditions during World War I is illustrative of Sweden's doctrine of neutrality which does not bar having an active foreign policy. Sweden, along with Norway and Denmark, declared its neutrality in a joint declaration soon after the outbreak of the war.³⁷ However, Swedish opinion was decidedly in favor of Germany for much of the war because of historic ties of language, culture, and governmental style. This preference

35 Nordstrom (2002) 64-65

36 Nordstrom (2002) 87-89

37 Nordstrom (2002) 94

is reflected in a large growth in Swedish trade with Germany, along with a shrinking of trade with the Entente. Sweden's position as a neutral was severely strained because of a particular incident that showed the extent to which Sweden preferred Germany in the conflict. In 1917 it was revealed that the German minister in Argentina had sent a number of coded dispatches to Berlin through the Swedish embassy.³⁸ This kind of diplomatic cooperation was a clear violation of the principles of neutrality, although they did not pull Sweden into the war. As the war began to turn against Germany, so did Sweden begin to shift its focus more toward the western powers, signing a number of preferential trade agreements with the Americans and British. That it was able to easily do this is a reflection on the fact that while Sweden had been supportive of Germany, it had not been hostile to the western democracies. In fact, one of the primary reasons Sweden had been so supportive of Germany earlier in the war was that Sweden felt that the important war was the one fought on the Eastern Front against tsarist Russia, Sweden's historic enemy. When that war ended with the Communist Revolution in Russia, the ideological justification for the German war in Swedes' minds faded a great deal.³⁹

What is perhaps most interesting about Sweden's position in World War I is how closely it predicts Swedish behavior in World War II. That is, while the war went well for Germany, Sweden acted in ways which cannot be construed as anything but favorable to Germany. Then, when it became clear that Germany was losing the war, Sweden began to court the Western European states as well as the United States, and largely continuing to ignore Russia (or the Soviet Union in World War II).

38 Nordstrom (2002) 96

39 Hadenius, 20-25

Between the wars, Swedish foreign policy centered on non-alignment combined with a vigorous interest in international politics. This concept, that Sweden could be an active participant in international politics while retaining a policy of neutrality would be a guiding concept for Swedish foreign policy throughout the rest of the 20th century. As a result, Sweden saw no contradiction between its doctrine of neutrality and Swedish participation in the League of Nations. Sweden was a staunch believer in the League, and in fact submitted one of the arbitration cases the League successfully negotiated: the case of the Aland Islands.

The Alands are a group of islands that sit approximately 40 miles off the coast of Sweden in the Baltic Sea, and only 100 miles from the Swedish capital of Stockholm. They had been forced from Swedish control during the Swedish defeat by Russia in 1809, and had since been under Russian control. In the mid-19th century Russia had begun fortifying the islands, a move which caused a great deal of unease in Sweden. In the turmoil of World War I and the Communist Revolution, the islands had been successively occupied by Swedish, German, Soviet Russian, and White and Red Finnish troops, but there was no clear owner in the aftermath.⁴⁰ Sweden took the case to the League of Nations, which decided that the islands belonged to Finland, although it was to have guaranteed autonomy and the right to use Swedish, and further that the islands were to be a demilitarized region.⁴¹

Swedish defense spending decreased during the early 1920s, hit a low point in 1924, and then eventually began to pick up during the 1930s as the security situation in Europe became ever more precarious. This trend became even more pronounced as the 1930s wore on and the

40 Nordstrom (2002) 99-100

41 Rotkirch, 365-367

inability of the League of Nations to successfully prevent war became obvious. Sweden was party to negotiations over a possible Nordic defensive alliance that would have encompassed Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. However, Denmark pulled out of the discussions because it feared they would incite German ire, and Norway put its trust in neutrality, as it had during the First World War. Bilateral discussions with Finland floundered over Soviet protests about the fortification of the Aland Islands, although Finland fortified the islands on its own.

The failure of these negotiations was followed by a strong turn in Swedish foreign policy back toward neutrality. Swedish defense spending rose and compulsory service terms were extended in 1936. The air force was expanded, and new acquisitions were made for the navy. However, these measures did not lead to a war-ready Sweden by the beginning of hostilities in 1939, which would have a significant effect on Swedish wartime policy.⁴²

For the first several years of the war, Swedish foreign policy was unequivocally pro-German out of necessity. The Third Reich had overrun both Denmark and Norway in quick succession and with little difficulty. Beginning with these successes and continuing until the war on the eastern front began to turn against Germany in 1944, the Baltic Sea was largely a German playground, and therefore any Swedish shipping had to be allowed by the Germans. Because of Swedish dependence on imports of certain key basic goods such as fuel, Sweden was forced to accept German trade terms which were strongly skewed in favor of the Third Reich, and to refrain from taking actions which would anger Hitler. During this period, Sweden allowed German usage of Swedish airspace, as well as German access to Swedish coastal waters.⁴³

