

## SUMMARY

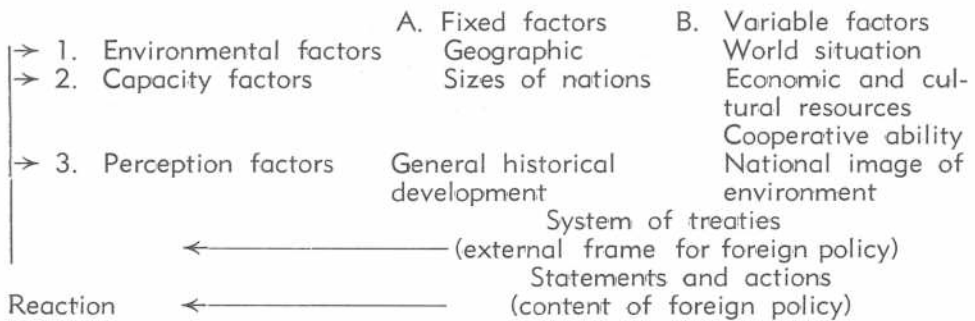
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### On Factors with a Bearing on Finland's Relations with the Soviet Union

By Göran von Bonsdorff

The article puts forward some points of view concerning the formation of Finland's relations to the Soviet Union since her declaration of independence in 1917. It is argued that there are certain basic factors: which have invariably been regarded as fundamental in appraising these relations, and other factors, which have been strongly dependent upon current situation in each particular case. Hence, the principal factors affecting Finland's relations to the Soviet Union are divided into two groups: fixed factors and variable factors. It should be noted, however, that what is concerned is mainly a difference in degree. The factors referred to as fixed are also influenced by development, though to a markedly lesser extent than those termed variable.

The interrelations of fixed and variable factors are illustrated by the following schematic representation, where factors have been classified into three groups according to their contents: (1) factors determined by the environment, (2) factors related to the foreign-political or functioning capacity of the nations concerned, and (3) factors associated with the perception of the train of events by the persons involved or with their personal views of what is taking place.



Fixed factors in the first group include those which are determined by the fact that the nations concerned are neighbours or by their geographical location in general. The variable environmental factors are associated with the general international situation and, in particular, with the situation prevailing in the regions that are geographically the nearest. The predominant fixed factor in the second group consists of the sizes of the nations,

while the variable factors in this group are related to their economic and cultural resources, and they can readily be altered through the industrialization process or through purposefully planned education. Such alterations affect not only a nation's ability for international contributions but also the citizens' willingness to them. As regards perception, the most variable factor is the total picture of the historical development that has taken place over centuries and furnishes a foundation for a general appraisal of the train of events. By contrast, the international political situation and the current development of international relations affect more strongly the images that various nations build of one another and that may be regarded as variable perception factors proper.

On the basis of this introduction it is possible to construct a foreign-policy behaviour model for specific situations. The point of departure is that, insofar as environmental, capacity and perception factors are concerned, one has to take account of comparatively permanent influences, on the one hand, and of influences of a more temporary sort, on the other. The interpretation of these factors by decision-makers is reflected partly in the system of treaties constituting an external frame for the nations' international existence and partly in statements and actions, which can be characterized as the content of foreign policy. Simultaneously, the treaty system in existence and the foreign policy pursued react upon environmental, capacity and perception factors.

To give a concrete picture of the nature of Finland's relations with the Soviet Union, the model outlined here was applied to four historical situations, namely, the situations around the years 1918, 1939, 1944 and 1967. It was established, as a result, that the fixed factors were not the same in 1939 as in 1918, and they were not the same in 1967 as in 1944; nevertheless, the changes that had taken place did not influence the general line followed in foreign policy. The important turning point was arrived at in 1944, when an alteration also took place in attitudes towards the fixed factors involved in Finland's relations with the Soviet Union. The change should not, however, be exaggerated, since Finland's foreign policy also displays features representing decided continuity, such as the neutrality policy pursued or her friendship with the other Nordic countries. Also, Finland's relations with the East include features which have been observable in various previous situations and which were known in part even before the country became independent.

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