

THE BOLSHEVIK? THE FAYMONVILLE CONTROVERSY IN THE 1930s AND  
1940s

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THE BOLSHEVIK?  
THE FAYMONVILLE CONTROVERSY IN THE 1930s AND 1940s

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. FAYMONVILLE IN THE 1930s.....	25
III. FAYMONVILLE IN THE 1940s.....	55
IV. CONCLUSION.....	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	84

## **ABSTRACT**

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Brigadier General Philip Faymonville is a controversial figure in the history of World War II. His services were highly valued by Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins even as he was reviled by those in the American Embassy in Moscow by both those in the State Department and the War Department. He may have been an effective overseer of Lend Lease operations in the Soviet Union and the sole attaché officer who predicted the eventual triumph of the Red Army, but he was still the target of accusations of communist sympathy and even working for the Soviets as their agent. The animosity grew so intense, in fact, that accusations of homosexual behavior were lofted at him in the campaign to have him removed from the Embassy in Moscow.



Fifty years after his death he remains a controversial figure and the subject of articles and portions of books. Though ultimately we will need to thoroughly investigate the Russian archives to get the best possible composite image of General Faymonville, in the meantime we can use what American sources we have to develop an image of him that can give us clues as to what his thinking was and determine if there was a valid point to the complaints of those working alongside Faymonville in the Embassy in Moscow. This will be the central theme of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

In March 1944, Henry Wallace, Franklin Roosevelt's vice-president, was planning to make a trip to China. He decided to take with him an officer recently assigned to an ordinance post at an Army post in Arkansas, one Colonel Philip Faymonville, to play an advisory role. When Wallace told General George Marshall of his plans, Marshall exploded and reportedly declared that "Faymonville was a representative of the Russians, not of the United States." This comment from such a high-ranking, well-known figure as General Marshall indicates how controversial Faymonville was, and how the controversy surrounding him reached the very highest levels of government.<sup>1</sup>

Today, the controversy that General Faymonville aroused occupies a very obscure corner of the history of American actions in World War II. Unless one is reading a great deal on Lend-Lease operations in the Soviet Union or one is delving into the history of, say, the American embassy in Moscow in the early days of the embassy's operations in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, one is not likely to ever see this name. He rates four mentions in Herman Wouk's historical

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<sup>1</sup> John Daniel Langer, "The Red General: Philip R. Faymonville and the Soviet Union, 1917-52". *Prologue* 8 (Winter 1976): 220.

fiction, *War and Remembrance*, but readers unfamiliar with the finer details of World War II history can be forgiven for thinking that Faymonville is an interloper as fictional as the novel's protagonists.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, echoes of the controversy can be found in various places. At the Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York, there is a file in the Tyler Kent papers that has a tab simply labeled "Philip Faymonville - Spy." Langer's article in the Winter 1976 edition of *Prologue* is called "The Red General." Other articles have been written concerning General Faymonville. These also address the controversy that seems to have overshadowed all else concerning him, including the title of "The General Who Called The Turn."

The controversy is simply this: was General Faymonville just a very loyal soldier doing the Roosevelt administration's bidding by maintaining friendly relations with various levels of the Soviet leadership? Was he perhaps a bit too helpful to the Soviet government - perhaps even having spied on its behalf? Finally, if neither of those two explanations are true, why did General Faymonville conduct himself as he did, first as an attaché officer in Moscow in the 1930s and then as the head of Lend-Lease operations in the Soviet Union in the 1940s? Did he cling to his long held notion that the Soviet Union was a natural ally of the United States in the event of a likely war against Japan too

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<sup>2</sup> Herman Wouk. *War and Remembrance* (1978; repr., New York, Back Bay Books, 2002), 622, 623, 639.

tightly? Or was he simply naive about the nature of the Soviet Union and the events that unfolded in that country in the 1930s and 1940s?

This paper will attempt to address these questions first by outlining what happened within the embassy and the Soviet Union in the 1930s when Faymonville was a Major, later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and sent to work in the embassy at Moscow as an attaché officer for the United States Army. Secondly, attention will shift to his days in Moscow as the head of Lend-Lease operations within the Soviet Union in the 1940s, initially as a Colonel and later as a Brigadier General. Finally, the paper concludes by determining based on all of the available evidence, where General Faymonville falls on the spectrum of Soviet sympathizers.

The sources used here consist of information gathered from the National Archive at College Park, Maryland, the Franklin Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, the Harry S Truman Presidential Library at Independence, Missouri,<sup>3</sup> the Library of Congress, and the *Foreign Relations Papers of the United States*. In addition, memoirs of those who worked in the embassy in Moscow during the 1930s and 1940s have been consulted, including the writings of Loy Henderson, Charles Bohlen, Admiral William Standley, and General John Deane. Additionally, various secondary sources were used. The secondary sources mostly consist of journal articles and these are quite important and will be

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<sup>3</sup> No physical visit was made to this library but material originating from this library was found on the Truman Library website.

reviewed below. There are several books that have been written on Lend-Lease operations in the Soviet Union and on the early days of the Moscow embassy's operations in the 1930s that are useful. In those texts one finds that Faymonville's name arises in different places, because it is difficult to write of either subject without mentioning him or his controversial tenures in the Moscow embassy.

Even now, as we rapidly approach the fiftieth anniversary of Faymonville's death, we have articles on Faymonville and brief mentions in other books. There is no full-length monograph on Faymonville, and only in recent years have historians been able to peer into the Russian archives to see what sources are available and what they say about him. The latter sources are sure to offer some light on the controversy and provide more complete answers to the questions posed above, but there is still no definite conclusion on Faymonville.

In terms of articles, the first significant one was written by Anatole Mazour for the *California Historical Society Quarterly*. Appearing in March 1963, fully one year after Faymonville's death, it is very respectful in tone, and presents a recap of the controversy from the 1930s and 1940s. It also features a rare glimpse into the reclusive personality of General Faymonville, which Mazour uncovers through conversations he had with him. These conversations reveal a dimension of Faymonville which make him very difficult to analyze. He never once responded to the controversy or commented on it in any way,

Mazour reported. Nonetheless, Mazour concluded that “as passions subside and personal sentiment give way to impartiality, the war year records and accounts of lend-lease aid to Russia during the crucial years will be revaluated, and Faymonville will appear in a different light, far more favorable than has been cast by current writers.”<sup>4</sup> This conclusion implied that Faymonville was already being cast in a negative light by various individuals at the time. Indeed, principal actors at the Moscow embassy such as Admiral William Standley were very critical of Faymonville and Standley even dedicated a chapter in his memoir, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, to chronicling the problems he had with Faymonville. There is a sense that Mazour’s comment was aimed at critics such as Standley. In fact, as we shall see later, Mazour was quite critical of the Standley memoir, in part due to Standley's criticism of Faymonville. In his own analysis, Mazour asserted that “his (Faymonville's) genuine patriotism, unquestionable integrity, and his unselfish devotion to civic affairs call for a well deserved tribute to an able soldier, administrator, citizen, and, above all, a Man in the noblest sense, Philip R. Faymonville.” This final paragraph to the article seems to be a summons for the next generation of historians to evaluate Faymonville in a more positive light in spite of the controversy surrounding the last half of his life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Anatole G. Mazour, "Philip R. Faymonville". *California Historical Society Quarterly* 42 (March 1963): 82.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 84. The capitalization of "Man" in the quote is Mazour's.