42 Hadenius, 43-45

43 Hadenius, 48-50

Further, Sweden provided trains for transit of German troops and materiel to both Norway and to northern Finland. In return for these concessions which clearly showed that Sweden was not entirely neutral, the Third Reich refrained from invading the country. When the war began to turn against the Third Reich, Swedish policy also began to turn.⁴⁴

In 1944, with the Allies beginning to see the war turn in their favor, Sweden began to distance itself from Germany in order to show that its previous concessions had been made out of necessity. Sweden began to allow courier flights by unarmed Allied planes, and as the German stranglehold on the straights connecting the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic Ocean weakened, so did Swedish commerce begin to reorient away from Germany and toward the West. Additionally, as the threat of German invasion waned, Sweden began training a considerable number of Norwegian and Danish “police” who would eventually be crucial in maintaining order in these nations when the German forces retreated. Swedish airports were eventually used as emergency landing destinations for damaged planes returning from raids against Germany. However, the privileges granted to the Allied powers were never as extensive as those given to the Third Reich.⁴⁵

Swedish foreign policy during the Cold War was far more independent than it had been at any point during World War II, despite the fact that it was once again geographically stuck between two major powers which exercised a great deal of influence on Sweden’s immediate neighbors. To the east loomed the Soviet Union, which controlled the small Baltic States and extended its reach as far west as East Germany. To the west was the United States and its allies,

44 Nordstrom (2002) 115-120

45 Trommer in *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, 268-276

which included Sweden's next-door neighbor, Norway. Even with the threat of nuclear war hanging over Europe, Sweden maintained an independent, activist foreign policy, condemning both the Soviet Union and the United States for aggressive or illegal acts.

Immediately after the war, expectations for the United Nations had been high in a way reminiscent of the enthusiasm shown for the League of Nations in the aftermath of the First World War. In fact, optimism may have been even higher this time because all of the great powers were active members in the institution, unlike the League of Nations, which the United States had declined to join and from which the nascent Soviet Union had been barred. However, as relations between the western Allies and the Soviet Union soured toward the end of the 1940s, and the Soviet Union began exerting stronger control over countries it had occupied during the war in Eastern Europe, concerns over security once again arose in Swedish foreign policy thought. Once again, Sweden turned to the other Nordic states in its first attempt at securing itself. This time, the framework mostly concerned Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, since Finland was already seen as having fallen under Soviet power and unable to conclude a defensive treaty that did not include the Soviet Union⁴⁶. However, as before, the talks fell through. This time, the plans failed because of Danish and Norwegian wartime experiences that weakened the case for the feasibility of remaining outside great power conflicts, and both countries soon joined NATO. This left Sweden to pursue a policy of neutrality on its own.⁴⁷

Throughout the Cold War, Sweden maintained an elevated level of defense spending in order to keep its commitment to defending itself against any aggressor credible as part of its

46 Molin in *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, 332-342

47 Molin in *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, 356-365

neutrality policy. Sweden produced its own weaponry, some of which is highly competitive on the international weapons market even today, such as Saab's fighter planes. The military service requirement for Swedish men was continued after World War II, which allowed Sweden to have a considerable portion of its citizenry in a national manpower reserve it could draw upon at short notice. Everything the Swedish military did was meant to make any attack against Swedish territory as costly as possible. For example, most Swedish naval power in the second half of the twentieth century was concentrated on mine-layers and coastal defenses rather than ships of the line for use in blue water engagements. Swedish Bofors anti-aircraft systems were highly regarded and would likely have exacted a large toll on attacking air forces. The Swedish air force had very little in the way of bombers, concentrating instead on fighter planes, since this would be more effective in defending territory.⁴⁸

Sweden actually pursued a nuclear weapons program for a number of years with the goal of having a small number of nuclear weapons to be delivered by aircraft for defensive purposes. However, the advent of huge nuclear arsenals and the development of ICBMs in the 1950s and 60s made the defensive potential of the few nuclear weapons Sweden might be able to deliver ineffective when compared with the likelihood of total annihilation in a retaliatory strike. In the end, Sweden never developed a nuclear weapon, and since it signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it has advocated the idea of a nuclear-free Norden.⁴⁹

Swedish neutrality in the Cold War era was largely limited to the spheres of security and defense. In terms of economic involvement, Sweden was active in promoting cooperation within

48 Kruzel in *The Committed Neutral: Sweden's Foreign Policy*, 69-70, 72-74

49 Kruzel in *The Committed Neutral: Sweden's Foreign Policy*, 72-73

Western Europe. It was one of the founding members of the Nordic Council, a forum for economic and environmental cooperation in Norden that was founded by Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland in 1952. Sweden participated in the Marshall Plan. It also joined the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and the European Free Trade Association. When the EFTA lost most of its significance due to the UK and Denmark deciding to join the European Community, Sweden did not follow suit. This was due to the fact that, while the EFTA had been apolitical and concerned primarily with economic opening, the EC had committed itself to working toward political integration in Europe.⁵⁰ Until the end of the Cold War, it was felt that joining the EC would represent a break from the Swedish neutrality policy and realignment toward the West.

