

FROM "ALLIES WITHOUT ALLIANCE" TO CONCERTED ACTION: ROMANIA AND FINLAND IN THE AFTERMATH OF OPERATION BARBAROSSA (1941)

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Abstract:

This study describes the relationship between two small and lesser states joining the German attack against Soviet Union in an attempt to recapture the territories lost to Soviet Union in 1940. It is conceived as an in-depth analysis of the Romanian-Finnish relations based on the criticism of archival sources discovered in the Romanian, Finnish and British archives. Becoming "allies without alliance" almost overnight, the relations between the two countries acknowledged a quick shift from low profile bonds to an agreement based on a combination of balance of power and joint action. The aim was to remove the threat Russia was posing to the two countries and to increase their influence at a peace conference to be open following the expected defeat of their big neighbour. Romania was the advocate of closer ties between the two countries keeping in line with its search for influence rather than autonomy in its foreign relations, while Finland was more prudent consistent with its choice for autonomy rather than influence.

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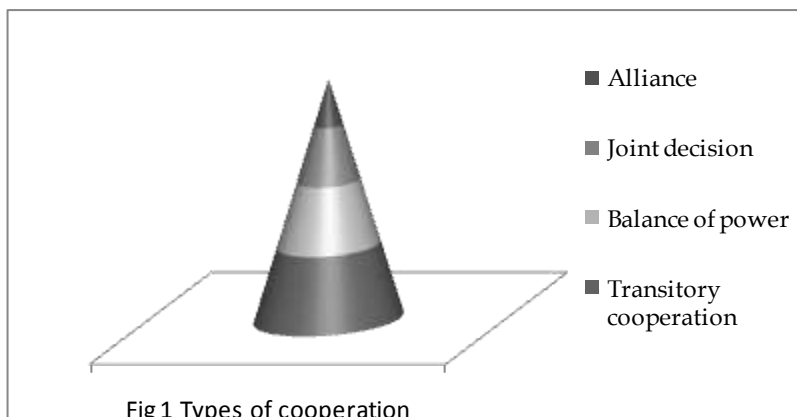
Acest studiu descrie relațiile dintre două state mici și mijlocii care s-au alăturat atacului german împotriva Uniunii Sovietice într-o încercare de a-și recâștiga teritoriile pierdute în favoarea acestei mari puteri răsăritene vecine în anul 1940. Acesta este conceput ca o analiză în profunzime a relațiilor româno-finlandeze bazată pe utilizarea critică a surselor documentare descoperite în arhivele românești, finlandeze și britanice. Devenite „aliați fără alianță” aproape peste noapte, relațiile dintre cele două state au cunoscut o transformare rapidă din legături cu o vizibilitate redusă la o înțelegere axată pe o combinație de balanță de putere și acțiune comună. Obiectivul era acela de a înlătura pericolul pe care Rusia îl reprezenta pentru cele două țări și de a le spori influența în cadrul unei conferințe de pace ce se aștepta a fi deschisă ca o consecință a înfrângerii prognozate a marelui lor vecin. România a fost avocatul unor legături mai strânse între cele două state în conformitate cu linia sa de politică externă ce căuta să-și sporească mai degrabă influența decât autonomia, în vreme ce Finlanda a fost mai

prudentă în concordanță cu opțiunea sa mai degrabă pentru autonomie decât pentru influență în plan extern.

Keywords: balance of power, joint decision, small and lesser powers, Romania, Finland, World War II

Introduction

This study starts with a question that has guided two decades ago the research of Arthur Stein with regard to the “liberal” versus “realistic” assumptions in explaining the behaviour of international actors: why nations cooperate? As Stein noted, in an anarchic international environment, cooperation can only be understood in terms of interests of states. Therefore, in most cases alliances are **transitory forms** and adjust to developments of international relations. The **balance of power** theory stresses the paradoxical nature of alliances, which are concluded by states to ensure their survival through concerted action. Other alliances have more than solely a symbolic value. They presuppose even a **joint decision** to a certain level, up to those who not only reflect, but also affect the parties’ interests. Finally, there are alliances, which Stein researches in-depth, which succeed to adopt a **course of action favourable to their ally, even if it conflicts with their own interests.**¹ Taking into account the occurrence (likelihood to happen) and the depth of cooperation, we can infer a “taxonomy” of cooperation:



Two additional concepts must be integrated at this point. The first concept draws on a number of private and public references to the Finnish or Romanian “ally” or more often “brother-in-arms”. As this article will

¹ Arthur Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate? Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 151-155.

demonstrate, the beginning of the military operations against the Soviet Union in concert with Germany made the unity of scopes between Finns and Romanians more visible. This had an impact upon the relations between the two states which became, as once Ion Stanciu has put it with regard to the World War I Romanian-United States relations, "**allies without alliance**". Although he does not conceptualize this expression, he refers to the relationship between two countries, the nature of which has unexpectedly, in the course of war developments, acquired a new significance.² In fact, this concept is to a large extent another expression of the **balance of power**, within the meaning that both partners want the defeat of their enemy but no formal understanding between them exists. Another concept is "**concert**" or "**concerted action**" which is often used especially by the Romanian Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mihai Antonescu. The term draws on the example of the Concert of Europe, which was in fact an action of cooperation and compromise between the European states based on balance of power in keeping the peace of the Old Continent. In a critical account upon the Concert of Europe, Sheldon Anderson shows that the term is based on four principles: 1. Machiavellianism should guide policy-making; 2. the political character of a state, as long as it is not revolutionary, is of no consequence in foreign affairs; 3. the balance of power keeps the peace; 4. the general peace holds when the great powers control the state system and adjudicate the legitimacy of demands to change it and the heads of state determine policy, not "the people."³ Within the Romanian-Finnish relations, as this article will show, the term was used to encompass a combination of **balance of power** and **joint decision** as regards "the Russian question".

Returning to Stein's concepts, where in this taxonomy fits the relation between two small and lesser countries, such as Finland and Romania, situated in the in-between Europe and caught in the middle of a gigantic conflagration? Did the bonds between the two countries, in the context of the outbreak of the Barbarossa Campaign, exceed the stage of transitory cooperation where they were to be found at the start of World War II? Were the parallels of situations and reactions of the two countries as genuine as it was often claimed in public rhetoric?

² Ion Stanciu, *Aliați fără alianță. România și S.U.A. 1914-1920* (București: Editura Albatros, 1992), 27.

³ Sheldon Anderson, *Peace and Change* 32, Issue 3 (Jul. 2007): 303-304.

Since this subject is still a white page in the historical literature, this investigation draws primarily on the archival documents from the Finnish and Romanian archives, from where one can understand the rationality of the main actors, especially of the political and diplomatic decision-makers.

Allies without alliance

The launching of the Barbarossa Campaign against Soviet Union on June 22 created an entirely new security environment for the small and lesser countries squeezed between Germany and the Soviet Union. First and foremost, by the nature of the situation, neutrality was outside the range of possibilities open to them and therefore these states had to choose sides. Nevertheless, the Romanian Leader, General Ion Antonescu, and the vast majority of his compatriots had little doubt where Romania's national interest rested. By joining Germany and not the Soviet Union, one believed that Romania will align with the winning side⁴ and thus the reintegration of the provinces lost in 1940, Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina, will be achieved. Some even dared to dream that the Vienna Dictate will be revised in favour of Romania. Additionally, not joining the Reich would have entailed the risk of German occupation because the possibility to stop the war at the Romanian borders was very slight.⁵ While Romania lobbied for and officially entered the war from the very first moments thereof, Finland needed three more days to move its troops against Soviet Union although war operations on the Finnish-Soviet front started soon after the launching of the German invasion. In fact, in his proclamation of June 22, Hitler had already mentioned not only Romania, but also Finland among the powers joining in the war against Soviet Union: "German divisions [...] together

⁴ More used in the international theory is bandwagoning, a term introduced by Stephen Van Evera and popularized by Kenneth Waltz. Waltz describes bandwagoning as allying with the strongest power. Instead, balancing predicts that such an alignment would be dangerous to the survival of states and that instead they should balance against such power, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Teoria politicii internațională* (Iași: Polirom, 2006), 176-178. The cases of Romania and Finland can more aptly be described by referring to Stephen Walt's case of states who align to a domineering power during wartime in order to take a share of the hunt at the time of peace, Stephan M. Walt, *Originile alianțelor* (Iași: Institutul European, 2008), 81-82; John A. Vasquez, *The power of power politics. From classical realism to neotraditionalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 254-255.

⁵ Grigore Gafencu rightly asserts in an entry in his diary of 19 September 1942 that Finland and Romania entered the war against Soviet Union as a consequence of the Soviet aggression against them in 1939-1940: "the neighbouring states have neither the lust nor the capacity to attack it", Grigore Gafencu, *Jurnal, Geneva, ianuarie 1942 - 13 martie 1943*, vol. II, ed. Ion Calafeteanu, (București: Editura Paideia, 2008), 141.

with the heroes of Finland's freedom and their marshal defend Finnish soil. From the banks of the Prut River, from the lower Danube to the Black Sea, German and Romanian soldiers are united under state leader Antonescu.'⁶

Soon after Finland's stepping in the war, the Finnish envoy to Romania, Eduard Hjalmar Palin, called on June 27 on Vice-President of the Council of Ministers Antonescu informing him about Finland's joining the struggle against the USSR⁷ and expressing his country's satisfaction for having an ally such as Romania in the struggle for their holy rights.⁸ It seems that at this point M. Antonescu came to realize the benefits of closing the ties with Finland. He answered to this communication by writing a letter to the Finnish Prime Minister Johan Wilhelm Rangell in which he expressed his country's satisfaction for "standing shoulder by shoulder with the glorious Finnish nation in the holy struggle for re-establishing their justice and their inalienable rights and for the defence of European civilization".⁹ The two apparently conflicting notions encompassing a national goal (reintegration of lost territories) and an ideological aim (the puzzling expression of defence of Europe) will come to be used time and time again both in the public and in the private rhetoric concerning the Romanian-Finnish relations. Representatives of the Romanian government will express on various occasions their satisfaction that the Finnish Army was fighting side by side with the Romanian Army and defined the relations between the two states as brotherhood-in-arms. The interest to develop the relations with the widely respected democratic state of Finland and to differentiate itself to some extent from the war of Great Powers is barely concealed in Romania's policy, while Finland affirmed open and loud that it struggled for a Continuation War, separated from the Great Powers.