Nothing more was said about Faymonville for over a decade. Then, in September 1975, James S. Herndon and Joseph O. Baylen evaluated his years as the attaché officer in the Moscow Embassy in an article written for the *Slavic Review*. This second article is also quite important. It is, for the most part, a comparative analysis of the reports Faymonville sent to his superiors in the War Department and the Army and the reports generated by other attaché officers stationed at other posts adjacent to the Soviet Union as well as reports generated by other attaché officers that served other countries outside the Soviet sphere of influence. Their research indicates that in comparison to Faymonville's reports, other American attaché officers were much more pessimistic in their reports on the state of the Soviet military. The article also discussed Faymonville's reports in the context of the events that occurred in the Soviet Union at the time, as well as the development of the Red Army and its internal self-inflicted weakening courtesy of Stalin's purges. Both authors do concede that "it is difficult to evaluate Philip R. Faymonville" even thirty years after the conclusion of hostilities in the European theater. However, they seem to lean towards the view that though the reports he sent back to his superiors were "distinctly uncritical of the Soviet Union, the Stalinist regime, and the Red Army," these are balanced out by the fact that Faymonville practically stood alone in his prediction that the Soviet Union would not collapse within weeks of the commencement of Operation *Barbarossa*, and his accurate judgment that the Red Army would eventually defeat the *Wehrmacht*. Indeed, they considered his having clung to the

unpopular idea of eventual Soviet triumph as a courageous stance.<sup>6</sup>

Little more than a year later, John Daniel Langer wrote an article for *Prologue*, the quarterly publication of the National Archives and Records Administration, titled "The Red General: Philip R. Faymonville and the Soviet Union, 1917-52." The article, as its title implies, was more ambitious in scope, as it covers practically Faymonville's entire military career, even including his days as a officer stationed with the Army's expedition to Russia at the close of World War I. This third article, much like the one by Herndon and Baylen, is more sympathetic to Faymonville and it is also quite important. He did, in places, point out that Faymonville "misjudged" various occurrences in the Soviet Union at the time, such as the purges being conducted by Stalin in the late 1930s. However, while he pointed out that Faymonville's critics may have had a point, like Charles Bohlen, about Faymonville's alleged pro-Soviet leanings, Langer then cites analyses of Faymonville's that "Bohlen would have applauded."<sup>7</sup> Such observations in support, or at least in sympathy, of Faymonville dot the article. Langer's sympathy for Faymonville is at last made clear at the end of the article when he declared that, for the Roosevelt administration, "Faymonville made a good victim" and suggests that he "fought for his views but seemed too preoccupied to defend himself." He also states that Faymonville was in fact so single-minded in his opinions and duty that "he displayed an obliviousness to

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<sup>6</sup> James S. Herndon and Joseph O. Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville and the Red Army, 1934-43," *Slavic Review* 34 no. 3 (Sep. 1975): 504.

<sup>7</sup> Langer, "Red General": 212.



the opinions of the men around him that became self-destructive.” From comments such as these one can infer that Langer viewed Faymonville with sympathy but noted that in the end what brought him down was his own naïveté, if at least with respect to the embassy staff around him and senior Army officers. He also seemed to have suggested that the attacks on the unpopular Faymonville were a way for those in the embassy and elsewhere to signal their disapproval of the foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration, especially concerning policy towards the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup>

The controversy would not be revisited for another thirty years. Then, in January 2008, Mary Glantz had an article published in *The Journal of Military History* titled “An Officer and a Diplomat? The Ambiguous Position of Philip R. Faymonville and United States – Soviet Relations, 1941-1943.” As the title of this fourth article implies, its scope is limited to Faymonville’s service as the head of Lend-Lease operations in the embassy in Moscow in the first half of American involvement in World War II. She quoted the final paragraph of Mazour’s article, and she called it a “challenge to future historians” to correct a “historical injustice” Mazour seemed to hint at. She does so and makes no secret of where her sympathies lay in the last sentence of her first paragraph: “It is now time for a more dispassionate evaluation of this fascinating man and his unique role in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid: 221.

U.S.-Soviet relations." She calls this evaluation "long overdue."<sup>9</sup> It is clear from the outset, therefore, that she wished to paint Faymonville in a much more sympathetic light than any of her predecessors.

Mary Glantz is a Foreign Service officer in the employ of the State Department and it shows in her approach to the issue. For Glantz, the Faymonville controversy brings up questions concerning military officers serving in diplomatic roles and whether they should even be placed in such positions. She considered Faymonville an "outsider" whose position outside the diplomatic and military intelligence community was the result of him having worked in an unique organizational configuration. He held an "unprecedented" position that circumvented the chain of command; one which made him, at once, "a military officer, a diplomat, and a supply agent for the White House."<sup>10</sup> In one passage, she makes it clear that she considers Faymonville to be almost purely objective. One sentence simply states that unlike other attaché officers who looked upon the Soviet Union with hostility and contempt, Faymonville "was neither a passionate opponent nor an ardent supporter of the Soviet Union." Glantz states that Faymonville's observations of the Red Army in action "reinforced his assumption that (the Soviet Union) would be an important counterweight to Japanese power in the Pacific and German power in Europe." Thus, in her view, as Faymonville's reports on the Red Army and Soviet

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat? The Ambiguous Position of Philip R. Faymonville and United States-Soviet Relations, 1941-1943," *The Journal of Military History* 72 (January 2008) : 142.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: 143.

developments made his reports more objective and accurate than, say, intelligence reports composed by successive attaché officers.<sup>11</sup> In the end, Glantz concluded that Faymonville was guilty of but one crime, that of “enthusiastically implementing the instructions of the President of the United States.”<sup>12</sup>

Based on these four articles, one gets the sense that the mood among historians is shifting increasingly towards sympathy for General Faymonville. There are various books that mention the Faymonville controversy, but they do so only in passing, and typically these books deal with either Lend-Lease aid in the Soviet Union itself or they are biographies of contemporaries of General Faymonville in which Faymonville cannot escape mention. As stated before, no books exist that deal with Faymonville exclusively.

One great difficulty that will challenge the would-be researcher or historian when investigating the Faymonville controversy is the fact that very little evidence from the man himself is available. This is where the research at the National Archives, which have his reports on file and on microfilm, is invaluable. Any other evidence from Faymonville's hand will be hard to come by. Mary Glantz explains why in her article. In a footnote, she explains that an unnamed researcher heard from Faymonville's sister that "he was so bitter about the entire affair, he requested that she destroy his papers upon his death."<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, there are accounts available from those who worked alongside

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid: 164-165.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid: 177.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid: 142.

Faymonville, and these can shed light on what happened in the embassy. These can be found in the form of memoirs of such individuals as Charles Bohlen, Loy Henderson, and Admiral William Standley.

