



Integrated Country Strategy

Finland

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

In this era of resurgent strategic competition when Russia and China seek greater influence in Europe and the Arctic, Finland is a pillar of stability, good-governance, and prosperity on Europe's northeastern border. Strongly independent and fully committed to global peace and security, it pursues its interests through leveraging networks, bilateral relations, and multilateral institutions. Together with a staunch commitment to the European Union, Finland increasingly counts upon a strong relationship with the United States for its security and regional stability. The United States benefits from this deepening partnership with Finland, through security cooperation and through Finland's like-minded pursuit of many of the economic policy choices that we, as Americans, also desire. There is no better time for building upon this opportunity.

What the United States brings to Finland and the partnership we create will shape the future of significant parts of the transatlantic relationship. U.S. strategic choices here will strengthen our ability to neutralize Russian attempts to undermine democratic institutions, halt Chinese efforts to turn Europe away from the Atlantic, expand freer trade and global integration for prosperity and jobs, and combine a complementary set of policies to further mutual interests in the European Union, the Arctic, and throughout the world.

This plan outlines objectives and the actions that this embassy and its talented officers and local staff members will take to realize the President's goals for the nation: securing our borders, realizing prosperity for all Americans, pursuing peace through strength, and continuing U.S. leadership to advance our interests around the world.

Our first strategic priority is building a strong security partnership that anchors northern Europe. This mission will support all possible paths to interoperability, from defense sales to joint planning, and to strengthening a mutual ability to defend our democratic societies against conventional and unconventional threats. We are mindful that Finland's unique perspective on Russia contributes significantly to that effort.

Secondly, this mission will invest in the future of this strong bilateral partnership, actively pursuing trade, investment, and next-generation innovation by linking U.S. and Finnish companies, expanding youth and academic exchanges, and using cultural activities that attract and ignite collaboration.

Finally, we prioritize a global partnership with Finland founded in shared values and related policies, to address issues that have no borders, including stewardship in the Arctic, counterterrorism, and a new model for development and humanitarian assistance that fosters strong people and vibrant economies instead of dependence.

It is a privilege to lead this mission as we protect Americans and American interests overseas, economically and effectively. Our consular efforts and management will continue to seek the best from our people and technology to ensure we have the foundation to carry out our ambitions and our responsibilities in public service.

Robert Frank Pence, Ambassador

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Security: Finland increases its contributions to European and regional security.

Mission Objective 1.1: Finland deepens and increases practical defense cooperation and collaboration with the United States and draws closer to NATO by fully utilizing its Enhanced Opportunity Partner status, while ensuring EU and NATO cooperation on security and defense enhances NATO's deterrent posture in Europe and addresses broader global challenges.

Mission Objective 1.2: Finland remains aligned with U.S. policy towards Russia, including on sanctions, and acts in concert with U.S. efforts to assist democratic states in Eastern Europe develop resiliency and strong institutions based on rule of law.

Mission Goal 2: Invest in the Future: Investments in the connections between the United States and Finland reinforce public support for policy goals and mutual economic benefits, strengthen goodwill, and maintain the relationship into the future.

Mission Objective 2.1: Trade and investment between the United States and Finland increase as a result of Embassy support for innovation and entrepreneurship, and our effective use of tools to promote U.S. exports and to attract FDI to the United States (e.g. FCS services, SelectUSA).

Mission Objective 2.2: Finland supports U.S. efforts aimed at promoting a free, fair, and reciprocal economic relationship with Europe, countering unfair trade practices, and modernizing the rules of a fair and reciprocal economic order.

Mission Objective 2.3: Engage Finnish officials to advance U.S. interests in the EU and the Eurozone, in particular those interests related to Brexit and energy security, focusing on the Finnish Presidency of the European Council.

Mission Objective 2.4: People-to-people ties between the United States and Finland across all sectors and demographics expand as a result of exchange programs and embassy engagement with Finnish institutions, civil society, and alumni of U.S. government programs, in order to sustain the foundations for long-term bilateral relations and global partnership.

Mission Goal 3: Global Partnerships. Finland advances shared priorities for the Arctic and strengthens engagement on global issues of concern to the United States including counterterrorism, crisis management, and development cooperation.

Mission Objective 3.1: Finland remains a strategic partner in promoting Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship, environmentally-responsible economic development, and a rules-based international framework that governs activities in the Arctic. Finland works with the United States to prevent unilateral efforts by others to restrict access to or dominate a region important for U.S. and Finnish security and economic growth.

Mission Objective 3.2: Finland's close alignment with the United States on environmental policy goals leads to the development of programs and activities that advance cleantech research, the development of alternative energies, especially in the biofuel area, and mitigation strategies for the effects of rising seas and warmer temperatures in the Arctic Region.

Mission Objective 3.3: Intensified U.S.-Finnish cooperation on counterterrorism, countering violent extremism, and crisis management leads to Finland's sustained engagement in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS and the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, cooperation on information exchanges, and enhanced Visa Waiver Program (VWP) security.