⁶ "The Führer to the German People: 22 June 1941", in German Propaganda Archive, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/hitler4.htm> (accessed September 15, 2009).

⁷ When on June 26 the Finnish envoy to Rome Onni Talas had informed Italian foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano of Finnish entrance in the war against Soviet Union, he insisted upon self-defence, ideological and geopolitical meaning of the struggle insisting that Finland had been bombed and the Finns were defending their territory against the Bolshevik Russia, which was the main enemy of Europe, see Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Commissione per la pubblicazione dei documenti diplomatici, *I documenti diplomatici italiani [DDI]. Nona Serie: 1939-1943, Volume VII (24 aprile 1941-11 dicembre 1941)* (Roma: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1987), 303.

⁸ Note of conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Eduard Palin of 27.06.1941, Arhivele Diplomatice ale Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al României (The Diplomatic Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, hereafter AMAE), Folder 71/1920-1944, Finlanda, vol. 14.

⁹ Mihai Antonescu's letter of 28.06.1941 for Rangell, AMAE 71, Finlanda, vol. 14.

Therefore, becoming allies without alliance was just an occurrence that had little to do with Romania and Finland's foreign policy choices and much more with Great Powers' objectives and with **balance of power** thinking.

Heading towards a concerted action

It was under these circumstances that the starting impulse for strengthening the co-operation between the two countries came up. On July 1 vice-PM Antonescu approached Palin and advanced his theory of Romania and Finland serving as the southern, respectively the northern wing of the anti-Soviet border. He conceptualized and explained his views. M. Antonescu underlined the fact that both countries had a vital interest in undermining the Slavic bloc. He considered that the long-term solution for weakening Russia would have to be modelled on the policy of Richelieu and Mazarin as expressed in the Westphalia Treaty that shattered the German bloc for a long time. In his views, both Finland and Romania had an interest in solving the Russian question to a degree that it ceased to constitute a permanent danger to their political and territorial order. Under this optic, the chief of Romanian diplomacy considered that radical means had to be employed in solving this issue: the disintegration of the 'Slavic mass' and its division into areas of control (railways under international and extraterritorial regime or territories under a kind of condominium). Emphasizing the fact that Romania and Finland had an interest in providing a general solution to the Slavic question, but particularly a solution given with regard to the Russian territories around their borders, M. Antonescu wanted a **concerted action** of the two nations. The areas of cooperation in his view regarded the defining of the grand principles of struggle against Slavism, the adoption of a common formula for solving the Russian question, the prevention of the creation of strong Russian states in their neighbourhood and mutual support as regards their territorial claims. Starting from these principles, the Romanian chief of diplomacy sketched out a program for developing the Romanian-Finnish relationship, including press and cultural cooperation.¹⁰

These plans reflect the high hopes of the Romanian foreign minister that the war will soon end with the defeat of Soviet Union and that the resettlement of "the Russian issue" was only a matter of short time. Therefore, he intended to press for a long-term political solution in

¹⁰ Palin's dispatch no. 76 of 2.07.1941, Kansallisarkisto (The Finnish National Archives, hereafter KA), folder Witting C11a.

cooperation with Finland, initially designed to protect his country's security at the eastern border and eventually aspiring to acquire foreign territories. It is difficult to know what political unit that it might be created with German help, did M. Antonescu exactly fear, but most likely the possibility of a German-Ukrainian rapprochement was not overlooked.

Eight days later, M. Antonescu approached again Palin with regard to the common ground for cooperation between Romania and Finland further explaining his viewpoints and stating that the real danger for the two countries was represented not solely by Bolshevism but also by Russia. Because of this common interest, the Romanian official produced again detailed proposals for organizing the cooperation between the two states and requested a precise response from the Finnish authorities.¹¹

The Finnish envoy reacted positively to these proposals by emphasizing the fact that according to his instructions he was to strive for developing very good relations with Romania.¹² He informed his foreign minister about Romania's proposals, also stating that M. Antonescu had already informed Germany in a pro-memoria about this plan.¹³ As anticipated, the Finnish government accepted the Romanian proposal stating that it was "firmly decided and happy to close ranks with the Romanian government and to pursue a concerted action regarding the Russian question." It was also emphasized that the Russian question was not only a great question of war but also a question of peace asking for "a concerted action of the neighbouring interested countries".¹⁴

Notwithstanding the Finnish positive reply, M. Antonescu insisted for clearer answers on the Finnish viewpoints regarding the organization of peace and on the cooperation between the two governments in preparing their respective peace programs. In the internal communication with the Foreign Ministry, Palin also insisted in favour of a response to the Romanian proposals: "reserve is of course at its place but barely a reason to offend."¹⁵ Nevertheless, as Asko Ivalo of the Finnish Foreign Ministry pointed to Palin, the Finnish government was not in a hurry to decide upon

¹¹ Palin's report no. 85 of 10.07.1941, KA Witting C11a.

¹² Minutes of conversation between Mihai Antonescu and the Finnish Minister Palin of 1.07.1941, AMAE, Finlanda, vol. 17, 6-7; Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (The Romanian National Archives, hereafter ANIC, Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri (The Presidency of the Council of Ministers), vol. 344/1941, 2-3.

¹³ Palin's dispatch no. 76 of 2.07.1941, KA Witting C11a.

¹⁴ Note of conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Eduard Palin of 10.07.1941, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

¹⁵ Palin's report no. 96/85 of 21.07.1941, KA Witting C11a.

its official position. This prudence sprang from the fact that the situation was still in motion: it was impossible to predict how much of Russia Germany would occupy and what the Reich's peace plans were. Therefore, Romania was to be informed that, in the Finnish conception, a precondition for Europe's well-being was the dismembering of Soviet Union down to its national foundations. In achieving this goal, the Finnish government considered it natural that all the countries at war with Russia should endeavour for an agreement. The Finnish aims were not yet crystallized, but Finland strived for safe borders in order to avoid that parts of the Finnish people will remain within the Russian state.¹⁶ Palin made the best of his instructions and transmitted on behalf of his government the determination to improve the relations between the two countries and to act in concert with the Romanians regarding the Russian question especially in respect to the final status of this country in a future peace conference.¹⁷

In the meantime, M. Antonescu elaborated in mid-July detailed instructions to the Romanian envoy to Helsinki, Notti Constantinide, reminiscent of the arguments used in the communications with the Finnish Foreign Ministry and emphasizing the Slavic, communist and nationalist Russian menace to Europe. "The Slavism and the Russian nationalism continue to threaten Europe not only as spiritual forces, but especially as biologic forces", wrote M. Antonescu. The influence of the Nazi ideology was evident in his argumentation. In order to prevent this scenario from happening, the great Slavic mass, in his opinion, had to be divided, dominated and civilized. He revealed the danger posed by the creation of a big Russian state or of two Slavic states neighbouring Finland and Romania. Besides his proposals that Romania and Finland should pursue a concerted diplomatic action and support each other in their territorial claims regarding Russian territory, the new element in these instructions is the stress placed by Romanian politician on the "spiritual" cooperation between them. This was partly the result of his strive to counter the Hungarian proselytism in Finland. He suggested that this cooperation should start with a press propaganda informing about the common interests and calling for the development of the relations by the means of visits, conferences or economic cooperation.¹⁸ If the cooperation against

¹⁶ Ivalo's dispatch no. Y61 of 23.07.1941, KA Witting C11a.

¹⁷ Note of conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of July 1940, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

¹⁸ Mihai Antonescu's instructions of 15.07.1941 to Notti Constantinide, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 17, 10-13.

Russia found receptive ears in many political circles in Finland, albeit limits were imposed on the extent to which Finland can influence the victors' decision on "the Russian question", the encouragement of Romanian propaganda against Hungary found little audience. The most Finland could make was to maintain the balance between the two contenders for Finnish sympathy although the mainstream opinion was in favour of Hungarian kin nation.¹⁹

It was by the end of September 1941 that the Finnish answers to his repeated demarches fully satisfied M. Antonescu. The vice-PM now considered the Finnish responses as testifying for the complete parallelism between the two countries with regard to their war aims. By now, the vice-PM felt confident enough in the cooperation with the Finnish side to approach with Palin delicate issues such as the Romanian territorial program.²⁰ He even confessed to the Finnish envoy that although his country's decisions on this topic had not yet been adopted, he wanted his country to acquire a zone of protection between the Dniester and the Bug.²¹

Although no treaty was signed between the two countries, by now a gentleman's agreement between them came in force regarding their cooperation in view of re-settling the Russian borders following the expected defeat of this country. This agreement may be reminiscent more of what Stein describes as understandings reached according to **the balance of power** logic. The main striving behind this cooperation envisaged the security of two states which only a several months ago had suffered the loss of territories to Soviet Union and thus understandably wanted to prevent this from repeating in the future. The possibility of their enlargement in the east was left open, whereby neither of the two states reached a decision on this issue. The **convergence of interests** or **balance of power**-kind of cooperation does not however encompass the full range of collaboration between Romania and Finland as I will prove henceforth.