The history of Swedish foreign policy in the twentieth century reveals a country which bent to a number of demands by powerful states in times of war in order to keep its territory inviolate by foreign troops, but which during times of peace was able to act largely independently from the influence of the great powers.

Sweden Analysis

How did Sweden establish itself as a small neutral country with an active foreign policy despite its location sandwiched between the two great power blocks of the Cold War? What were the perceived governance costs, and how credibly was Sweden committed to neutrality in the Cold War period?

Beginning in the early 1930s, the Swedish government began increasing its military spending as the security situation in Europe deteriorated. By the beginning of hostilities in 1939,

50 Dohlman in *The Committed Neutral: Sweden's Foreign Policy*, 99-102

Sweden was certainly not fully prepared for war with any of the major powers. However, it was likely in a better military position than its neighbors, Norway and Denmark, which had not been engaged in military preparations to the same extent Sweden was. As a result of the increased military preparedness and the lesser strategic importance of Sweden for the Third Reich's goal of controlling access to the Baltic Sea, Sweden was able to remain militarily uninvolved in World War II, although as discussed earlier, it did have to make a number of concessions to German demands.

After the war, Sweden maintained its military expenditures at relatively high levels in order to make credible its commitment to defend its territory against attack. In spending a relatively large portion of its budget on military, Sweden demonstrated that it would be able to exact a high cost from any force attacking Swedish territory. This did not necessarily mean that Sweden would be able to defeat an invading army, but this was never the goal. If the Swedish military was able to demonstrate the ability to exact high costs from attackers, it would deter aggressors because the costs of invasion would outweigh the benefits of successfully subjugating Sweden. Therefore, Sweden only needed to make its defenses difficult rather than impregnable, especially if it had a demonstrated commitment to neutrality which would show potential aggressors that Sweden would not ally against them.

The fact that Sweden produced a majority of its arms domestically made Sweden's ability to defend itself against attack and its commitment to neutrality more credible. First, since Sweden armed itself with domestic production, Sweden would not be vulnerable to having vital international supply lines cut, either militarily or through negotiations. More importantly, however, domestic arms production vastly improved Sweden's commitment to neutrality. This

is because arms purchases are always a political act, especially with modern weaponry and equipment which usually requires ongoing parts sales and maintenance work by the vendor nation. By building its own weapons, Sweden was demonstrating that it was not reliant on foreign countries for its defense needs and therefore was not beholden to either side in the conflict. As a result, Sweden could credibly say that it was building weapons systems only for its own national defense, since it was also clear that the Swedish military was not capable of projecting power, and therefore Sweden was clearly not building weaponry for offensive purposes.

Swedish defense readiness is also reflected in the fact that, through compulsory military service, it had a large proportion of its population trained for military service and a reasonable force of active-duty soldiers on call at all times. Thus, in the event of attack, Sweden would be able to mobilize a significant number of troops in a reasonably short time.

Since Sweden never had to fight a defensive war, there is no clear indicator of just how effectively the Swedish military would have been able to defend the country against attack, and so any estimation of the costs of invasion must of necessity be little better than an educated guess. However, it does seem reasonable to assume that Swedish ability to fight an attacker in World War II would have been somewhat better than Norway's, and perhaps on par with Finland's. During the Cold War, Sweden was probably the most militarily powerful of the Nordic states, owing largely to the fact that Finnish defense expenditures were restricted by oversight by the Soviet Union, while the Norwegians and Danes were able to lean on the United States for protection.

By the mid-twentieth century, Sweden had a history of neutrality that made its

commitment to neutrality in the Cold War far more credible. As seen above, Sweden had not fought a war since the early 19th century, had remained militarily neutral in both of the World Wars, and did not express any serious interest in joining NATO at its foundation. All of this made the Swedish commitment to neutrality quite robust, since it had been demonstrated several times that Sweden would not betray its neutrality policy even when tempted with significant prizes in return for involvement in hostilities. For example, the return of the Åland Islands was repeatedly used as a bargaining chip in attempts to draw Sweden into war. The Ålands were offered to Sweden during the Crimean War by the British and by both the British and Germans during the First World War. Each time, Sweden declined the offer and remained committed to neutrality.