Mission Objective 3.4: As a result of consultation and collaboration with the United States, Finland remains engaged on global issues that promote shared security and prosperity, retaining its traditional high level of support and commitment to development, human rights, religious freedom, women's empowerment, peacekeeping, and crisis management operations.

Management Objective 1: A safe and secure working environment and suitable housing profile ensure improved morale and increased productivity throughout the Mission.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Security. Finland increases its contributions to European and regional security.

Description and Linkages: Resolutely independent, Finland has a complicated history and relationship with Russia, with whom it also shares the longest land border in the EU. Given the evolving security situation in the Baltic Sea region, Finland is actively increasing its complementary security activities with the United States and other partners in the region to maintain stability. Embassy efforts will support U.S. and Finnish policy approaches to deepen our strategic partnership and will ensure that we meet the EUR Joint Regional Strategy goals of strengthening the Western alliance and securing and stabilizing the eastern frontier.

Mission Objective 1.1: Finland deepens and increases practical defense cooperation and collaboration with the United States and draws closer to NATO by fully utilizing its Enhanced Opportunity Partner status, while ensuring EU and NATO cooperation on security and defense enhances NATO's deterrent posture in Europe and addresses broader global challenges.

Justification: Russia will continue to loom large in Finland's economy and foreign policy. Moscow's aggression threatens European security with unique consequences for Finland, which shares a long border, substantial trade relations, and a complicated history with Russia. Finland deepening its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the United States, and mentoring other EU member states on integrated security, will bolster Europe against Russian aggression and other new security challenges. Finland's upcoming investments in defense capabilities present significant opportunities for increased interoperability and the U.S. defense industry.

Mission Objective 1.2: Finland remains aligned with U.S. policy towards Russia, including on sanctions, and acts in concert with U.S. efforts to assist democratic states in Eastern Europe develop resiliency and strong institutions based on rule of law.

Justification: As one of the EU member states neighboring Russia, Finland has a unique relationship and interconnections with its larger neighbor. It is a stalwart supporter of U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia and, due to Russian counter-sanctions, has borne the brunt of the economic consequences. The country has lessons to offer on remaining independent and committed to Western values while also maintaining stable relations with its neighbor. Finland has built a society resistant to outside malign influence that is a source of strength for the EU, and can usefully share those experiences in helping to build broader resilience in Europe.

Mission Goal 2: Invest in the Future. Investments in the connections between the United States and Finland reinforce public support for policy goals and mutual economic benefits, strengthen goodwill, and maintain the relationship into the future.

Description and Linkages: Relations between the United States and Finland have never been stronger. Our continued engagement with government and business leaders, academic and civil society institutions, and alumni of people-to-people exchanges will reinforce our economic ties with a key partner (National Security Strategy, pg. 34), while creating and expanding “the networks of current and future leaders who will extend a free and prosperous world.” (National Security Strategy, pg. 33).

Mission Objective 2.1: Trade and investment between the United States and Finland increase as a result of Embassy support for innovation and entrepreneurship, and our effective use of tools to promote U.S. exports and to attract FDI to the United States (e.g. FCS services, SelectUSA).

Justification: As part of the overall effort to increase U.S. exports and related jobs, the Embassy’s commercial outreach will increase opportunities for trade and investment between our countries, focusing on Finland’s vibrant startup scene and our shared strengths in knowledge-based industries.

Mission Objective 2.2: Finland supports U.S. efforts aimed at promoting a free, fair, and reciprocal economic relationship with Europe, countering unfair trade practices, and modernizing the rules of a fair and reciprocal economic order.

Justification: Finland is a small but open economy dependent on imports and exports and vested in the global free trade system. U.S.-Finnish trade has been increasing over the past several years. Embassy commercial and economic outreach will continue to advance discussions on trade policy and identify priority areas for advocacy.

Mission Objective 2.3: Engage Finnish officials to advance U.S. interests in the EU and the Eurozone, in particular those interests related to Brexit and energy security, focusing on the Finnish Presidency of the European Council.

Justification: Finland will hold the rotating European Council Presidency in the second half of 2019, immediately following European elections and during the timeframe when the new slate of European Commissioners will be formulated and a new European Parliament will be seated. It is also the period immediately following the UK departure from the Union, which will strain EU institutions. Finland will need to actively build greater EU cohesion in the face of likely disagreement among member states over the Multiannual Financial Framework, measures to protect against another financial crisis, and regional energy infrastructure. Other recurring or emerging challenges, such as migration, have the potential to polarize domestic political discussions and detract from the consensus support for Mission security and economic goals.

Mission Objective 2.4: People-to-people ties between the United States and Finland across all sectors and demographics expand as a result of exchange programs and embassy engagement with Finnish institutions, civil society, and alumni of U.S. government programs, in order to sustain the foundations for long-term bilateral relations and global partnership.