In 1955, Admiral William Standley published his memoirs, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*. In truth, Standley did much more than serve as ambassador to the Soviet Union. He served as the Chief of Naval Operations in the mid-1930s before retirement. His memoirs touch briefly on his naval career from the time he graduated from the Naval Academy to his time as the Chief of Naval Operations. More time is dedicated to his service as a member of the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission and later as the ambassador to the Soviet Union. However, the core of the book is, as its title suggests, dedicated to the issues Standley faced as ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Faymonville certainly figured into this account. It is as a member of the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission where Standley first encounters General Faymonville and where he is first mentioned. Standley has much more to say about Faymonville in the book, much of it quite critical. While he did not consider Faymonville to be a traitor or a subversive type, it is clear he considered Faymonville to be at minimum insubordinate. It is in this memoir that one gets a sense of Standley's vision of the embassy and its personnel the way a commander of a ship looks at his vessel and its crew.

One review considers Admiral Standley as one who "is not reluctant to speak frankly even if he deflates well known personalities." Not only was

Standley critical of Faymonville, but he was also highly critical of such figures as Joseph Davies and Wendell Willkie. He also noted that the reader will have difficulty trying to decide which frustrated Standley more: President Roosevelt's habit of bypassing him or "the suspicion and aloofness of the Soviet leaders."<sup>14</sup>

However, another cautionary tale emerged in the form of a review by Anatole Mazour, who provides secondary source material quoted elsewhere. He begins his review by firing a shot across Standley's bow: "His acquaintance with Russians, according to the author, dates back to his childhood days in Sonoma County, California. The schooling on the banks of the Russian River was hardly adequate." This opened a scathing review of Standley's memoir. Mazour even goes as far to accuse Standley of jealousy in regards to Faymonville. "About some of these recalcitrant persons Admiral Standley writes with annoyance and regret that he had not met them in the Navy," Mazour writes, right before referencing the portion of the book where Standley is recalling an encounter he had with General Faymonville. Mazour clearly believed Standley was unfit to be ambassador: "Steeped in his naval tradition the Admiral lacked diplomatic finesse, political sagacity, and economic vision badly called for at his post."<sup>15</sup>

Because of Standley's repeated interactions with Faymonville in both the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission and later as the ambassador to the Soviet Union, the book is an indispensable source when looking at the Faymonville

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<sup>14</sup> Donald Armstrong, untitled book review, *World Affairs* 118 no. 3 (Fall 1955): 84.

<sup>15</sup> Anatole G. Mazour, untitled book review, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 302 (Nov 1955): 158.

controversy, especially when one takes into consideration Faymonville's time as the director of Lend-Lease operations within the Soviet Union. For views on his time as the attaché officer in the embassy, we must look elsewhere for witnesses.

Another witness to Faymonville's work and controversy in the embassy in Moscow was Charles E. "Chip" Bohlen, who in 1974 had his memoirs published; memoirs that were fittingly titled *Witness to History*. His memoirs were published shortly after his death. Bohlen was a born Francophile, who inherited his love of all things French from his mother. It was in France in the early 1930s where Bohlen would learn Russian early in his diplomatic career; this equipped him for a life in the Foreign Service which would see the Soviet Union become the center of his career.<sup>16</sup> "He spent four long periods in Moscow, spoke Russian well, loved the Russian people, their art and their literature," but was "unable to make a single Russian friend and never was invited to visit a private home," which was a circumstance that frustrated him greatly. His first period of service in Moscow came at the very beginning, when William C. Bullitt was appointed as the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1933. Bohlen, along with Bullitt, would soon be disillusioned as were many of the embassy staff by conditions in Stalin's Soviet Union. This was particularly acute after Bullitt and the others on the embassy staff arrived with the optimism that the Soviet system could experience "liberalization." Stephen Kertesz considered Bohlen to be a

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<sup>16</sup> John L. Harper, "Friends Not Allies: George F. Kennan and Charles E. Bohlen", *World Policy Journal* 12 no. 2 (Summer 1995): 77.

member of a "distinguished group of young foreign service officers who decided to concentrate on Russian affairs" and judged his memoirs to be "extraordinary."<sup>17</sup>

In the memoirs, Bohlen confirmed that Roosevelt had faith "in his own capacity to settle the most complex problems through frank, direct (and insufficiently prepared) talks at the top level" and also "supports the charge that the President did not understand Soviet motivations and was at times naive, even frivolous." Perhaps the most important aspect of the book, however, is what one reviewer calls "a key to Bohlen's book and to his character," and that is Bohlen's "honesty." The reviewer went on to state that in *Witness to History*, "he does not try to build up a record of having been right at times when his superiors are wrong, though he says when and why he held different opinions." He further praised Bohlen for not being an "introvert agonizing over his own views or about the course of events, with the result that over a span of forty years" he advised various Presidents and Secretaries of State of differing personalities and views, and thus he managed to write a book that "gives us his own picture of these men as persons and as statesmen." When Bohlen was in the embassy in the 1930s, which was also during Faymonville's tenure as a military attaché officer, he worked under both Ambassadors Bullitt and Davies. He had a firsthand view of the Stalinist purges, and it was in this way he "acquired a sense of the Soviet

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen D. Kertesz, "A Diplomat Without Illusions", *The Review of Politics* 36 no. 2 (Apr. 1974): 318-319.

system he never lost.” Because of Bohlen's position in the embassy, and the indication by all accounts that Bohlen was a very competent, honest and forthright member of the Foreign Service, *Witness to History* provides an invaluable look into the operation of the embassy in Moscow in the 1930s. Bohlen's comments on Faymonville's actions and behavior add to the composite image that must be constructed of him in order for Faymonville's story to be told.<sup>18</sup>

Another perspective is lent to the Faymonville controversy by another career diplomat, Loy Henderson. Before his death in 1986, he took the time to write a memoir which covered his career with the State Department, with a focus on his time in the Soviet Union. After having worked with the American Red Cross in France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia after World War I, he went to work with the State Department in Ireland before becoming one of the State Department's first "observers" of the Soviet Union, along with George Kennan and Charles Bohlen. He spent 1927 to 1930 in Latvia, considered the "window on Russia" by the State Department. Upon the recognition of the Soviet Union in November 1933, he spent over four years at the new embassy in Moscow, coinciding with Faymonville's tenure as the attaché officer. He would contribute heavily later on to the formulation of foreign policy towards the

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<sup>18</sup> John C. Campbell, untitled review of Charles Bohlen's *Witness to History*, *Russian Review* 33 no. 1 (Jan. 1974), 89.



Soviet Union in the early postwar period.<sup>19</sup>

Henderson never learned the Russian language nor did he become particularly immersed in Russian culture to the extent of his colleagues Bohlen and Kennan.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, he was an early witness to the early dealings with the Soviet Union, as well as Faymonville's work in the embassy. A lengthy section in his memoirs detailed his observations of virtually the entire *dramatis personae* of the embassy. Along with Faymonville's service, "he saw firsthand, before the rest of American diplomats did, the duplicity of the officials in Stalin's foreign policy apparatus" over such matters as the construction and location of the new embassy and the repayment of debts left over from tsarist times. From these experiences Henderson was made into a hardened skeptic concerning "sustained cooperation with Stalin after World War II."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, he thought the provisions that established diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States "too lenient and open to abuse by Stalin."<sup>22</sup>

A memoir by George Kennan is used in this study very briefly, but it is more appropriate to discuss him and what he brings to the discussion via Walter Hixson's book, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*. Kennan, in the 1920s, left Wisconsin behind for Princeton University and eventually made his way into the Foreign Service. He, along with Bohlen and Henderson, became one of the early experts on the Soviet Union. Like Bohlen, he learned the Russian language and

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<sup>19</sup> Peter B. Kaufman, Book Review, *Slavic Review* 47 no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 531.