The only deviations in Swedish commitment to neutrality came during the two world wars, when the government's hand was forced by strategic realities which dictated that the country accept certain demands by whichever side was winning the war at the time. These partial breaks from neutrality (partial because Sweden managed even during these times to remain militarily uninvolved) were concessions which kept Sweden mostly independent while at the same time avoiding provoking a war, and in each case full neutrality was reestablished as soon as the war was over.

After the end of the Second World War, Sweden continued to cultivate a policy of neutrality in security and political issues. It did not join NATO or the Warsaw Pact, nor did it join the European Community, even when its partners in the European Free Trade Agreement did. Sweden also freely criticized both sides of the ideological conflict when either side took objectionable action, and although there were more occasions for criticizing the Soviet Union

about its belligerent policy with its Eastern European protectorates, Sweden managed to maintain an appearance of impartiality.

Positioned as it was on the border between Soviet-influenced Finland and American-influenced Norway, Sweden walked a line between the two great powers which had to avoid raising hackles on either side. On the western side, Sweden had a positive image to begin with thanks to a shared political and economic system. Beyond this, Sweden had strong economic ties with the western world, and powerful linguistic and cultural ties with its neighbors in the western camp, Norway and Denmark. This positive image made the west relatively secure in the knowledge that Sweden was not likely to ally against them with the Soviet Union, particularly because of the Soviet Union's hostility to liberal democracy and capitalist economics. As a result of these things, and the more general points made above, Sweden's commitment to neutrality was seen as credible in the west.

To the east, the historical trust was less deep. However, for the Soviet Union it must be counted in Sweden's favor that it did not directly involve itself in either the Winter War or the Continuation War between Finland and the USSR. Public opinion in Sweden had been strongly in favor of Finland during these wars, but Sweden refrained from any official action in support of Finland, although it did allow volunteer soldiers to go fight for Finland, and housed a number of Finnish refugees for the duration of hostilities. After the war, Sweden's decision to not join NATO or the EC likely greatly helped assure the USSR of Sweden's position as a neutral that would not pose a threat. Later, the Swedish decision to forego acquiring nuclear weapons was a further assurance of Sweden's lack of interest in aggression against the Soviet Union.

There are a number of other theories as to why Sweden was able to remain neutral in the Cold War. I will attempt to address some of these ideas here, and to show that they do not present the whole story.

There are those who would claim that Sweden was able to remain neutral because of its location on the periphery of the geostrategically important regions in Europe. In this view, it was only because of Sweden's location distanced from the centers of conflict that it was not seen as strategically important enough to be drawn into one camp or the other. This is a valid point, insofar as it discusses why certain countries were inevitably drawn in by the conflict between the superpowers. However, this viewpoint presents more of a positive case for when countries *will* be forced into a strong hierarchy with a dominant state than a negative case for when countries *will not* be forced into such an arrangement. The strategic location argument seems to present a good case for when certain countries that are in vitally important geographic positions will be subordinated by dominant states, as was the case with West Germany for the United States and Poland for the Soviet Union. It does not explain as well why more peripheral states, such as Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria, which are by no means on the direct invasion corridor from west to east, were subordinated. It is not at all apparent why some peripheral states were subordinated while others were not.

A constructivist would likely argue that it is the history of neutrality that allowed Sweden to remain neutral. However, there are a few problems with this. Most importantly, if it is a history of neutrality that paved the way for Sweden's neutrality in the Cold War, how did that history of neutrality come about? Sweden fought numerous wars in its past, and yet, following the Napoleonic Wars, Sweden was suddenly able to stay out of wars. Beyond this

point, I would also argue that the history of neutrality certainly plays a role in making credible Sweden's commitment to neutrality, but that this is not enough to explain the success of this policy. It was only in conjunction with Sweden's ability to resist an attack that its neutrality policy was strong enough to deter attempts at subjugation.

Finally, realists would likely point out that it was almost exclusively due to Sweden's military and economic power that it was able to avoid being forced into one of the two camps. Here again I think there is a valid argument, but one which does not explain the whole story. It is certainly true that it was crucial for Sweden to have armed forces which could resist an invader if it wished to not be threatened by one of the great powers. However, the maximum strength that Sweden would be able to muster would nevertheless be insignificant compared to the might of either the Soviet Union or the United States, and as such, it would seem that military strength alone would not have been able to deter the superpowers from intervening in Sweden. I would suggest, instead, that power was an important part of a larger strategy of neutrality that Sweden successfully conducted during the Cold War.

Norway History

The history of Norway as an independent nation begins, to some extent, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when Norway was detached from Danish rule and was placed in a semi-autonomous position under a monarchic union with Sweden.⁵¹ Under this system, which would continue until full independence in 1905, Norway handled most of its domestic affairs on its own but its foreign relations were controlled by the Swedish monarchy. As a result, Norway was a neutral country throughout the 19th century, although not to the same extent as Sweden,

51 Danielsen et al. 208-209

largely due to the importance of the British market for the Norwegian economy.