Justification: Significant investments in exchanges and cultural and educational programming created a growing network of alumni with a greater understanding of the United States. These individuals form the basis of what the National Security Strategy calls “networks of current and future leaders who will extend a free and prosperous world.” The Embassy’s continued and expanded investment in these networks will help forge even stronger ties between our countries.

Mission Goal 3: Global Partnerships. Finland advances shared priorities for the Arctic and strengthens engagement on global issues of concern to the United States including counterterrorism, crisis management, and development cooperation.

Description and Linkages: We have a unique opportunity to highlight our perspectives and to forge closer bonds on Arctic issues with Finland during the remainder of its 2017-2019 Chairmanship, and during the handover to the Icelandic Chairmanship, of the Arctic Council. Our Arctic cooperation with the Finns will address National Strategy for the Arctic Region goals of positioning the United States to respond effectively in the Arctic while strengthening international cooperation in the region. It will also contribute to achieving the EUR Joint Regional Strategy goals of strengthening the Western alliance, preserving Western democratic principles, and ensuring effectiveness and accountability. Although it is a small country, Finland is actively engaged on the global stage and with international efforts to counter terrorism and address the underlying conditions that contribute to its spread.

Mission Objective 3.1: Finland remains a strategic partner in promoting Arctic Ocean safety, security and stewardship, environmentally-responsible economic development, and a rules-based international framework that governs activities in the Arctic. Finland works with the United States to prevent unilateral efforts by others to restrict access to or dominate a region important for U.S. and Finnish security and economic growth.

Justification: Arctic issues gained prominence on the bilateral agenda as the United States handed off the two-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council to Finland in 2017. Close coordination on shared priorities for the Arctic, including science and technology, will ensure U.S. interests are reflected in the Council’s future work amid growing interest in the economic and security dimensions of the Arctic from states in the region and beyond.

Mission Objective 3.2: Finland's close alignment with the United States on environmental policy goals leads to the development of programs and activities that advance cleantech research, the development of alternative energies, especially in the biofuel area, and mitigation strategies for the effects of rising seas and warmer temperatures in the Arctic Region.

Justification: Finland and the United States are committed to maximizing the use of cleantech, alternative energy development, and environmental mitigation strategies to meet our joint goals in the Arctic. The impact of these efforts build on synergies between our business and research communities and fulfill the National Strategy for the Arctic Region goal of pursuing responsible Arctic region stewardship.

Mission Objective 3.3: Intensified U.S.-Finnish cooperation on counterterrorism, countering violent extremism, and crisis management leads to Finland's sustained engagement in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS and the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, cooperation on information exchanges, and enhanced Visa Waiver Program (VWP) security.

Justification: Finland is a strong partner in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS, contributing political support, participating in the foreign terrorist fighters working group, and deploying military and police trainers to Iraq. At the same time, returning foreign fighters or individuals radicalized in Finland (including those recruited on the far right) are increasing the risk of terrorism on Finnish soil. Intensified U.S.-Finnish cooperation will ensure sustained and increased contributions to the counter-ISIL coalition and domestic counterterrorism reforms to increase security in both countries. CA's mission is to "protect the lives and interests of U.S. citizens overseas." By honestly assessing the Mission's ability to respond to crises, Post will be in a better position to effectively support U.S. citizens in Finland in times of national or personal emergencies. Executive Order 13780 required the Department to "review all nonimmigrant visa reciprocity agreements and arrangements to ensure that they are, with respect to each visa classification, truly reciprocal insofar as practicable with respect to validity period and fee." Presidential Proclamation 9645 states that, "it is the policy of the United States to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks and other public-safety threats," and "information-sharing and identity-management protocols and practices of foreign governments are important for the effectiveness of the screening and vetting protocols and procedures of the United States." Under the Proclamation, the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Department of State and other agencies, must report regularly to the President on the status of foreign government performance against baseline information-sharing and identity-management criteria. Nationals of countries deemed deficient in these areas may be subject to entry and visa restrictions under the Proclamation

Mission Objective 3.4: As a result of consultation and collaboration with the United States, Finland remains engaged on global issues that promote shared security and prosperity,

retaining its traditional high level of support and commitment to development, human rights, religious freedom, women's empowerment, peacekeeping, and crisis management operations.

Justification: Finland is a key partner for the United States on a range of global issues critical to safeguard American values and where the security of the United States is at stake. By channeling Finland's desire for a more effective foreign engagement policy, the opportunity exists to advance targeted goals from women's empowerment, to combatting biothreats, to peacekeeping in fragile states.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: A safe and secure working environment and suitable housing profile ensure improved morale and increased productivity throughout the Mission.

Justification: Cost effective measures, including new leasing arrangements, maintenance programs, and effective renovation projects, improve the condition of government-owned properties and the quality of available housing, keeping morale and productivity high.