<sup>20</sup> David Mayers, Book review, *International History Review* 14 no. 3 (Aug. 1992): 579.

<sup>21</sup> Peter B. Kaufman, Book Review, *Slavic Review* 47 no. 3 (Autumn, 1988): 532.

<sup>22</sup> David Mayers, Book review, *International History Review* 14 no. 3 (Aug. 1992): 580.

became immersed in Russian culture. He served in the embassy from the first days of diplomatic recognition and worked under William Bullitt at first. His concerns over how the United States dealt with the Soviet Union after World War II prompted him to write the "long telegram" to the State Department and his famous *Foreign Affairs* "Mr. X" article dealing with that topic, both in 1947. For Hixson, "Kennan is a study in contradictions," one who decried the Cold War and the arms race it engendered and instead favored "negotiation and detente." Kennan's memoirs, even though they also give the reader a sense of what was going on in the embassy in Moscow during Faymonville's tenure there as an attaché officer, made no mention anywhere of Faymonville, and thus are of limited value here.<sup>23</sup>

Because of their presence in the embassy during this critical time, the memoirs of Admiral Standley, Charles Bohlen, Loy Henderson, and some of the views of George Kennan are useful in creating a composite image of the Faymonville controversy. The historian travels dangerous territory when relying on a single memoir, but by bringing in those belonging to different people, all of whom were witnesses and principal actors in the Faymonville controversy, different viewpoints can enhance this study through more nuanced perspective. They will also serve to balance each other, as the memoirs are heavily biased based on the simple fact that each are written by different men with different

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<sup>23</sup> Edward Goedeken, untitled book review, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 21 no. 1 (Winter 1991): 187-188.

viewpoints and different agendas, and perhaps different desires and ways to alter the narrative of the time and place in which they lived. Therefore, by using multiple memoirs written by several men, including peers and superiors, with differing perspectives, they can serve to mitigate the problems that can result from overreliance on a single memoir, if not eliminate them altogether.

A lengthy investigation of the controversial tenures of General Faymonville at the embassy in Moscow has been sorely needed. This occupies a juncture of American history that addresses not only the American involvement in World War II, but also the beginnings of the Cold War. For the historian whose focus is on World War II, the Faymonville controversy is worth exploring because of how it impacts Lend-Lease operations, foreign policy, and relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which were forced into an alliance due to the emergence of a common enemy and the common goal of completely defeating that enemy. For the Cold War historian, the very beginnings of the mutual distrust between the United States and the Soviet Union can be found here, as well as the fear of communists as an American enemy within. There are other angles to be explored here as well; for instance, gender historians can focus on such aspects as the accusations of homosexuality that were leveled at Faymonville (this will be covered in more detail later in the paper). Because of the setting of the controversy, there is much ground to be explored by military and diplomatic historians as well. Fascinating in its own

right, this obscure corner of World War II history is worthy of more detailed attention. Before continuing, however, a brief biographical sketch of Faymonville is needed.

Philip Faymonville was born on April 30, 1888, in California.<sup>24</sup> He attended Stanford University before later going to the United States Military Academy at West Point, from which he graduated in 1912.<sup>25</sup> That year, he graduated ninth in his class.<sup>26</sup> Upon his commissioning in June 1912, he was placed into the Coast Artillery as an ordinance officer, and spent time on the Mexican border and the Philippines before the United States entered World War I.<sup>27</sup> While in the Philippines he began to travel down the path that would eventually take him to the Soviet Union. It was in the Philippines where he began to study Russian, around 1916 or 1917, and he was already fluent in Japanese at this point.<sup>28</sup>

One may question at this point why an ordinance officer in the Philippines who spent time in Mexico as well would spend time concerning himself with languages like Japanese and Russian? After all, in that decade, the United States found itself doing battle with the Germans in Europe and occupied itself with a pursuit of Pancho Villa in Mexico as well. It seems that Faymonville already had an eye looking towards the future. He expected that there would be a war

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<sup>24</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville," 83.

<sup>25</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 483.

<sup>26</sup> Langer, "Red General": 209.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 144.

between the United States and Japan in later years, and in such an eventuality, he expected that Russia would be a natural ally of the United States if such a conflict arose.<sup>29</sup> Mazour reports that this was what Faymonville expected from the time he graduated from West Point and prepared himself for that eventuality, perhaps expecting to be of use to the United States Army if his prediction ever came true.<sup>30</sup>

When one first encounters Faymonville's vision of geopolitics and its implications for diplomatic and military strategy, one may be inclined to ask why there was so much focus in it against Japan. The country burst out onto the world scene in 1905 with the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Japan was far and away the most powerful Asian nation at the time, and was seen to have designs on the Pacific region.

The abilities of the new Pacific power were not lost on the United States Navy. In the period following the Russo-Japanese War, "a war scare shook the U.S Asiatic Fleet into frantic activity" which reached clear to the Philippines. The Japanese had defeated a Russian fleet of fifteen battleships when Japan only had six. The Japanese had successfully destroyed both the Russian Far Eastern Squadron and the Russian Baltic Squadron. If this could be done to Russia, it was reasoned in the United States Navy, this could surely be done to the United States, which itself had its fleet split between its two coasts. On July 9, 1907,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville," 84.

President Theodore Roosevelt announced that the American battleship fleet was being transferred from Atlantic waters to San Francisco. In fact, then Ensign Chester Nimitz, later to become the Admiral in charge of operations in the North and Central Pacific during World War II, reported that "There was so much talk of war with Japan that when we approached Manila Bay, I almost sent a landing party to see if we still held the place" when he arrived at the American naval base at Cavite in the Philippines.<sup>31</sup>

There is still another dimension that could have easily contributed to Faymonville's thoughts concerning Japan, and one incident in particular involves his hometown of San Francisco. California underwent a wave of Japanese immigration during this time. Many of those immigrants were veterans of the Russo-Japanese War. They accepted low wages for their labor, so much so that it "upset the West Coast labor market." The city of San Francisco responded by segregating Japanese schoolchildren, which was a practice that "outraged the people of Japan." This practice continued until President Theodore Roosevelt pressured the city to put an end to it. In exchange, Roosevelt negotiated an agreement from Japan designed to limit immigration to California. When this incident took place, Faymonville was in his late teens and by all indications was living in San Francisco. While we have no way of knowing how impressionable Faymonville was at this point or if such happenings affected his outlook in any

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<sup>31</sup> E.B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 1976): 58.

way, we also have no evidence that this did not affect his outlook in any way.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, World War I was in progress, and business from that war that needed to be resolved took Faymonville on his first journey to Russia. On August 2, 1918, Major General William S. Graves was ordered to go to Siberia to command an American expeditionary force there; he would soon draw 8,000 men from his own 8th Division in California and would augment this with forces from the 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments in the Philippines.<sup>33</sup> Faymonville may have well been among the forces selected from the Philippines. He served as the chief ordinance officer and judge advocate in the American Expeditionary Force that General Graves commanded; additionally, he was a member of the Inter-Allied War Materials Committee.<sup>34</sup> Here was his first chance for him to practice his Russian skills, and as it would turn out, this would not be the last time. General Graves had vague orders from President Wilson concerning his mission in Siberia; Boot describes him as a "bluff sort with no patience for the complexities of diplomacy."<sup>35</sup> Faymonville sympathized with his commander, a man "who criticized U.S. intervention policy and the professional diplomats who defended it."<sup>36</sup> Additionally, while in Siberia, Faymonville took part in the repatriation of the Czechoslovak Legion and later was put in charge of prisoner-

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Max Boot. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 211-212.