¹⁹ Silviu-Marian Miloiu, "Finland's views and political attitudes concerning the Romanian-Hungarian clash on Transylvania (1941-1942)", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai - European Studies* 1 (2006): 105-119.

²⁰ In a meeting of the Council of Ministers of December 16 in which the governors of the eastern provinces liberated from Soviet occupation were also invited, the governor of Transnistria (never before a Romanian province), Professor Gheorghe Alexianu, insisted that Romania should master this province forever, Marshal Ion Antonescu answering that "you must work there as Romania would have installed there for two million years", Marcel Dumitru-Ciucă and Maria Ignat, eds. *Stenogramele şedinţelor Consiliului de Miniştri. Guvernarea Ion Antonescu*, Vol. V (octombrie 1941-ianuarie 1942) (Bucureşti: Arhivele Naţionale ale României, 2001), 490.

²¹ Palin's dispatch no. 132 of 26.09.1941, KA Witting C11a.

Steps towards **the joint decision** model had already been taken and the evolution in this direction will consolidate in the following months.

By now engaged in a war against a common enemy and observing a number of common goals, the two countries closely monitored their international and domestic politics in order to be able to discern the changes in the international and regional environment they may reflect or even influence.

Romania and Finland's position may have been akin in many respects, but they were different in terms of political regime, a fact which did not lack consequences with regard to their foreign policy. Finland was one of the few remaining democratic states in Europe and the only democracy fighting side by side with Germany. As such and despite the war restrictions and limitations, the bottom-up influence over foreign policy was more significant than in case of autocracies such as Romania where the decision was taken primarily according to the top-down model.²² In what Romania is concerned, this country was ruled by a military dictatorship whose shortages and weaknesses were not concealed to the Finnish envoy to Bucharest. Nevertheless, when it comes to choosing between Romania's political forces, he consistently believed that at least during wartime Ion Antonescu's rule was preferable to his democratic or right-wing opponents' for his energetic and wise conduct of foreign and domestic affairs. Palin's examination of Romania's domestic and foreign policy is consistent with these views. Thus, at the end of July he reported that no foreign policy alternatives were open to Romania if the country was to be saved from total ruin except for the one the Romanian dictator was pursuing. He also praised Antonescu's vigorous and determined defence of his country's sovereignty and political and economic interests. This determined him to consider that the general's deposition from the head of the government, which was discussed in various quarters, would result into a catastrophe for his country. He was aware that even after Romania

²² In case of democracies, three main factors must be taken into account according to Thomas Risse-Kappen, Peter Gourevitch and Peter Katzenstein: 1. the nature of the political institutions and the degree of their centralization; 2. the structure of society regarding its polarization, the strength of social organization, and the degree to which societal pressure can be mobilized; 3. the nature of the coalition-building processes in the policy networks linking state and society. Risse-Kappen's distinction between different categories of public (mass public opinion, the attentive public and issue publics) is also useful and can explain some of Finland's foreign policy peculiarities, Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Public opinion, domestic structure, and foreign policy in liberal democracies", *World Politics* 43, No. 4 (Jul., 1991): 482, 486.

had managed to reunite Bessarabia and North Bucovina to her national territory, these circles, although rather heterogeneous, were taking into account the necessity of ousting Antonescu from power. In many quarters it was believed that he was going too far in his friendship with Germany or even that he had turned Romania into a German protectorate. Even the positive outcomes of his policy were considered insufficient to justify the high price paid for Germany's support. Contrary to these accusations, Palin considered that Antonescu was defending Romania's sovereignty and autonomy and that no alternative was possible to his policy.²³

The Finnish envoy appreciated that besides the former interwar political elite, Antonescu's main political issue were the legionnaires and the Jews, while his main support came from the army and from the Germans. In what regards the attitude towards Antonescu's regime, the legionnaires were however divided into four main categories: those with communist leanings; the cautious who adopted an "wait and see" attitude; the conciliators prepared for a rapprochement with the acting chief of state; the fanatics committed to put an end to Antonescu's life and regime in which scope they had formed a ten men death squad. The latter had already made attempts to Antonescu's life, which had determined the general to surround himself with heavy security forces. Politically, however, the radical right-wing and the Jews did not enjoy sufficient support in the country to really endanger Antonescu's position. The authentic political danger was coming, in Palin's opinion, from "the normal patriotic circles": the intelligentsia and the interwar political parties where Antonescu was criticized less for his domestic policy and much more for his foreign policy. Many members of these circles were pro-English, pro-French and anti-German, being also driven by personal ambitions and envy. On the other hand, Antonescu's supporters were not always reliable and sometimes they looked as being guided by circumstances. Therefore, Antonescu's real support came from the army. The army's attitude towards Antonescu was exceptionally positive as he was trying to have the country cured from her traditional bad habits and old sins. Antonescu's government was based on bayonets, assessed Palin, and this statement was underlined by a diplomat in the Finnish Foreign Ministry, who also underlined the affirmation that Antonescu was leading the country not only based on Romanian but also on German bayonets; a very valuable

²³ Palin's report no. 28 of 27.07.1941, Ulkoasiainministeriön arkisto (The Archives of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, hereafter UA), folder 5, C 14.

support in time of war, yet a very narrow basis for a government during peacetime.²⁴

How did Antonescu come to support a German orientation of Romania's politics? Palin fully realized the influence of the political domestic and international environment in this respect. Initially, Antonescu was not an admirer of Germany, a country against which he had struggled during the First World War. As in the case of many Romanians, his sympathy went to France and Britain, countries to which he had been appointed military attaché. As late as September 1939 the general was deeply pessimistic of Germany's chances of victory in the war. He quoted Antonescu as arguing to a foreign diplomat in Bucharest that "even if Germany will manage to conquer the entire Europe, and even if she would achieve the occupation of the British Archipelago, in the end she would nevertheless be defeated." The Finnish minister believed that it was in the summer of 1940 when Antonescu came to realize that Romania had no alternative to be saved from a total collapse than by joining wholeheartedly to Germany, ask this power's support and pay the price. Taking advantage of this situation, the Germans forced Antonescu into economic and political concessions to which he was prepared to consent given the circumstances. This made him totally bound to Germany, a line he followed "straightforward and with frankness". As an ally and a trusted man of the Axis, he was prepared to cooperate with the Reich in all fields. Nevertheless, Antonescu was trying to preserve as much as possible of Romania's sovereignty and autonomy. Palin showed his approval of Antonescu's leadership when writing to his Foreign Minister that "it would be desirable that he gets support in his hard work in order to bring about truly positive and permanent outcomes. He would deserve it."²⁵

Looking from Germany's perspective, Palin noticed that the German bayonets had not always been behind Antonescu. At the beginning, the Reich's favourites were the legionnaires. It was only when Germany understood that they lacked the capacity of governing the country spreading around confusion and chaos that Hitler had withdrawn its support for them. Yet the Finnish minister emphasized the very important fact that Germany was preserving the legionnaires in its back pocket as a lever on the Romanian government. Berlin's interest was the prevalence of tranquillity and organization in the country so that she can get from Romania what she needed. Antonescu was able to deliver capacity

²⁴ Palin's report no. 28 (continuation) of 28.07.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

²⁵ Palin's report no. 30 of 30.07.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

of leadership and trust. The German envoy Manfred von Killinger proved this when declaring that "in this country there is not any other man but Antonescu able to maintain the order here. He is wise, energetic and honest."²⁶ Palin also recalled the fact that Antonescu was put in charge with the Romanian front, nominally also leading the German armies present there, so that the victories gained on that area to be attributed to him.²⁷

The Finnish envoy was thus aware of the autonomy versus influence dilemma of small and lesser states and observed that while trying to preserve as much as possible of its autonomy, Romania was first and foremost concerned of gaining influence. On the other hand, he understood Germany's ability to use Romania's domestic rifts in order to *divide et impera*.

Perhaps little aware of the consistent recent history of Romania's relations with France and Britain, Palin did not conceal his surprise to discover that numerous Romanians were still sincerely pro-Western. He described the split between the governmental circles. Here he found determination to create and root in the Romanian society the feelings of friendship towards Germany and the press contributed to a large extent writing extensively about the friendship, the virtues and the importance as brother-in-arms of the Germans, on the one hand, and the popular feeling which ran against the Reich, on the other hand. Although he asserted that a change in the people's sentiments toward Germany did take place within certain limits, "at the bottom of their heart the sentiment in this country is of friendship to the Western countries and of suspicion, not to say hate, to Germany". He looked convinced that many efforts were still needed before that will change.²⁸

The Finnish envoy contrasted Romanian public's reserve towards Germany with its sympathy toward Finland. He admitted to have been touched by the Romanian's satisfaction that they were allies with the Finns. He concluded that "our nation and army enjoy the highest consideration

²⁶ This opinion was shared in by Hitler himself who argued in 27/28 September in his "table talks" that "Antonescu is of Germanic origin, not Romanian; he's a born soldier. His misfortune is to have Romanians under his command. But let's not forget that only a year ago these people were wildly fleeing from the Bolsheviks. It's wonderful how, in so short a time, Antonescu has been able to get what he has got out of his troops. Doubtless he will also succeed, with time, in obtaining administrators who aren't rotten with corruption.", Hugh Trevor-Roper (editor), *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944. His Private Conversations* (New York City: Enigma Books, 2000), 49.