The time between the rising independence movement in the late 19th century and the end of World War I represented a period of active Norwegian commitment to strategic neutrality backed up by significant military expenditures. Norway began bolstering its military in the latter half of the 19th century as tensions between Norway and Sweden grew over the monarchic union. The increased military spending continued through independence first as a deterrent to Swedish revanchism, and later as a deterrent to possible German aggression during the First World War. During the early 20th century, then, military expenditures were seen as a necessity if Norway wanted to maintain its neutrality.⁵²

This situation changed drastically at the end of World War I with the founding of the League of Nations. The League appeared to promise an end to war, and enthusiasm for the project ran high.⁵³ In Norway, this translated into a rapid and extensive demobilization of the armed forces and a drastic cut in military expenditures. As a result, when the strategic situation in Europe began to deteriorate in the early 1930s, Norway was entirely unprepared for war. Unfortunately, Norway continued to put its faith in the League of Nations and in an implicit British guarantee of Norwegian sovereignty, and did not increase military spending in any significant way until 1938. By that point, the hour was too far advanced for the new military appropriations to make a significant difference. When the Third Reich invaded in 1940, the Norwegian army fought back, but was limited by its outdated equipment and poorly trained soldiers. The Norwegian navy had not received a new ship since the beginning of the century,

52 Nordstrom(2000), 262-266

53 Nordstrom (2000), 291-295

and its two ironclads were quickly sunk. Training times for Norwegian troops were below 50 days throughout the decade, so they were largely not prepared for a major campaign.⁵⁴

The one bright spot in the dismal defeat of Norwegian forces fighting to defend their homeland against the Nazi invasion came at the end of the fighting, as both the Norwegian government and the majority of Norwegian shipping managed to escape the invading forces. The government in exile would be set up in London, from where it would coordinate both the usage of the Norwegian merchant marine for Allied shipping and the eventual organized resistance in Norway which began to emerge in 1942. This government in exile clearly aligned Norway with the western Allies, an alignment which would extend into the postwar period.⁵⁵

After the war, Norwegian defense spending would remain at higher levels than during the interwar period, but would never reach proportions equal to that spent by Sweden. In fact, a significant proportion of Norway's military materiel was given to the country by the United States, or was paid for by NATO funds. In addition, nearly all Norwegian weapons purchases were from the western democracies. As a result, it was clear that Norway would not be able to mount an independent defense of its territory in the case of an attack by the Soviet Union.

However, Norway did retain a number of areas of independence from NATO control. Norway had a special status which prohibited the stationing of foreign NATO troops on Norwegian soil except when Norway was under attack or immediate threat of attack. NATO was also not allowed to conduct military exercises on Norwegian territory, nor were nuclear weapons to be deployed in Norway. In order to avoid creating unnecessary tensions with the

54 Danielsen et al, 345-348

55 Nissen in *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, 115-119

Soviet Union, Norway stationed only a very small portion of its forces in Finnmark, the northern region of the country which bordered the USSR.⁵⁶

Turning now to foreign policy, it becomes clear that Norway was never a strictly neutral country in the same way that Sweden at least aspired to be. In general, Norway had a policy of neutrality with a fallback option of depending upon the United Kingdom for a guarantee of Norwegian sovereignty.⁵⁷ This reliance on the British is linked to both history and economics. Historically, the UK had issued a unilateral guarantee of unified Norway and Sweden during the Crimean War. Later, during the First World War, there was an implicit guarantee of Norwegian sovereignty by France and the UK. Economically, Norway was heavily dependent on the British market for both its exports and imports. As a result, Norway has a history of following what the UK does. This can be seen in Norwegian adherence to the European Free Trade Association in the 1950s, in Norway's membership in the League of Nations, and in Norway's role as one of the founding members of the United Nations.⁵⁸

During World War I, the closeness between the United Kingdom and Norway led to the label of "neutral ally" being given to Norway. This was due to the far warmer relations Norway maintained with the UK than it did with Germany. It traded far more with Great Britain than it did with Germany, and at one point there were even worries that Germany might try to invade Norway because of the obviously non-neutral relationship between Norway and the UK. When Germany invaded Norway in 1940, the western Allies sent forces to Norway to try to hold off the offensive. They were successful in holding the line for a time, but eventually the troops were

56 Pharo, 239-243

57 Pharo, 234-237

58 Danielsen et al 436-442

shifted back to the continent in an effort to prevent the German invasion of France from succeeding, thereby allowing German success on both fronts. Nevertheless, it is true that the UK sent troops to defend Norway despite the lack of alliance or defensive pact between the countries before hostilities began. The alliance between the UK and Norway was not established until the government in exile arrived in London. After the war, military cooperation between Norway and the UK continued with the posting of Norwegian troops in occupied Germany under British command.⁵⁹

Norway was less enthusiastically supportive of American overtures, however. There was extensive debate over whether to take Marshall Plan money, which was resolved only once it became clear that the only other states refusing the money were Eastern European nations that were increasingly under Soviet domination.⁶⁰ The debate was also influenced by economic conditions in Norway, which had to cope with a great deal of destruction in its northern provinces in the aftermath of the Engelbrecht Division's destructive scorched-earth policy during its retreat from Finland.