<sup>34</sup> Herndon and Baylen. "Col. Philip R. Faymonville" : 483.

<sup>35</sup> Max Boot. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 212.

<sup>36</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 144.

of-war repatriation in Germany.<sup>37</sup> The latter assignment took place in 1920; he returned to the United States in August of that year and returned to the ordnance world by serving at the Ninth Corps headquarters in San Francisco until January 1922.<sup>38</sup> Already a pattern could be seen: this officer, an ordnance officer by training, was given a diverse array of assignments, and many of them delved into areas far beyond the typical realm of an ordnance officer. Indeed, one could argue that he was far more exposed to the diplomacy and foreign service even at this point than he ever was in his assigned field of ordnance. In today's terms within the military, he might be considered to be more of a Foreign Area Officer rather than an ordnance or artillery officer. Even so, Faymonville's career was about to take an even more diverse turn. In January 1922, he was dispatched as an American military observer in the then Soviet town of Chita in the Soviet Far East; he would hold this position until May 1923.<sup>39</sup> Faymonville was being exposed to Russians and the Soviet Union early and often in his career.

In May 1923 he was sent to Tokyo to be the military attaché there and in 1926 he returned to the United States to continue in the capacity of an ordnance officer, and he received more technical training in his field at the ordnance school at the Watertown Arsenal in Massachusetts. He also attended the Army Industrial College from which he was graduated in 1933 before being sent to

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<sup>37</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville," 84.

<sup>38</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 483.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



study the then relatively new tactics concerning chemical weapons and tank warfare at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland.<sup>40</sup> It would seem that Faymonville was destined to toil in relative obscurity forever as an ordinance officer with a great deal of international exposure via his assignments to the Philippines, Russia, and Japan. However, things were about to change. Events were on the horizon that would thrust him into the spotlight. The first of these events was the recognition of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by the United States, and it was at the new embassy that was made necessary by this act where Philip Faymonville first stepped onto history's stage.

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<sup>40</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville," 83.

## CHAPTER 2 - FAYMONVILLE IN THE 1930s

In November 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution toppled the provisional Kerensky government in Petrograd. As a result, the Bolsheviks proceeded to forge the world's first Communist state, and after having established power by force, and having survived a civil war that erupted soon thereafter, in 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established. Due to its adherence to Communism as its governing philosophy, this nation was an international pariah, with few countries establishing diplomatic relations with it. The United States was one of those that refused to grant diplomatic recognition, and this state of affairs would last until 1933, when President Franklin Roosevelt believed he could consider such a move with the backing of the voting public. That year, "after a series of meetings with Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov," the Soviet Union soon attained the diplomatic recognition of the United States. This move, it was hoped, would gain for the United States access to Soviet markets while the Soviets, for their part, appreciated the legitimacy the move seemed to grant to their regime.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Walter L. Hixson, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989): 11.

Another angle to consider in the decision to grant to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the diplomatic recognition withheld by the United States since 1918 is the way President Roosevelt viewed the world scene. In 1933, the Nazis came to power in Germany and made no secret of their desire to rearm Germany. Japan had succumbed to militaristic government by that point and had already begun to march its armies through China. Roosevelt required a counterweight for these actions and the Soviet Union provided him with a ready-made solution in his search for such a counterweight. George Kennan writes in his memoirs that Roosevelt "obviously considered the resumption of relations with Russia to be desirable for the sobering influence it might exercise on the German Nazis and the Japanese militarists." This was ultimately the rationale behind granting diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union, in Kennan's eyes, and he goes further to state that "if this effect (of gaining a counterweight) could be achieved only by throwing a certain amount of sand in the eyes of the American Congress, press, and public, he (Roosevelt) was not adverse to doing this."<sup>42</sup>

Philip Faymonville, an ordinance officer in the United States Army, was also interested in the possibility that the Soviet Union could play the role of "counterweight" to Germany and Japan, but especially Japan. As we have seen,

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<sup>42</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967): 57.

his greatest contributions, in spite of his being primarily an ordinance officer were as an attaché officer<sup>43</sup>; first in Japan from 1923 to 1926, and eventually, as an attaché officer in the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> Along the course of his career he learned Japanese and Russian and became fluent in both languages as he expected that Japan would become the chief adversary of the United States in the Pacific in the future, and that the natural ally in the event of a war between the United States and Japan would be Russia.<sup>45</sup> In fact this guided his thinking ever since graduation from West Point and had still not changed by the time he went to the Soviet Union to become the new attaché officer there.<sup>46</sup> This thinking would eventually embroil Faymonville in controversy and turned him into a divisive figure in the American embassy in Moscow, the War Department and State Department, because it led to accusations that he was too sympathetic to the Soviet Union and generated great concern that he even freely gave the Soviets information about the United States they otherwise would not have been privy to, especially in the 1940s.

When Philip Faymonville went to Moscow in 1934 as an attaché officer in the American embassy, he found an embassy staff that was deeply hostile to the

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<sup>43</sup> An attaché officer is an officer who typically operates out of an embassy and focuses primarily on the observation of foreign military establishments. In so doing they provide intelligence information to their respective governments on military operations.

<sup>44</sup> Anatole G. Mazour, "Philip R. Faymonville," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 42 no. 1 (March 1963): 83.

<sup>45</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat? The Ambiguous Position of Philip R. Faymonville and United States-Soviet Relations, 1941-1943," *The Journal of Military History* 72 (January 2008): 144

<sup>46</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville": 84.

newly-recognized Union of Soviet Socialist Republics because of that nation's presumed interest in preserving Communism at home and exporting Communism abroad. Therefore when Faymonville established working relationships and close contacts with the Soviet government in the 1930s, the perturbed embassy staff began to refer to him as "the Bolshevik Major."<sup>47</sup> His reports on the conditions of the Red Army, considered to be too optimistic, did nothing to dim this perception of him among the Embassy staff.

How, then, did the Embassy staff, and eventually the State Department and the War Department, come to this conclusion about Philip Faymonville? What went on in the Embassy while he was there, and what actions did Faymonville take, to lead the Embassy staff to consider him blindly pro-Soviet, and were they justified in thinking this way?