²⁷ Palin's report no. 28 of 28.07.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

²⁸ Palin's report no. 27 of 19.07.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

both at the topmost official circles and within the population at large and, if at all possible, of an even greater sympathy, respect and admiration than those which marked the Finnish-Romanians relations during the Winter War". In the official circles, Palin found concern with the concluding of peace and desire that Romania will prepare a peace program in cooperation with Finland.²⁹ The Finnish minister thus underlined the empathy and solidarity between two small and lesser powers with a similar recent history and sharing many common aspirations in the war.

Gradually, the **balance of power**-kind of cooperation between the two states based on the old Arabic and Chinese saying that the enemy of my enemy is my friend acquired a deeper significance with the development of the political, diplomatic, cultural³⁰, military and to some extent of the commercial relations. A proof in this regard is the first dispatch of the Finnish envoy Notti Constantinide of August 4 when he handed his credentials to the President of Finland in a 20 minute long audience. Because the reopening of the Romanian Legation came shortly after the two countries became allies *sui generis*, the significance of this moment cannot be exaggerated. The fact that President Risto Ryti designated the Romanians as "brothers-in-arms" and showed a marked interest for the situation in which Bessarabia was found when it was recaptured from Soviet Union was not meaningless, but invited to comparisons with the fate of Karelia when retaken by Finnish troops. The Finnish chief of state also paid a special interest to Romania's economic situation, encouraging the strengthening of the economic and cultural bonds between the two nations in addition to their military relations. This was perhaps the result of Finnish interest in opening new outlets for its products and of finding new possibilities of cereals provisions when the traditional markets had now been closed. The reception impressed Constantinide who pointed to the cordial atmosphere during the ceremony and the special significance given to his audience scheduled three days after his arrival in Helsinki, a fact also stressed by the Finnish director of protocol. In his dispatch, Constantinide emphasized the fact that Romania had uninterruptedly maintained a military attaché accredited to Helsinki, meant to pinpoint to the continuity of the relations between the two states

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ This is dealt with in Silviu Miloiu, "Cultures at war: the cultural relations between Romania and Finland during the Second World War," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A.D. Xenopol"* XLII (2005): 409-422.

despite Antonescu government's decision of autumn 1940 to close down the Romanian Legation in Helsinki.³¹

The Romanian envoy also enjoyed a very cordial reception at the Finnish foreign minister Rolf Witting. Witting not only granted him an hour long audience but also invited him to his villa. With this occasion, the Finnish chief of diplomacy approved unreservedly the Romanian viewpoint that Finland and Romania had a common interest in the division of Russia and the prevention of any big states being formed in their neighborhood. He also expressed his desire for a common political action to be pursued by the two states by reciprocally informing about the changes of situations of interest to them and adopting common attitudes whenever the circumstances will be favourable, for instance if the two states will be offered excessive territorial enlargement or unwanted exchanges of population.³² Thus, the cooperation between the two states was already moving towards a closer **convergence of interests**, which was a line in their gentlemen's agreement and a step forward towards some kind of **joint decision** during wartime.

The first part of the war which acknowledged, although with great losses, the retaking of their lost territories in the east and moved the war on the territory of the USSR was a time of high hopes for an early end of the conflict, with Romania and Finland finally ending up on the victorious side. In such circumstances, Romania wanted to increase its influence with the Reich in pursuing the maximization of its gains at the forthcoming peace as Walt has put it. The Romanian press reflected the leadership views. The assessment was optimistic, full of praise for the Romanian Army, its leader, now Marshal Antonescu, and the German allies. The press also pointed to Romania's struggle against Bolshevism.³³ At this point, the Finnish envoy shared Romanians' optimistic assessments. Commenting on August 12 on Romanian war aims, Palin remarked that the recapture of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina may be counted among the certain outcomes of the war. He was convinced that it was also righteous as the two provinces constituted from an ethnographic, historical and strategic point of view a part of this country. However, Romania faced a difficult

³¹ Notti Constantinide's dispatch no. 1/1 of 4.08.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 17, 14-15.

³² Constantinide's dispatch no. 3/4 of 10.08.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 17, 16.

³³ Palin's report no. 35 of 23.09.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

task in reconstructing these potentially rich provinces because of the fact that Soviet occupiers had dilapidated them.³⁴

Nevertheless, Palin believed that the Romanians will not be content with the reintegration of these provinces if they were to finish the war on the winning side. There were two views in this regard. The governmental circles considered that Romania should also acquire Transnistria³⁵, a region populated by a sizable minority of Romanians and Germans. To counterbalance these views, the opposition circles were of the opinion that Romania should be content with Dniester as its eastern border but should attempt to regain those areas of Transylvania annexed by Hungary in the previous year. The Finnish envoy refused to believe that any of these hopes had on the short-range any chance of being achieved. In order to assess the significance of Palin's commentaries it will be important to know the source of the Finnish envoy's information. As he confesses, this was nothing more than his impression (*vaikutelma*) derived from private interviews with Romanian decision-makers and their opponents, from official discourses and from reading the press "in-between rows". Palin also commented on Romania's general war objectives regarding Russia and observed that they envisaged a division of Russia based on ethnic grounds and "the creation of a situation in which the eastern threat would be as small and as remote as possible". Additionally, Romania aspired to war reparations and to the achievement of a status corresponding to the new importance of the country.³⁶

Consequently, the beginning of the military operations against the Soviet Union in concert with Germany made more visible the unity of scopes between Finns and Romanians. This had an impact upon the relations between the two "**allies without alliance**". The following pages will describe the progresses in the relations between the two states leading in some areas to the acknowledgement of the joint decision agreement which was however never achieved due to war developments. In the meantime, the mutual interest of raising their reciprocal representation in the partner country increased. No wonder that the Romanian government

³⁴ Palin's report no. 31 of 28.01.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

³⁵ The agriculturally rich area of the Ukraine between the Dniester and Bug rivers most of which was under Romanian administration from 1941 to 1944. This was designated by the Romanian authorities for the resettlement of over 100,000 Jews and Gypsies deported from Bucovina and Bessarabia. For them, Transnistria was a place of famine, sickness, and death, Radu Ioanid, "The Antonescu Era", in *The tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Brahm (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 149-152.

³⁶ Palin's report no. 31 of 28.01.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

attempted to have a more visible presence in Helsinki not only diplomatically, but also politically, culturally and economically.

The understanding between the two countries was not always as smooth as officially proclaimed. In a dispatch to Palin, the general secretary of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, Aaro Pakaslahti, countered the complaints he had received from the Romanian partners, i.e. that Constantinide was kept uninformed about the Finnish views of the international situation, with the argument that the Finnish part was sharing with the Romanian minister all information he wanted to get. Pakaslahti pointed out to the British demarches in Helsinki about which extensive and reliable information was given to Constantinide. The Finnish diplomat recalled the Finnish decision adopted at highest level to keep the relation with Romania warm.³⁷ On the other hand, in mid-September, Constantinide complained about the lack of news regarding the state of affairs in Romania for two months already, therefore reaching an impossibility to shed light even on the most elementary developments of his country. He was also in impossibility to listen to the broadcasts of Radio Romania. He asked that the Official Gazette and the main journals published in his country to be delivered by plane to Helsinki in order to keep him updated.³⁸

No such complaints are to be ever found in Palin's dispatches. For instance, he was familiar not only with the domestic or foreign policy of the country, but also with the progress of the Romanian troops on the eastern front.³⁹ He approached for the first time on July 21 the issue of whether or not Romania was going to continue the war on the eastern banks of the Dniester. He passed on the information he got from a trustful military attaché according to which Romania will stop at the Dniester⁴⁰, which was in fact what many ordinary Romanians also believed. As a matter of fact, this issue will create a deep division between the government and former political elite around the National Peasant and National Liberal parties⁴¹ and even inside the governmental or army leading circles.

³⁷ Pakaslahti's dispatch no. Y 74 of 27.09.1941, Kansallisarkisto Witting C11a.

³⁸ Constantinide's telegram no. 13/71 of 18.09.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

³⁹ Palin's report no. 86 of 16.07.1941, Kansallisarkisto Witting C11a.

⁴⁰ Palin's report no. 98 of 21.07.1941, Kansallisarkisto Witting C11a.