Norway only joined NATO under the conditions outlined above, and after negotiations for a Nordic defense agreement fell apart. For Norway, the problem was that Sweden was unwilling to consider a strongly western-oriented alliance which would acquire most of its weapons from the western democracies as a stated policy of the alliance. Once these talks collapsed, Norway turned to the west to guarantee its independence in the face of fears of Soviet domination. These fears were only compounded in 1948 by the Soviet occupation of

59 Danielsen et al, 348-356

60 Pharo, 343-344

Czechoslovakia and the demands made of Finland for a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, followed by rumors that a similar proposal would soon be presented to the Norwegian government. Soon after, Norway applied for NATO membership.

Norway Analysis

The case of Norway is an interesting one, in that it was not coerced into NATO in the same way that Estonia was coerced into union with the Soviet Union, nor was there a conflictual relationship between Norway and the United States akin to that between Finland and the Soviet Union. In the final counting, Norway must be considered as a country that retained nearly all of its sovereignty, ceding only some control over its military independence to NATO in return for help from NATO in armaments and equipment. In other words, Norway was an independent country which decided to cooperate with the United States in an alliance, thereby giving up a small measure of its sovereignty in return for military protection. As a result, Norway can be considered to have been in a very weak hierarchy with the United States, which imposed only a few restrictions which might just as well be described as voluntary cooperation. This result came about largely as a result of Norway's experiences in World War II.

In the run-up to the Nazi invasion of Norway in 1940, Norway had mostly trusted its policy of neutrality to keep it out of the hostilities. It had remained nominally neutral in World War I despite its close ties with the UK, and it hoped to do the same in World War II. As a result, the Nazi attack caught the country by surprise, and although the government and armed forces resisted for a time, the military was poorly equipped and unprepared to meet the German attack. The harshness of the German occupation forces during the war left a deep impression on the Norwegian people. In the aftermath of the war, Norwegians realized that the country could

not remain a neutral power without significant military expenditures. This gave Norway two choices: sacrifice a significant portion of its government's budget each year to maintaining a military capable of exacting high military costs from any aggressor, or sacrifice its commitment to neutrality and join one of the two camps beginning to take shape in Europe. It chose the latter, and in 1949 it joined NATO.

This choice was undoubtedly influenced by the course of international events between the end of World War II and the establishment of NATO. In 1948, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia raised concerns around the world over the growing Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Later that year, the USSR concluded the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with Finland, which, although it was far less restrictive than the Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia, was nevertheless viewed with considerable hostility in Norway. These concerns over the actions of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe with regard to Norway's independence were further aggravated when rumors emerged of a planned proposal by the USSR to Norway of an FCMA treaty similar to that concluded with Finland. In the aftermath, the Norwegian strategic situation appeared highly precarious, and so the country appealed to the west for protection.

The agreement that brought Norway into NATO reflects the fact that Norway entered the alliance as an independent state that was willing to cooperate on security issues on its own terms. The agreement placed a number of limits on the depth of Norwegian obligations to NATO, such as the limitations on placement of foreign troops on Norwegian territory or the ban on nuclear weapons in Norway. In joining NATO, Norway did not give up its sovereignty except in certain security matters, such as the subjection of Norwegian forces to the NATO

command structure in case of war.

In all other areas, Norway retained its independence, and it guarded this independence carefully. It was willing to join EFTA, but was not willing to follow the UK into the EC. This was due to the fact that EFTA was a forum for pure economic cooperation, while the EC had political aims. Norway was not willing to give up its political sovereignty, even though this decision cost it the economic benefits it would have gained from membership in the EC. It was willing to join the Nordic Council, but only because this was a forum for cooperation among equals rather than one which established a political hierarchy in Norden.

Norway can be seen as a nation which entered into a very weak hierarchy with the United States in return for certain material benefits, which can be counted as the governance costs. This fits into the framework of hierarchy theory under the subgroup of countries which accept payments from a dominant state in return for an agreed-upon level of control by the dominant state over some aspect of the subordinate state's policies. In this framework, Norway accepted American control over some of Norway's security policy in return for American support for Norwegian independence and provision of weapons to Norway.