On November 17, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt granted the Soviet Union diplomatic recognition and named William C. Bullitt as the first Ambassador to the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> With the opening of the embassy in Moscow came the necessity of fully staffing it with personnel. Included in this staff would be military observers and attachés. Apparently then-Major Faymonville left some favorable impressions on the Army early on in his career and on others in high places as well. Loy Henderson noted that "following the inauguration of President Roosevelt, he was attached to the White House in some capacity that

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Clifton Daniel ed., *Chronicle of the 20th Century* (Mount Kisko, NY: Chronicle Publications, 1988): 426.

was never quite clear to me," and Henderson further speculated that Faymonville "may have been one of the junior attachés there." It was while he was at the White House that he became "acquainted" with Eleanor Roosevelt, "who was intrigued by his views regarding the Soviet Union and who maintained thereafter a special interest in him." Henderson further stated that "in view of his long-established friendly interest in the Soviet Union, his knowledge of the Russian language, the fact that he was *persona grata* to the Soviet government, and his support by Mrs. Roosevelt", his selection as the first military attaché officer to the Soviet Union was "almost inevitable."<sup>49</sup> Faymonville was "appointed as the military attaché in Moscow in February 1934 and reported to the embassy for duty in July of the same year."<sup>50</sup> He would remain at the post for five years.<sup>51</sup>

While in this post, one of his functions was to observe the Red Army in action. Upon arrival he quickly went to work establishing contacts and cordial relations with Soviet officials which was no doubt aided by his fluency in Russian; he soon established "very close and friendly relations with them."<sup>52</sup> In communications with State Department officials in the United States, Faymonville demonstrates just how quickly he went to work in establishing

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<sup>49</sup> Loy W. Henderson, *A Question of Trust: The Origins of U.S. Soviet Diplomatic Relations: The Memoirs of Loy W. Henderson* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986): 315.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid: 314.

<sup>51</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville": 83.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 146.

contacts within the Red Army. In a telegram to the Secretary of State, sent on February 2, 1935, Faymonville expressed his concerns over personnel transfers from the Soviet Union to the United States. In the telegram, he said "I believe Red Army offers possibility of developing understanding and friendship which no other group here offers. If contacts with Red Army chiefs are further fostered it seems likely that we may secure in them a group of friends who in party discussions might effectively present case for American friendship." To do this, Faymonville recommended the maintenance of the Army contingent already on the ground in the Soviet Union in the name of keeping contact with the Red Army and ensuring contacts made with them would not be severed. In Faymonville's view, keeping military and air attaché officers in place in the Soviet Union was "essential."<sup>53</sup>

Colonel Faymonville's close working relationship with various Soviet officials is also confirmed by a diary entry composed by Joseph Davies, who had followed William Bullitt as Ambassador to the Soviet Union. On March 23, 1937, the Embassy held a dinner for the leadership of the Red Army. At this dinner, it was noted that "Colonel Faymonville, who knew all of these men very well, greeted them first and presented them to Mrs. Davies and me."<sup>54</sup> At this dinner were the "High Command of the Army and Navy" and others "such as 'Hero

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<sup>53</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1933-1939, The Soviet Union*. "The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Wiley) to the Secretary of State," February 2, 1935: 173-174. (*Foreign Relations of the United States* will be hereafter referred to as *FRUS*.)

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941): 132.

Flyers' of the Soviet Union, famous parachute jumpers, airplane engineers, and the like."<sup>55</sup> Faymonville had clearly developed a great many contacts in the Red Army at minimum at a time where it was difficult to develop contacts with virtually any Soviet officials or citizens. Loy Henderson, also employed at the Embassy at this time, also acknowledged that Faymonville had "cultivated informed sources" in the Soviet Union.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, Ambassador Bullitt commented in correspondence to President Roosevelt on January 1, 1934, that "There has been practically no social or intellectual intercourse between the diplomats in Moscow and the members of the Soviet government."<sup>57</sup> This comment seemed to foreshadow the difficulties that American diplomats would have in developing contacts with Soviet officials or ordinary citizens. Charles Bohlen, who was a Third Secretary at the Embassy in Moscow at the time, was running into different circumstances than Faymonville did when trying to engage with the Soviet populace. Bohlen recounts that though he "was eager to look up some of my acquaintances from my previous tour," he "was immediately discouraged by other members of the Embassy" because "they pointed out that any attempt by a foreigner to get in touch with a Soviet citizen was the equivalent of signing an order for his arrest, if not his execution."<sup>58</sup> Bohlen was

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> H.W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire, 1918-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 82.

<sup>57</sup> Orville H. Bullitt., ed. *For the President: Personal and Secret. Correspondence Between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972): 65.

<sup>58</sup> Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History 1929-1969* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973): 45.



therefore kept from people that he had known even during his previous tours there. He goes on to explain that "Nor did I dare inquire into the whereabouts of George Andreychin, the Intourist official who had been so helpful in 1934", stating that "Andreychin had been arrested in January, 1935, a day or so after he had lunched with me in my apartment."<sup>59</sup>

Colonel Faymonville also seemed to possess a degree of knowledge others at the embassy did not have: knowledge of the Russian language. Charles Bohlen reported that of all those who worked in the embassy in those early days in the 1930s, "Chipman (a Third Secretary at the embassy), Faymonville and I were the only officers fluent in Russian."<sup>60</sup> What doubtless made things more interesting for the embassy staff was how Faymonville initially acquired his knowledge of Russian. At some point "during the 1920s he studied the Russian language and maintained unostentatious, friendly, and informal contacts with representatives in the Soviet Union who happened to be in the United States." The nature and purpose of these contacts was either unknown to Henderson or simply omitted from his memoirs.<sup>61</sup>

Faymonville would soon find himself at odds with the staff at the embassy in Moscow due to other important reasons, however, almost all of them bound up in the events taking place in the Soviet Union at the time. Stalin had taken power in the Soviet government shortly after the death of Lenin in 1924

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Henderson, *Question*: 315.

and he made his presence felt early on. Many career diplomats headed to Moscow hopeful of presiding over a successful diplomatic relationship with the Soviet Union, only to see such hopes dashed as the 1930s wore on.<sup>62</sup> It should be noted that the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union was a negotiated event, with conditions attached. A pact was signed with the Soviet Union which guaranteed them diplomatic recognition under the following conditions: "promises not to disseminate Communist propaganda in America, freedom of religion and full legal rights to United States residents in the Soviet Union" and "rejection of all claims made arising from the American military expedition to Siberia in 1918."<sup>63</sup> The details of this pact were left up to the Foreign Service officers to negotiate and these negotiations were, as Mary Glantz describes them, "nasty."<sup>64</sup> Under these conditions Faymonville kept his distance from the American diplomatic corps in Moscow, and this reached the point where the embassy staff grew increasingly hostile with him.<sup>65</sup> Charles Bohlen further underscored the hostility of the embassy staff towards Faymonville. Serving as the embassy secretary, Bohlen noted that "the weak link in the staff was the chief military attaché, Colonel Philip R. Faymonville, a slender, pink-faced man with a fringe of white hair who had a definite pro-Russian bias."<sup>66</sup> Other military attachés also took a dim view of Faymonville. The acting naval attaché, for

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<sup>62</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 146.