⁴¹ The first expression of this viewpoint can be found in National Peasant Party leader Iuliu Maniu's letter to General Ion Antonescu of July 18. After admitting that the reintegration of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina evoked the eternal "gratitude of the country for the Romanian generals, officers and soldiers" and first and foremost for Antonescu himself, as head of army, Maniu insisted that Romania shall not pursue a policy of aggression against Russia, England's ally, which will perhaps end up on the victorious side, Ion Calafeteanu,

The German attack on Russia made it a matter of realism that the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union shall join ranks against their common enemy. Although the alliance will construct on an anti-German basis⁴², the little European countries that joined Germany in the attack against Soviet Union came to be considered enemies of both nations. The grouping of Finland and Romania alongside the Axis in contrasting coalitions to the allies of the USSR, Great Britain and the US, blew up their relations. An official Finnish communiqué announced on July 30 that the diplomatic relations between Finland and the UK had been severed and enumerated the British actions starting with 1940 against the Finnish maritime interests, which had reached the stage of a blockade in the second half of the year. On August 1 the press also announced that British planes had attacked the harbours of Kirkkonieni, Petsamo and Liinahamari.⁴³

The process of breaking up of the relationship was nevertheless painful. The Romanian envoy ascertained from his conversations with Finnish businessmen or traders the dominant role England had played in the Finnish economic life. Two quarters of the meat and grain consumed in Finland were imported from the UK. On the other hand, the breach of the relationship with Britain allowed Germany to consolidate her position in Finland, further cemented by the common fight against Russia, the much hated and feared enemy. Regarding the role assigned to Finland in the north of Europe, Constantinide quoted an article published by *Diplomatisch-politische Information* that had a profound and lasting echo in the region. The article concluded that by her participation in the war Finland had assumed the leading role in Scandinavia. Finland was thus not a member of the group of "stubborn neutral countries" and to reward it, Germany promised to have high regard of its national ideals: therefore, its aspirations in Eastern Karelia were to be fulfilled. An article with similar conclusions was published by *Essener Nationalzeitung* and by the semi-

ed. Iuliu Maniu-Ion Antonescu. *Opinii și confruntări politice 1940-1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1994), 78-79.

⁴² Winston Churchill reacted instantly upon hearing the news assuring his countrymen that "This is no class war, but a war in which the whole British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations is engaged, without distinction of race, creed or party." Already on July 7, at Stafford Cripps' advice, Churchill sent a telegram to Stalin promising every possible help: "We have only to go on fighting to beat the life out of these villains.", Martin Kitchen, "Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union during the Second World War", *The Historical Journal* 30, No. 2 (Jun., 1987): 418-419.

⁴³ Constantinide's report no. 25 of 27.08.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 329-335 (on the report Mihai Antonescu wrote a resolution calling for publishing in the Romanian press news about the Finnish military and political efforts).

official paper of the NSDAP's Hanover's branch *Niedersächsische Tageszeitung*. The former newspaper openly stated that Sweden had lost the unique chance of preserving its leading position in the north. This positive attitude toward Finland and the criticism of Sweden was echoed in the diplomatic circles. The Romanian envoy reported the declaration of a member of the German Legation in Stockholm according to which Sweden had transformed itself into an asylum of German enemies.⁴⁴

Both Sweden and Finland reacted negatively to these appraisals and suggestions. The Swedish PM Per Albin Hansson and the former PM and chief of diplomacy Rickard Sandler stated that Sweden had done everything it could for Finland, however preserving its neutrality. It was exactly the status of neutrality that enabled the Swedes to support Finland, as the Swedish defence minister emphasized. On the other hand, by realistically assessing their political and economic situation, the Finnish government rejected such suggestions. Ryti unambiguously declared to the press that "Finland is not a Great Power and does not seek to acquire such a position. The feeling of unity will always be characteristic of our attitude towards the Nordic states and Finland wants no change in this."⁴⁵ This was a new statement regarding Finland's choice for autonomy rather than an influence in its foreign policy.

Witting also confirmed to Constantinide that all Finland wanted from its participation in the war was the creation of a state whose borders will be easier to defend by fixing them on natural obstacles. That might make necessary the occupation of southern Karelia but not of St. Petersburg or of its surrounding areas. The Romanian envoy commented that Finland had a high regard for the future, even for the distant future, and thus wanted to avoid anything that might worsen the relations with Scandinavia or post-war Russia. Finland wanted cooperation with the Scandinavian states and envisaged with regard to Russia the incorporation of those territories inhabited predominantly by the Finns but not more than that.⁴⁶ The position of the government was challenged only by the nationalists and their journal *Ajan Suunta*, an adept of Greater Finland with a leading position in Scandinavia. Yet, although in the future this current was

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The Finnish Foreign Minister declared to Italian envoy Cicconardi that Finland did not wage war out of imperialistic reasons, but for security. The claims for Carelia sprang both from sentimental reasons and from the desire of making the frontier easier to defend, see Cicconardi dispatch to Ciano of 2.11.1941, *DDI. Nona Serie: 1939-1943, Volume VII (24 aprilie 1941-11 dicembre 1941)*, 726.

considered capable of playing a doctrinaire if not a political role, it had a limited influence and lacked both important personalities and popularity.⁴⁷ Indeed, as Constantinide interpreted it, the strong attachment of the Finnish nation to the democratic system of governance, its belief that it constituted part of a group of states with a superior culture, including an acclaimed political culture, its sense of solidarity with the Scandinavians represented an important element of its cultural and foreign policy identity.⁴⁸ Assessing Finnish territorial goals in the east, Constantinide estimated that at the general peace Finland may ask for Eastern Karelia and the Kola Peninsula while being prepared to give up a strip of land situated north of Leningrad and alongside the Finnish Gulf so that the town bearing the name of the founder of Soviet Union will be out of the range of any gun situated on the Finnish territory. The Finns were however worried that the Germans will not hand over the Kola Peninsula, a territory rich in mines and wood and that Eastern Karelia seemed bound to remain under German administration.⁴⁹ These diplomatic dispatches prove once again that despite the many similarities between Romania and Finland, differences also existed in terms of domestic regime (dictatorship versus democracy), foreign policy goals and the pursuit of these goals (influence versus autonomy).

Moreover, pursuing their national goals as defined by their elites, Romania and Finland presented in a different light the meaning of their war. Repeatedly, the Finns emphasized the local and "private" character of their war. The Romanian envoy to Helsinki reported on August 30 that the Finns were attempting in their propaganda to treat gently both the Swedes and the Russians. The mainstream opinion in Finland understood that their country will continue to neighbour Russia and Sweden and therefore rejected the mission assigned to her by Germany of being the Great Power of the north. Commenting on a conversation between Mannerheim and the Romanian military attaché Titus Gârbea, Constantinide remarked that the Finnish Marshal was encouraging the Romanian Army to continue its attacks on the heart of Russia while reserving the Finnish Army only for local operations, in order to solely defend its limited interests. He concluded that "it is obvious that the Finns want to leave options open for their future and preserve their army without engaging it in actions that are

⁴⁷ Constantinide's report no. 25 of 27.08.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 329-335.

⁴⁸ Constantinide's report no. 93 of 1.10.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 345-349.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

not directly linked to their interests [...]”⁵⁰ The Romanian envoy seems to have interpreted Finnish prudent behaviour coupled with the prompting to Romania to strike against Russia in the sense of pulling someone’s chestnuts out of the fire.

Although Finland could not be won towards the German magnificent plans in the north, the relations with Britain will go from crisis to crisis in the autumn of 1941 until the state of war will be proclaimed between the two traditional partners. On September 22 the British Government handed its Finnish counterpart a memoranda asking for immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of the troops inside Finnish borders under the threat that unless these conditions were fulfilled Britain might decide to declare war upon Finland. As correctly interpreted by the Romanian envoy, the British memoranda could not but receive a negative answer although, paradoxically, Finland was short of reaching its military objectives.⁵¹

The Finnish reply frustrated British expectations, Anthony Eden complaining even that the Finns were ungrateful for the British support during the Winter War. In fact, responding to an interpellation in the Parliament, Eden had answered on October 1 that his government has already addressed a warning to the Finnish government through the Norwegian minister in Helsinki⁵². This warning stated that if the Finnish government persisted in invading purely Russian territory, London will be forced to treat Finland as an open enemy, not only during the war but also when peace will come to be made.⁵³ The Soviet envoy to London was also putting pressure on the chief of British diplomacy to declare war on Finland, Hungary and Romania.⁵⁴ Eden emphasized that not only Britain but also the United States will be disappointed of the Finnish answer.⁵⁵

The United States joined in the effort to convince Finland to end the war against Soviet Union. The Romanian charge d’affaires Brutus Coste reported from Washington that according to a press declaration made by

⁵⁰ Constantinide’s report of 30.08.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

⁵¹ Constantinide’s report no. 93 of 1.10.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 345-349.

⁵² The note was sent on September 22 and published a week later, Georg Gripenberg, *Finland and the Great Powers. Memoirs of a diplomat* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 210

⁵³ *Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series – Volume 374. House of Commons. Official Report. Eighth volume of the session 1940-1941. 9th September – 11th November 1941* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1941), 558.

⁵⁴ David Dilks, ed. *The diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945* (London: Cassell, 1971), 410.

⁵⁵ Constantinide’s report no. 18/154 of 13.10.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14, 54.

Cordell Hull on November 3, the US passed to Finland a Soviet offer for opening up negotiations based on the returning by the Soviet Union to Finland of the territories it had annexed in 1940 and that Finland had declined the offer.⁵⁶ The American involvement persevered with the Finnish envoy being instructed to declare to Helsinki that if Finland desired to keep American friendship it had to give palpable proofs that it intended to cease its military operations and retreat its troops behind the 1939 border. The American State Secretary noticed that Finland started its advance against Murmansk and Archangelsk, two destinations of the American-British goods supply for the USSR, and warned that were Finland not to comply with these requests, the conclusion would be that either it had lost its independence or was simply pursuing the war according to the will of its people. Hull's intervention was subject to criticism in the *New York Times* on the ground that Finland knew that the Germans were only one step away from their house while the democracies were far away, unable to guarantee its security.⁵⁷ The Finnish President was warned in a letter dated November 6 against the advance of the Finnish troops behind the 1939 border.⁵⁸

Constantinide was privy to the three memorandums handed over by the American envoy to the Finnish President on October 27, 28 and 31. The Americans wanted the Finnish military operations to be immediately stopped and requested Finland to provide guarantees for the fact that it will retreat behind the 1939 borders. The Finnish military campaign side by side with Germany was deemed a direct threat against the safety of the United States. The US also warned that a Finnish action against the American deliveries for Russia will entail immediate consequences. An urgent reply was expected from the Finnish Government. The Romanian minister received information that the Finnish answer would reproduce in a very detailed form the ideas from the memorandum meant for the United Kingdom. A rupture of the diplomatic relations between the two countries

⁵⁶ In fact, in Michael Berry's interpretation, Hull's press conference "marked a new stage in the evolution of American policy toward Finland, a policy which had begun as a result of the British demarches and the American fear that Finnish advancement eastward might eventually cut the vital Murmansk supply line", R. Michael Berry, *American foreign policy and the Finnish exception. Ideological preferences and wartime realities* (Helsinki: SHS, 1987), 179.