Opposing Perspectives

There are of course other explanations that have been put forth for why Norway became a NATO member. In short, they revolve around two possibilities: that Norway was essential to American security interests because of its location on the Arctic Sea, which placed it on the defense corridor for anti-submarine warfare, and that Norway voluntarily joined the alliance because of its experiences in World War II which made it impossible for it to contemplate taking a neutral path. Both of these explanations have merit, but, as before they do not paint a full

picture, even when taken together.

To address the second argument first, there was without doubt a turning away from complete neutrality in Norway in the aftermath of World War II. This turn away was not necessarily toward alliance with the west, however, as shown by the history of Nordic defense talks in the mid- to late-1940s which would have created a regional defense network separate from NATO. To be sure, Norway saw a western orientation for this group, but it did have an interest in retaining more independence for the defense alliance than it found in NATO. Otherwise it would not have sought to create a Nordic alliance network in the first place. Furthermore, it was not until after the Soviet takeover of Czechoslovakia, the signing of the FCMA treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland, and rumors of a similar proposal to Norway that the country actually moved in a determined way toward alliance with the west.

The geostrategic argument also has a good deal of truth to it, since it explains why the United States was willing to give Norway military supplies in return for supporting its anti-submarine activities in the Arctic Sea. However, it does not take into account the shift in Norwegian attitudes on alliance which allowed those payments to be quite small, since the two countries' interests coincided to such a great degree.

Conclusions

The two western examples are more indicative of the more cooperative nature of the western bloc in the Cold War conflict. In this setting, Sweden's commitment to neutrality and commitment to exacting high governance costs on an aggressor, which were somewhat similar to Finland's, were able to buy for it a more balanced and unbiased neutrality than Finland could in its more conflictual relationship with the Soviet Union. The case of Norway also illustrates

this more cooperative approach to hierarchy that the United States took in NATO. Norway was able to establish itself in a position that was close to its optimal outcome, since its commitments to NATO were less than they were for most of the other members, while still purchasing for Norway significant security benefits.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

So far, we have seen how the countries in each pair contrasted with each other. However, there are important lessons to take away from a look at a comparison among all four countries taken together, which will be the goal here.

To begin, there is an ordering which can be done to place these four countries along a spectrum of hierarchy that will be useful in understanding the outcomes. At the most independent side, Sweden was almost entirely neutral during the Cold War, although it was culturally, economically, and politically more closely tied to the western democracies that constituted NATO.

While not nominally a neutral power because of its NATO membership, Norway appears to be in the next least restrictive hierarchy because of the nature of the relationship between Norway and the U.S. led NATO. It did not have many real restrictions on its independence in forming both national and foreign policy, as these restrictions were limited to the presence of some American early warning systems in northern Norway and integration of Norwegian military command with NATO's command structure. This low level of control also came about as a result of a pacific bargaining process which did not involve coercion to any significant degree. The Norwegian relationship can be characterized as a willing alliance partnership.

Finland can be considered to occupy the next position along the hierarchy spectrum, a position that can be labeled as a Soviet sphere of influence. It was constrained from taking a number of actions by its relationship with the Soviet Union. While it was nominally neutral, Finland was by no means entirely independent, particularly when it came to foreign policy.

That the USSR generally had the authority to prevent Finland from acting in certain ways, but generally did not have the authority to command it to take action, or to subjugate its military decision making to the Warsaw Pact demonstrates that Finland was not a client state in the same way that Poland or Czechoslovakia were.

Estonia was, without doubt, in the most restrictive position of the four countries, as it was actually part of the USSR after the Soviet occupation which began during World War II. It did not have a foreign or domestic policy that was in any way independent of Moscow. As a result, it was in stronger hierarchy than even East Germany or Poland. While the three other countries had some degree of space to modify their relationships with their respective dominant states, Estonia remained under total Soviet domination until the breakup of the USSR in 1991.

By looking at the variables discussed in the previous chapters, it is possible to make some conjectures about how the hierarchies noted above occurred. Let us consider each of the variables across all of the countries.

The governance costs are distributed in such a way that they were perhaps more indicative of the hierarchy results than the credibility of each country's commitment to neutrality. Sweden, the most strongly neutral of the four countries, also had the most ability to resist an invasion, because it spent a greater part of its GDP on defense, built its own weapons, and had a larger manpower pool to draw from. While it alone did not have to demonstrate this capability during World War II, the very lack of invasion is perhaps indicative of this greater defense capability.

Finland is likely the best example of high governance costs leading to a weaker hierarchy for the subordinate state than the dominant state might otherwise have imposed. It was subject

to an all-out invasion by Soviet forces in the Continuation War, but was able to defend itself long enough that the USSR was forced to negotiate a peace agreement to allow its forces to concentrate on the drive toward Germany. In the aftermath, Finland remained independent at the same time that other countries which had been overrun by the Red Army became Soviet satellite states.