<sup>63</sup> Daniel, *Chronicle*: 426.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and a Diplomat?": 146.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Bohlen, *Witness*: 45.

instance, Captain David Nimmer, of the United States Marine Corps, told his superiors that he felt that Faymonville was too heavily biased towards the Soviets as well.<sup>67</sup> Bohlen added in his memoirs that Colonel Faymonville "was not very useful because he was inclined to favor the Soviet regime in almost all its actions."<sup>68</sup> Bohlen's dim view of Faymonville is also reflected in the comment that "it did not take me long to discount Faymonville's views."<sup>69</sup>

An additional source of animosity was that Colonel Faymonville was aloof from his fellow employees and government officials at the embassy. This estrangement from the Embassy staff, which seems self-imposed by virtue of Faymonville's introverted personality, only made matters worse. At the time of Faymonville's death in 1962, Anatole Mazour commented that "his entire life seemed to have been guided by a single philosophical principle: learn as much as possible and utter as little as possible" and added "this characteristic caused much irritation among many of his official associates."<sup>70</sup> Loy Henderson, who was at the embassy at the time, recorded Faymonville's behavior in his memoirs. "He was, so to speak, a lone wolf," he stated, adding that "at embassy-staff meetings he rarely contributed to the discussions" and that in private conversations with his fellow embassy members, "he showed an interest in eliciting their views with regard to the developments in Soviet-American

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<sup>67</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 484.

<sup>68</sup> Bohlen, *Witness*: 57.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville": 84.

relations and events that were taking place in the Soviet Union, but was reserved in expressing his own."<sup>71</sup> He was very careful to not make any sort of statement, even in private conversation within the walls of the embassy "that might be considered as critical of Soviet policies and practices."<sup>72</sup> In what could have only irked his colleagues at the embassy further, he harbored a great distrust for the State Department that "manifested itself almost immediately upon his arrival in the Soviet Union."<sup>73</sup> He also "apparently wished to make it clear to the Soviet authorities and to American visitors that he should not be considered a part of the embassy but as a military man," who was keeping his distance from the "numerous problems and differences that were casting gloomy shadows over U.S.-Soviet relations."<sup>74</sup>

At this point, one could argue that Faymonville was not deeply introverted but rather placing barriers between himself and the embassy personnel for his own reasons, such as the perceived need, to him at least, to be seen as a separate entity from the embassy so that he could continue making contacts with Soviet military personnel and getting as much information as possible from them as a result. However, a return to the Mazour article seems to suggest that his apparent introversion was a lifelong trait. Mazour once told Faymonville in a discussion Mazour recounted on the occasion of Faymonville's death that "Phil, you are an American von Moltke who is endowed with the skill

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<sup>71</sup> Henderson, *Question*: 315.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

of being silent in several languages" in response to Faymonville responding to various interview questions by "smil(ing) pleasantly, utter(ing) a few words" and saying "mainly nothing."<sup>75</sup>

The negotiations over the recognition pact were not the only sources of concern for the diplomats in Moscow. The other major source of concern were the purges in the Soviet Union in which millions of Soviet citizens died. Among those executed in the purges were a large amount of Red Army soldiers and several top officers. This left diplomats with the impression that the Soviet Union would not be able to defend itself adequately in the event of a war and indeed were actively courting defeat. For instance, in February 1938, Loy Henderson, by this time *chargé d'affaires* at the Embassy, forwarded to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, a report on the impact of the purges upon the Red Army and the assigning of political commissars to the Red Army. Henderson indicated that other American military attachés in Moscow noted that the purges damaged the Red Army severely and that its fighting ability was further hindered by the power wielded by the political commissars within its ranks.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, "From May 1937 to September 1938, 35,020 officers were arrested or expelled" from the Red Army and "it is still unclear how many were

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<sup>75</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville": 83- 84.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 147.

executed."<sup>77</sup> Robert Gellately states that the Red Army officer corps was purged of at least 33,400 in 1937-1938, with a minimum total of 7280 being arrested; this is "including three of five marshals, fifteen of sixteen commanders, and sixty of sixty-seven corps commanders" who "perished."<sup>78</sup>

None of the concerns about the purges or any other issues other embassy personnel had about the Soviet Union deterred Faymonville. Major W.E. Shipp was a military attaché who was assigned to Estonia and he reported the concerns of the Estonian general staff that the Red Army "could initiate an offensive immediately."<sup>79</sup> Faymonville dutifully agreed with Major Shipp and indeed was the first to provide his superior Army officers in Washington a detailed analysis of the 1936 *Field Service Regulation*, to include reporting the changing of the Soviet military doctrine from "liberation of the world's subjugated toilers" to "defense of the Socialist state of workers and peasants" and new definitions of "deep battle" in which the "encirclement of the enemy" was "a basic method of maneuver."<sup>80</sup> Faymonville also was seemingly impressed by "the joint employment of parachutists and mobile group forces," which he saw at work in an exercise in Belorussia in 1937; he also noted the presence of armored forces and praised the

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<sup>77</sup> Nicolas Werth, "A State Against Its People: Violence, Repression and Terror in the Soviet Union". *The Black Book of Communism*, Stephane Courtois et al. Translated by Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer. Harvard College (1999): 198.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe* (New York: Knopf, 2007): 275.

<sup>79</sup> David M. Glantz, "Observing the Soviets: U.S. Army Attachés in Eastern Europe During the 1930s," *The Journal of Military History* 55 no. 2 (April 1991): 163.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Red Army's handling of its tanks.<sup>81</sup> Faymonville additionally had a very good idea of the materiel the Soviet Union could supply in the event of contingencies.

Charles Bohlen noted one such episode during the 1938 crisis over Czechoslovakia, when options were being explored by all parties to see what could be done to protect that nation. Alexander Kirk, the First Secretary of the Embassy, had asked Colonel Faymonville to provide a "cold-blooded judgment as to what the Soviet Union could do, on the assumption that it wanted to help the Czechs"; the response he received was "a paper in which he said that all that the Soviet Union could do for Czechoslovakia would be to send them two of its forty-five squadrons of bombers-a few dozen planes."<sup>82</sup> Kirk was "astonished" at this, apparently believing that the Soviet Union could do more for the Czechs, and Faymonville replied to this astonishment that "This is what my serious calculations bring me to."<sup>83</sup>

Along with evaluations of the Red Army's doctrine and their material strength came evaluations of personnel. As for the purges of the late 1930s, Faymonville remained unconcerned about their effect. He was "one of the very few, perhaps the only one, who insisted that the potential power of Stalin's army remained intact" and in fact later reported that "the Red Army was substantially undamaged by the purge because the army was organized along defensive

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Bohlen, *Witness*: 59.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

lines."<sup>84</sup> Ambassador Davies agreed fully with Colonel Faymonville's assessment and backed his assessments of the Red Army even as Faymonville was perhaps alone among attaché officers and military personnel in his optimistic assessment of the impact of the purge.<sup>85</sup>

Faymonville also managed to view other areas of the Soviet Union that were apparently cut off from other prying eyes. This gave him a view of not only the potential military strength of the Soviet Union at the time but also of its economy. On one occasion he went to "an installation near the Urals devoted to the production of engines for warplanes" and returned quite impressed by what he saw. Loy Henderson reported that "he (Colonel Faymonville) said the factory was by far the best plant he had seen in the Soviet Union and in some respects was superior to any American airplane motor factories." This operation, "which was nearly self-contained, with casting, milling, and molding done on site, employed 12,000 persons, each working twelve hours a day" and impressed other observers as well as Henderson himself.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of what Faymonville was reporting and witnessing for himself, there were doubters, and they were not lacking for justification. Faymonville's rosy view of the Red Army in the 1930s was in sharp contrast to what attachés like the aforementioned Captain Nimmer was reporting to Washington. James Herndon and Joseph Baylen refer to a report of his from August 15, 1934, which

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<sup>84</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 495.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 495-496.