⁵⁷ Coste's telegram no. 149/4625 of 4.11.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 13.

⁵⁸ Dispatch no. 262 of 6.11.1941 to the Finnish President, KA Risto Rytin kokoelma 29, Nippu 3/1.

was not considered unlikely to happen.⁵⁹ The memorandums puzzled the Finnish circles as to the reasons which caused their deliverance to Helsinki. Three hypotheses emerged: its delivery came at the instigation of the UK; at the request of the USSR; the most plausible one was that it sprang from the US desire that the Finnish troops will not cut the railway Murmansk-Leningrad, the only line of supply for the USSR after the harbour of Archangelsk had become impracticable because of the ice.⁶⁰

Constantinide estimated the impact of the British and American demarches on the governmental circles as being "considerable". Finland was attempting to avoid reaching the state of war with the Anglo-Americans. This was a result of the belief of both the Finnish Government and the public opinion that the war will end in a peace of compromise and Finland's interests would be best served if it avoided to be drawn in the Great Powers war. Secondly, the Finns considered the possibility that the state of war with the two Great Powers will affect on the long run its economic interests. The relations with the two powers made it possible for Finland to build up an important wood and food industry during the previous two decades. They had represented the best commercial partners for Finnish products and their banks had granted advantageous credits to Finland without any control being imposed upon these industries. Constantinide understood the dilemma the Finnish authorities were facing in terms of economy and commerce: if Finland is forced to cooperate primarily with the Germans, it will have to grow its capacity of production to the upper limit in order to satisfy the Reich's European needs. Its production would not depend on its capitals or commercial calculations. Where capitals lacked, Germany would come to its assistance but under German control. Germany would demand the right of participating to benefits and take the control. This would inevitably denationalize the Finnish capitals and lead to the control of the Finnish economy. This perspective worried to the upmost the financial circles, especially when they compared it with the ideal state of affairs which had previously permitted the rapid industrialization and enrichment of the country. The Romanian minister appreciated that these worries of the economic circles were influencing the politicians. A contributory factor in this respect was the fact that the President, the PM and the Foreign Minister had previously

⁵⁹ Constantinide's telegram no. 23/183 of 6.11.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 13, 56-57.

⁶⁰ Constantinide's telegram no. 24/184 of 8.11.1941 for Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14, 178-179.

been bankers who worked a good part of their life in the Anglo-American banks. Constantinide concluded that while the Finnish loyal cooperation in the war against Russia was safeguarded, the German economic methods and plans lacked any sympathy.⁶¹

Gradually, Romania and Finland's relations with Britain were heading towards the state of war prompted by Soviet Union. When the Finnish envoy in London Georg Gripenberg reported that his Romanian colleague Viorel Virgil Tilea had decided to remain in London as a private person, the Finnish diplomacy was interested in the reasons which determined him to take such a step. Nevertheless, the fact that Tilea was condemned in contumacy at heavy prison for not obeying the government's orders to return to Romania, that he had all his considerable fortune confiscated and his citizenship withdrawn proved the fact that Tilea's decision was in contradiction with his government's orders.⁶² Palin strongly denied some assumptions according to which everything was a comedy orchestrated for the Germans in order for the Romanians to maintain their relations with Britain. Moreover, Marshal Antonescu's determination to pursue a loyal policy towards Germany as well as the categorical, bitter and offensive language of the Romanian press towards Britain proved that the relations between the two parties had been severed. Palin anticipated, however, the possibility that Tilea's remaining on his own risks in Britain may be useful in case Antonescu's pro-Axis policy will prove to be a failure.⁶³

The comprehension of the common interests of the two countries made the relation between Romania and Finland develop very rapidly after the beginning of the Eastern Campaign. M. Antonescu underlined in his instructions to the Romanian envoy in Helsinki of October 6 the excellent cooperation and the concerted diplomatic action between the two states. He requested the envoy to meet the Finnish Foreign Minister and reiterate Romania's desire to keep alive this **uniform action** in the Russian question and in the territorial issues by reciprocally informing and supporting their programs and attempting to reach a common point of view on all issues.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² The activity of Tilea in London was puzzling the British authorities which were not always at ease with him. Special Operations Executive documents show that Tilea was in receipt of British funds while also keeping in contact with former King Charles II. Instead, the British wanted for a while a Romanian Committee being set up in London representing Iuliu Maniu, see A/D.3 to A/D 4 of 23.02.1942, The National Archives (hereafter PRO) HS 5/765 (SOE Romania political groups and freedom movements).

⁶³ Palin's report no. 32 of 1.09.1941, UA, 5, C 14.

The Romanian vice-PM again emphasized that: "The action of constituting the northern respectively the southern wings of the Russian border is imposed by the geography of our permanent interests." The Romanian chief of diplomacy also informed his envoy that he had drafted a program in order to hastily rocket up the Romanian propaganda in Finland. In addition to the political, cultural and propaganda cooperation, M. Antonescu also envisaged the expansion of the economic relations between the two countries. Romania had already placed orders of ammunition and war materials in Finland and aimed at intensifying the commercial exchanges.⁶⁴

In fact, the relation with Finland was part of M. Antonescu's grand design by which he tried to draw all resources of the European continent against Russia. Germany's satellites such as Slovakia, Croatia, the Reich's informal allies such as Finland, Romania and Hungary, the Vichy France were considered as being driven by a common interest in achieving the Axis plans to bring about the defeat of Russia. For instance, at the end of August M. Antonescu approached the French envoy Jacques Truelle with regard to what he saw as the Slavic danger and the Russian imperialism. Antonescu pointed to Germany's superior military power but he did not avoid mentioning the great population reservoir at Russian disposal. Therefore, he drew the conclusion that what was needed was a European unified position so as the Russians would not again be able to confront Europe with a new danger. Answering his concerns and proposals, Truelle pointed to the difficult situation of his country pressed in-between Scylla and Carybda, namely the German occupation and the British uncompromising attitude. Although accepting the fact that an anti-Russian program was needed, Truelle did not answer to his interlocutor's subtle suggestion and even stressed out his opinion that the Balkan Slavs were to be compromised with.⁶⁵ This conversation made plain the rift between the two states in this regard which was partly a result of geography. Situated in Western Europe, for France the two great powers influencing its external environment were Germany and Britain, while Romania, situated on the other edge of Europe, was marred by other scenarios. In this respect, political geography was important, and while it divided the interests of Romania and the Vichy France, it created the solidarity of the Romanian-Finnish relations.

⁶⁴ Mihai Antonescu's instructions to Helsinki of 6 October 1941, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

⁶⁵ Mihai Antonescu's minutes of the conversation of 29.08.1941 with the envoy of France, Truelle, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 94-96.

In his instructions for Helsinki dictated on November 16, M. Antonescu asked Constantinide to approach the Finnish PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He advanced to the Finnish officials the proposal of sorting out the common interests and issues for peace as soon as possible and not leaving this action for the time of peace. He considered that the two friendly governments had to find in cooperation the political and diplomatic solutions for future peace, as well as economic ways of collaboration. The Romanian vice-PM transmitted his opinion that the small and lesser European states had to find common formulas to prepare themselves for the time when the Great Powers would decide upon the final terms of the peace. The Romanian official was particularly interested in concrete forms of cooperation between the two countries.⁶⁶

In the meantime, by September the Finnish troops had registered important military gains marked by the liberation of the towns of Viipuri and Petroskoi, the reaching of Lake Onega and the cutting off of the Murmansk railway. Thus, the Russian troops, still located in Eastern Karelia, maintained their link with mainland Russia only through the strip of land situated in-between Lake Onega and the White Sea. The Finnish war operations, anticipated Constantinide, would be directed towards closing this connection and clearing the ground of Soviet troops before reaching their final war objectives. Eventually, the Finnish Army will adopt a defensive stand.⁶⁷ The frontline will remain stagnant during November, but in December the Russians retreated from Hanko thus avoiding the turning thereof into a new Gibraltar and allowing the numerous Finnish forces to be freed for being used on the main front.⁶⁸

When predicting the Finnish war intentions, Constantinide based his assumptions on Väinö Tanner's declarations of September 14, which he considered an accurate statement of Finnish war objectives. The social-democratic leader underscored in his speech five principles regarding the Finnish pursuit of war: Finland did not intend to conclude a separate peace; this country struggled in a local and separate war, not a part of the war among the great powers; the Finnish-Soviet war was a continuation of the Winter War; it was only by chance in a brotherhood-in-arms relation with Germany; and as a democratic state, it did not fight an ideological war

⁶⁶ M. Antonescu's instructions for Helsinki dictated on 16.11.1941 and ciphered and sent to Constantinide on 21.XI.1941 AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

⁶⁷ Constantinide's report no. 93 of 1.10.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 345-349.