Norway on the other hand did not demonstrate an appreciable degree of ability to defend itself against attack, as evidenced by the fast collapse of Norwegian forces during the Nazi invasion. It might seem puzzling that Norway was then in a weaker hierarchy with the United States than Finland was with the Soviet Union. This was due in large part to the difference in the second variable, the credible commitment to neutrality, which will be discussed below. For now, suffice it to say that the governance costs to the United States of bringing Norway into the American hierarchy were not very high because Norwegian interests were relatively closely aligned with American interests, and that the payments necessary to bring Norway into the American hierarchy in those areas where American and Norwegian interests clashed were minimal.

Estonia illustrates the case in which the lack of ability to extract high governance costs led to the loss of a nation's independence. It did not resist Russian demands for use of Estonian territory in world War II, nor was there a military reaction of any significance when events came to a head. In essence, Estonia allowed itself to be occupied by the Soviet Union with very little resistance, and even had it tried to fight, it would likely have been unable to present much of an obstacle, as the Estonia military was unprepared and demobilized at the time of the crisis. Even after the Soviet takeover, there was little in the way of real resistance to the new rulers, although

this was probably due to the proactive policy of terror that the Soviet authorities took to suppress any opposition to the new government. As a result, there was little vocal opposition to the Soviet-run government, and Estonia was integrated into the rest of the Soviet Union.

The various countries' degree of credible commitment to neutrality also influenced the hierarchy outcomes, but to a lesser degree than the governance costs did. This is because the commitment to neutrality works only in those cases in which a few things are true. First, the country must actually be committed to a policy of neutrality, rather than being interested in either alliance with the dominant state's enemies, which can lead to a coercive interaction, or interested in securing protection by the dominant state against some other, likely mutual, enemy. And perhaps more importantly, the commitment to neutrality depends upon the small state's ability to extract high governance costs from an aggressor, since without this capability, any declaration of neutrality will be largely seen as irrelevant in military terms, since the neutral would be unable to prevent the dominant state's enemy from attacking it through a militarily weak neutral state's territory.

In this sense, Sweden once again is the clear example of a neutral. It had a long-standing commitment to neutrality, and had managed to remain outside of both World Wars despite the fact that all of its neighbors had become directly involved in at least one. It also had a significant military which would be able to both deter potential aggressors and reassure possible dominant states which might otherwise worry about an enemy using Swedish territory as a staging ground.

Finland is the most interesting case in that it represents the case in which the credible commitment was more important to its maintenance of independence than in any other case

discussed here. While its military was reasonably well prepared, it was only thanks to Finland's credible commitment to not ally against the Soviet Union that allowed it to remain independent in the shadow of a deeply insecure state. By seeking Soviet approval for a number of Finnish diplomatic moves to integrate with the west, Finland demonstrated that it was not a threat to the Soviet Union. By signing the FCMA treaty, it ensured that the Soviet Union would be alerted to any attack against Finnish territory and therefore be able to mobilize to counter the threat before Finland could become a base of operations for the USSR's enemies. All of its actions as outlined in Chapter 2 helped put it in a position in which the costs to the Soviet Union of subjugating Finland would have been high relative to the diminished benefit thanks to Finland's credible commitment to non-alignment.

Finally, Estonia once again demonstrates the least successful case, since it had a conflictual relationship with the USSR in the run-up to the Soviet occupation. It had sought allies in the West to guarantee its security, a strategy which would have been logical from a realist perspective but which meant that it was seen as a threat to the USSR because of its location near the heart of Russia's industrial base. Even if it had had a commitment to neutrality, it did not have the military capacity to prevent an aggressor from taking over Estonian territory in order to use it to strike at Soviet lands.

In short, the extent to which a country was in a hierarchical relationship with one of the superpowers in the Cold War was largely determined by the governance costs the dominant state would have needed to pay in order to subordinate that country combined with the credibility of each country's commitment to neutrality. Those that did these things well, or had interested closely aligned with the likely dominant state, were in light hierarchies with their

dominant. The countries that did this less well, or had more conflicting interests with the dominant, found themselves in more restrictive hierarchies.

Weaknesses and Areas for Future Research

There are a few things that it proved to be impossible to do in the time-frame available for this paper. For the most part, they are empirical research which would have helped strengthen the arguments contained here, or might perhaps shown where the data do not in fact conform with the analysis presented. An approximation of governance costs using military expenditure data is one such possible analysis which would have helped deal with the upfront invasion costs, but the data for military spending for some of the countries, Estonia in particular, were either difficult to find, untranslated, or missing entirely. These kinds of measures would be an excellent way to test the strength of the arguments presented here.

Expanding the countries covered to deal not only with Norden, but perhaps Europe as a whole, would of course also help test the validity of the variables and the conclusions drawn. However, such an undertaking would be massive, as each country would require both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and the number of countries in such a project would be daunting.

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