⁶⁸ Constantinide's report no. 221 of 5.12.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 13, 59-63.

against democracy. As the Romanian envoy correctly understood it, the speech was released because it sought to deny the allegations about a separate peace Finland was ready to conclude and to alleviate the fears of the public opinion that the Finnish Army was going to fight a general war against Russia whereby it might suffer additional casualties, hunger, sufferance and the loss of its democratic edifice. Constantinide claimed in his reports that his discussions with German personalities made it clear that Germany accepted the Finnish war program and their political democratic regime.⁶⁹

Facing common challenges, Romania wanted to emphasize the common attitudes of the two countries. Well-acquainted with Finnish position from the diplomatic reports, Antonescu approached Palin in order to point out to the Romanian moderate political behaviour and to ask for Finland as a brother-in-arms, showing sympathy to the fighting of Romania.⁷⁰

The Finns used every opportunity to stress out the separate character of their struggle, parallel but not part of the Axis. The Anglo-American demarches and the prudence of the government gave pace to rumours reported by Constantinide in his diplomatic dispatches regarding alleged dissensions between Mannerheim, who wanted an energetic continuation of the military operations, and the government willing to make all efforts to stop the advance of the armies towards Murmansk and St. Petersburg in order not to provoke the Western Powers.⁷¹ Even the adherence to the Anticomintern Pact was described by Finnish top officials up to foreign minister Witting as only the fulfilment of a formality lacking any political or practical consequences. Nevertheless, Constantinide anticipated that there were only a few possibilities that Finland will remain in this "neutrality" vis-à-vis the Great Powers and sooner or later she will

⁶⁹ Constantinide's report no. 93 of 1.10.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 345-349.

⁷⁰ Palin's dispatch no. 181/160 of 19.11.1941, KA Witting C11a.

⁷¹ This is not documented. However, in his memoirs, Mannerheim admits that "critical voices" had risen against the crossing of Finland's historical frontiers - as it did happen also in Romania, but affirms that military calculations had to prevail in establishing on where the defence line should be fixed. Yet he insists upon his determination that Leningrad and the Murmansk railway were not to come under attack by Finnish troops in order to undermine Soviet arguments that an independent Finland constituted a threat to the USSR's second important city, Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, *Memorii* (București: Editura Militară, 2003), 290.

be forced to her regret to choose sides.⁷² When in September Roosevelt delivered a speech to the youth conference by which he mixed Finland with the other allies of Germany that shed the blood of their youth for Hitler's ambitions, it was certainly unpleasant for the Finns who for such a long time and with such insistence had stressed the separate character of their struggle. The Finnish envoy to Bern Tapio Voionmaa, however, reported that despite this affirmation, the Swiss press acknowledged the difference between the Finnish independent struggle and the war between the Great Powers. The interest for Finland was still alive as well as the warm sympathy, while the attitude towards Hungary or Romania was cool.⁷³ This report thus contrasted the foreign policy lines of Finland and Romania, again emphasizing Helsinki's cautious, autonomous orientation.

The nature of the two countries' relations with Germany was a matter of interest and analysis for their diplomatic representatives. Palin was astonished by a speech of Manfred von Killinger of October 1941 regarding the treatment of the German minority in Romania. He noticed the uncovered way in which the Germans understood to support Antonescu and to encourage the participation of the Romanians in the war. In tackling in his speech topics such as the war, the economic relations between the two states, the oil and political issues, von Killinger unveiledly interfered in the Romanian domestic life. The speech produced bitterness in the opposition circles while the governmental circles assessed his statements as reflecting the friendly feelings of the German envoy towards Romania.⁷⁴ This was a price Romania, as a small and lesser country, was compelled to pay for gaining influence on the international arena. Palin's surprise highlighted once more the differences between the two countries' choices in their foreign policy.

Despite some incongruence in their foreign policy lines, the two foreign ministries continued to obey their gentlemen's agreement regarding the reciprocal information and cooperation as regards the developments taking place on the international arena. The German

⁷² Constantinide's report no. 221 of 5.12.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 13, 59-63.

⁷³ 'In such infortunate countries as Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Italy, whose governments have found it necessary to submit to Hitler and to do his biddings, the quislings have organized youth movements too - but those are only movements of the youth by the tens of thousands to the slaughter of the eastern front where the Nazis need cannon fodder in their desperate attempts to shatter the stalwart Russian Army', see Voionmaa's dispatch no. 46 of 15.09.1942, UA 5C 31.

⁷⁴ Palin's report no. 34 of 8.10.1941. UA, 5, C 14

government's proposal of joining the Anti-Comintern Pact⁷⁵ was judged by Finland and Romania according to their own interests, but they kept each other privy to their decision-making process. Accordingly, Raoul Bossy reported on November 18 from Berlin that his Finnish colleague had informed him on the fact that the Finnish Government did not adopt a decision regarding this proposal, first made by Japan in the summer. His Finnish colleague anticipated however that because the pact did not represent a treaty of alliance but an anti-Bolshevik manifestation, it was hard for his government to refuse to do so. If the invitation would have regarded instead the adherence to the Tripartite Pact⁷⁶ the Finnish envoy anticipated that his Government would have refused to accept it as his country did not want to join a political constellation but to defend its own interests. The Finnish envoy also quoted a German high official who pointed out to the difference between Romanian and Finnish stands vis-à-vis Germany: "Finland fights for her borders and her struggle is parallel with ours, while Romania fights for the common cause and we struggle shoulder by shoulder the same war."⁷⁷

In the decision-making process for joining the Anti-Comintern Pact, M. Antonescu insisted on being informed on the Finnish position before practically adhering to it due to the fact that Germany had pointed out to him Finland's acceptance of the German invitation. The Romanian vice-PM was not very happy about German government's proposition.⁷⁸ Palin confirmed on November 22 on behalf of foreign minister Witting the fact that his country had indeed agreed to adhere to the Anti-Comintern Pact. Palin also conveyed his foreign minister's wish to meet the Romanian vice-

⁷⁵ The agreement was signed initially by Germany and Japan (to which Italy and later Hungary, Manchuko and Spain had adhered) in November 1936 providing for the exchange information on the activities of Soviet-backed international communist parties. Romania and Finland adhered to it at its fifth anniversary in a large group of states comprising also Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Wang Ching-wei's government in Nanking and Slovakia, "Anti-Comintern pact" *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Ed. I. C. B. Dear and M. R. D. Foot. Oxford University Press, 2001. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Turku University. 4 November

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⁷⁶ The Tripartite Pact, negotiated in Tokyo and signed in Berlin on September 27, 1940 by Germany, Italy, and Japan included the promise of mutual aid if any one of the signatories was attacked by a power not already involved in the European war. Romania was already a signatory of the Tripartite Pact from November 23, 1940.

⁷⁷ Bossy's telegram 340/42106 of 18.11.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 14.

⁷⁸ Copy after S. Palasto's secret telegram of 19.11.1941, KA Väinö Tannerin kokoelma VAY 1739, 178.

PM in Berlin and approach in their conversation the international situation.⁷⁹

The meeting between M. Antonescu and Witting, the only such high level summit between the two states' officials in the course of the war, took place on November 27 in Berlin occasioned by the two countries' adhering to the Anti-Comintern Pact. The conversation of the two foreign ministers touched upon the international situation and on the relations between the two states. A special attention was paid to the Romanian-Finnish concerted attitude regarding Russia by means of which the two leaders of the diplomacies emphasized their common stand. They referred to the initiative of M. Antonescu to get closer to Finland after the Finnish-Soviet war broke out on June 25. No new agreements were reached during the discussion, but the two chiefs of diplomacies have clearly stated their desire to intensify the **political intimacy** between their states, Witting pointing once more to their **identity of interests**. Furthermore, the Finnish foreign minister highly appreciated Palin's efforts in this direction. Witting also pledged himself to provide M. Antonescu with all the important Finnish data, information and decisions in order for the consultation with Romania to be able to generate a common viewpoint of the two countries, regarding the territorial questions as well as the Russian issues. They also pledged to remain loyal friends.⁸⁰

On his return from Berlin, M. Antonescu invited Palin to the Foreign Ministry in order to express his satisfaction in what the conversation with Witting was concerned. The vice-PM also informed about his interviews with Hitler in which Finnish issues were approached, with Hitler displaying a great deal of respect for Finland's just cause and assuring that all her desires in the new Europe will be fulfilled. Furthermore, Antonescu spoke again about the parallelism between Romania and Finland.⁸¹

The Finnish joining the Pact took place without any enthusiasm being displayed by the Finnish authorities, whereby the latter even underlined that this was a mere formality.⁸² In contrast, the Romanian

⁷⁹ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of 22.11.1941, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 301.

⁸⁰ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Rolf Witting of 27.11.1941, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 307, AMAE Finlanda, vol. 17, 35.

⁸¹ Palin's dispatch no. 197 of 1.12.1941, KA Witting C11a.

⁸² Constantinide's report no. 221 of 5.12.1941 to Mihai Antonescu, AMAE 71 Finlanda, vol. 2, 350-354.

press was more enthusiastic about the consolidation of the Romanian-German relations as a result of this adherence.

The two states informed each other regarding their positions towards the British ultimatum delivered to them. M. Antonescu tackled this issue with Palin on November 31.⁸³ A week later Palin approached the foreign minister on the same issue underlining the similarity of the responses of the two states to the British ultimatum.⁸⁴ According to his dispatch to Helsinki, M. Antonescu read him during the interview a document according to which Romania's engagement in the war represented a defensive struggle against the Soviet aggression that had started back in 1940. Romania's request for Dniester as the eastern border was once again stressed and it was this aim that made it impossible for the Romanians to accede to British demands. The document accused Britain for not fulfilling her extensive promises for guarantees.⁸⁵

Britain's war declaration against Finland, Romania and Hungary was the outcome of these months of tensions. The war declaration against Finland was commented by the Romanian press. *Timpul* published an article about the séance of annual closing of Eduskunta in which President Ryti had observed that the front with the Red Army had become calm and that despite his country's efforts to preserve peace Britain had declared war on Finland and started a propaganda campaign against it. Ryti contrasted British attitude to that of Germany, Italy and Hungary who, in a difficult alimentary situation, had granted a big help to his country.⁸⁶

The Japanese surprise attack on the American bases in the Pacific and the war declarations of Axis countries against the US brought the greatest financial power of the world in the war on the side of the UK and the USSR. If the Romanian and Finnish position as regards the British ultimatums resembled to a large extent, their attitude in this respect differed. Palin made it clear to M. Antonescu that there could be no agreement between Romania and Finland in this respect as his country was not a signatory of the Tripartite Pact and considered itself free from any obligations to this effect.⁸⁷

⁸³ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of 31.11.1941, AMAE Finlanda, vol. 17, 36.

⁸⁴ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of 7.12.1941, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 364.

⁸⁵ Palin's dispatch no. 207/1999 of 7.12.1941, KA Witting C11a.

⁸⁶ *Timpul* of 26.01.1942.

⁸⁷ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of 15.12.1941, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 390.

The end of 1941 brought with it the halt of German offensive and the failure of the Wehrmacht's ambition to defeat the Soviet Union in a blitzkrieg. This fed the rumours that Finland was suing for a separate peace. In order to convince the Romanian side of the absurdity of these allegations, the Finnish envoy read in presence of M. Antonescu a confidential note by means of which the Finnish President and his Foreign Minister informed the Romanian Government that Finland had never taken into consideration the idea of a separate peace. The note stated that Finland was prepared to adhere spiritually to some of the European transformations. The country had joined the German struggle in order to save her territory and existence and a struggle for honour only ends with a peace of honour. The note also stressed that the **action of concert** between the two states initiated by M. Antonescu and agreed upon by the two countries had remained as a directive of the Finnish Government.⁸⁸

Another issue of interest for the two countries was the plans for the 1942 military campaign. Palin reported from Bucharest that in the aftermath of its bloody occupation of Odessa⁸⁹, Romania intended to demobilize round 30% of her existing forces, to continue taking part in the war with six brigades, while four-five divisions will remain as forces of occupation over the Dniester. These troops supplemented the forces to be maintained at the border with Hungary. Half of the effective was to be accorded supplementary instructions with the help of the Germans in Moldova.⁹⁰ Indeed, the end of the campaign in Odessa appeared to signal the end of the large-scale participation of the Romanian troops on the eastern front. This was further augmented by the referendum organized by

⁸⁸ Minutes of the conversation between Mihai Antonescu and Palin of 11.11.1941, ANIC, The Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 344/1941, 270-271.

⁸⁹ The battle was already lagging behind the schedule when the Soviet fleet's first amphibious operation took place on September 22 by which 2,000 naval troops landed behind the Romanian Army besieging Odessa. Co-ordinated with a small parachute drop, it forced the Romanian Army to abandon the positions from which they were bombarding the port. The Soviets were nevertheless forced to evacuate the town between October 1 and 16 in a "small Dunkirk" in order to prevent the capture of Sevastopol by General Erich von Manstein. No less than 86,000 soldiers, 15,000 civilians, 1,000 lorries, 20,000 tons of ammunition, 400 guns were evacuated, John Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 211.

⁹⁰ Palin's report no. 38 of 10.10.1941. UA, 5, C 14.

Marshal Antonescu in October in which he asked the people's opinion of his leadership.⁹¹

Given the shared interest of the two parties for their future military plans, an exchange of views took place in Bucharest and Helsinki. M. Antonescu informed the Finns in the second half of November of the Romanian government's intention to stop taking part alongside Germany in the campaign of further east. Yet he pointed out that though a gradual demobilization of the army was envisaged – the demobilization of 200,000 men had already taken place – the Romanian troops will remain as troops of occupation in the regions of Transnistria and Odessa.⁹² The Finnish Foreign Ministry also informed that the Finnish intention was to return to the borders of 1939, a territory where it had already introduced normal civil administration, whereas the captured territories over the former border were maintained under military administration.⁹³ Mannerheim also answered to Romanian preoccupations with the Finnish military future plans by letting Antonescu know that the Finnish High Command intended, after the capture of St. Petersburg, to discharge the recruits of the older age classes while the members of the younger age classes will remain as troops of occupation.⁹⁴

Conclusions

This study leads to two main conclusions. First, the relations between the two states headed from the statute of **"allies without alliance"** relationship based on **balance of power** towards **joint decision** in some areas although these pledges were only partly fulfilled due to undesirable war evolutions. The shift from balance of power towards joint decision started in July with the action of concert proposed by M. Antonescu and speeded in September by the Finnish final approval of the scheme. The impulse of cooperating on these grounds came to Romania and Finland consented more or less enthusiastically. In their main advocate M. Antonescu's conception, the relations with Finland were part of a grand design aimed at strengthening the influence and small and lesser states at the future peace conference to be open in the aftermath of a German

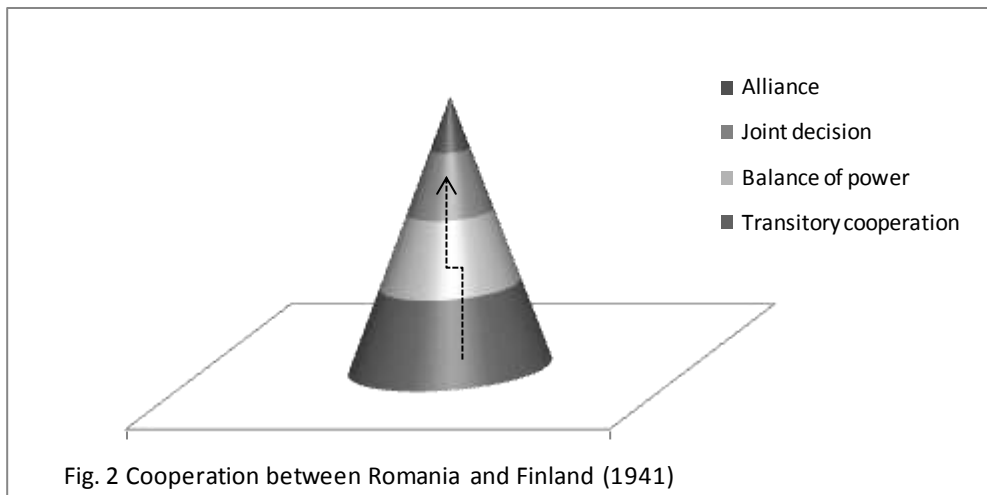
⁹¹ Not surprisingly, the support for Antonescu's policies was expressed by 3,446,889 citizens as opposed to 68 who expressed their opposition to his policies. This was followed by a proclamation of the marshal to the country, Palin's report no. 41 of 28.10.1941. UA, 5, C 14.

⁹² W. Schreck's telegram no. 180/103 of 19.11.1941 to V. Tanner, KA Väinö Tannerin kokoelma VAY 1739.

⁹³ Ivalo's dispatch no. Y 100 of 3.11.1941, KA Witting C11a.

⁹⁴ Ivalo's dispatch no. Y 113 of 22.12.1941 to Palin, KA Witting C11a.

victory. His conception was shared, at least insofar as the reconfiguration of Russian polity is concerned, by some of the most influential members of the Finnish political elite such as President Ryti and foreign minister Witting and by the envoy to Bucharest Palin. Nevertheless, the Finnish side was generally more prudent in handling these issues, both due to the different political regime and to some differences in the war strategies and aims of the two countries.



Second, while both countries were facing the **small and lesser powers dilemma** by not being capable to exercise influence on the international arena simultaneously maintaining their autonomy of decision, Romania placed more emphasis on striving for influence and Finland on aiming to maintain its autonomy. While Finland was mostly driven in her pursuit of war by the desire to regain its lost territories and to shorten the frontier with Russia in order to ease its defence, Romania's strivings only partly overlapped with those of the Nordic country. In addition to the reintegration of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina and to the occupation of Transnistria, Romania's primary aim was the reintegration of "the heart" of Romania, the part of Transylvania lost to Hungary with Axis' help. Only the main author of this decision, i.e. Germany, was considered capable of reversing it, and therefore Bucharest wanted to influence Berlin in this regard. Hitler was aware of this and therefore he skilfully played Romania and Hungary against each other. Moreover, as a democratic country with a larger measure of consensus, Hitler did not possess such a lever against Finland as he did in the case of Romania where he maintained the extreme

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right legionnaires in reserve in case the Romanian government failed to raise to his expectations. Thus, Finland was able to avoid declaring war against the US as opposed to Romania. Despite these differences, Finland also attempted to increase its influence in Berlin and Romania to preserve its autonomy, but the emphasis is different.

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