<sup>86</sup> Brands, *Cold War*: 82.



informed the director of naval intelligence that Soviet war material was "definitely inferior to items of like manufacture produced by the Western powers" and that the Soviet Union would be "an overwhelming *LIABILITY*" to whatever side wished to accept it as an ally.<sup>87</sup> Herndon and Baylen also saw Nimmer as being very biased against the Soviet Union, which affected his own reports to the War Department on Soviet military capabilities. When one remembers that Faymonville was an advocate of an alliance with the Soviet Union in the event of what he viewed as an inevitable conflict with Japan, one can see that Faymonville had some unpopular notions about the Soviet Union and its military strength.

The views were unpopular because many knew in Moscow what Faymonville apparently did not, or was simply unwilling to factor into his assessments. Its officers were being massacred; not by a foreign army but by its own top leadership. As part of his purges of the late 1930s Stalin had "accused, tried, convicted and executed for treachery over half the senior commanders of the Red Army."<sup>88</sup> In this purge no officers were sacred, not even his chief of staff, Tukhachevsky, who while a former officer under the Tsars showed his commitment to the new regime by switching sides to the Reds during the civil war that followed the Bolshevik Revolution and did much to lead the offensive against Warsaw in 1920 and to quell the Kronstadt uprising of 1921; he had also

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<sup>87</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 484.

<sup>88</sup> John Keegan. *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 175.

brought about the creation of the Red Army's tank unit and its large mechanized corps which not only put the Red Army at "the very forefront of modern military development", but also impressed Faymonville in his very reports as attaché.<sup>89</sup> His replacements, and other replacements for the executed officers and marshals, were, in Keegan's words, "not to Russia's military advantage."<sup>90</sup> "Stalin looked upon the threat Nazi Germany posed with a lackadaisical attitude and had no hesitation of purging the ranks of the Red Army leadership, even if it meant replacing them with inexperienced officers."<sup>91</sup> These moves would lead to great trouble later on as the threat of war cast a shadow across Europe. A preview of this trouble would manifest itself in the form of the invasion of Finland by the Red Army in 1939. Nicolas Werth noted that "the purge of the Red Army, notably at the higher levels, had serious effects on the Russo-Finnish conflict of 1939-40... when it constituted one of the heaviest handicaps for Soviet military effectiveness."<sup>92</sup> The handicap to military effectiveness came not only in the form of "direct harm" to the Red Army but also "doubts, demoralization, and paralysis of the will."<sup>93</sup>

Faymonville, nonetheless, sent reports to Washington expressing confidence in the new leadership of the Red Army. On March 30, 1938, "Faymonville reported on Stalin's old Civil War comrades, Marshals Voroshilov

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid: 176.

<sup>91</sup> Werth, "A State Against Its People": 199.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.: 198.

<sup>93</sup> Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin and Hitler*: 275-276.

and Semen Budenny," who were to take over the Red Army from the recently purged old guard.<sup>94</sup> In his report "he wrote, somewhat inaccurately, that 'to Voroshilov belongs much of the credit for the building up of the Soviet Union's fighting forces'" and "in a second dispatch dealing specifically with Budennyi, Faymonville stated that 'Marshal Budyonny may be classed as an energetic and skilful [sic] field commander' and 'he has had little formal military education but his fame as a Civil War cavalry leader is already legendary.'"<sup>95</sup> Faymonville reached these conclusions despite the troubles in the Red Army due to its decapitation that would be exposed in future campaigns. Charles Bohlen reported that "at staff meetings...he would stoutly defend the purges, insisting that they were uprooting traitors and enemies of the people from the Red Army, and therefore did not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthened the military," a notion that was at odds with what others around him were reporting at the time and what events later on would show.<sup>96</sup>

Interestingly enough, however, there are reports available that show Faymonville was unwilling to accept the Soviet rationale for the trials and purges that were targeting various Red Army officers. For one example, Faymonville filed a detailed report on June 17, 1937, in which he covers the show trials and executions of eight senior Red Army officers, to include Marshal Tukhachevsky. In it, he showed a semblance of disbelief in the Soviet version of events. In a

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<sup>94</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville": 499.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Bohlen, *Witness*: 57.

segment of the report in which he summarized the trial, Faymonville said that "The trial of the eight accused officers (accused of treason) took place in secret, if, indeed, any trial took place at all." He noted that the officers were accused of "high treason, of having conspired with intelligence agents of a foreign country...and of planning to wreck the Red Army, dismember the Soviet Union, and returning the country to the rule of landlords and capitalists." However, Faymonville took the time to pour cold water on the charges by pointing out that not only was there no incentive for the eight men to commit treason, but additionally it was a physical impossibility in any case. "Commanders of the eminence of the accused have not the slightest degree of privacy in the Red Army" Faymonville explained, adding that since the officers accused were separated by long distances, any treasonous plot would have had to have occurred "through intermediaries or by letters" which would have been detected in short order by "the extremely alert service of the investigating officers of the government." In his conclusion, Faymonville considered the trials and executions of these men a "serious blow" to morale and called it a "serious weakening of the effectiveness of the Red Army" that would not escape the notice of Germany or Japan.<sup>97</sup>

As we have seen, Faymonville's work at Moscow made many enemies in the embassy staff and rankled others such as Bohlen and Henderson. Other aspects of Faymonville's personality served to irritate the embassy staff outside

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<sup>97</sup> National Archive RG 165, Roll 15, 1443, NARA.

the professional realm, however. Not only did his views and his work appall those around him in the embassy, but his apparently unflappable nature did so as well. Moscow in the 1930s was a dour, depressing place, a city where anyone in the embassy staff would enjoy their work in spite of the atmosphere around them. Langer states that “during the worst of times, diplomatic life” in Moscow “reminded George Kennan of wartime internment in a Nazi detention camp.” Charles Bohlen described leaving Moscow as being “like coming out into fresh spring air from a room where the oxygen content was sufficient to sustain life but insufficient to produce any mental or spiritual animation.” Contrast this with Faymonville’s view of Moscow at this time. Faymonville would, years afterward, describe Moscow, San Francisco and New York as “the only cities he knew that were worth living in.” He found the people and society of Moscow “democratic and informal” and soon cultivated a reputation for throwing “the best parties in town.” Even the British ambassador of the time noted Faymonville’s circulating around Moscow, especially as compared to his embassy colleagues. Langer concluded this observation by saying “In a climate of depression and tension, a cheerful face can rankle. Faymonville’s undoubtedly did.”<sup>98</sup>

To be fair to Faymonville, it is apparent he knew that life for a diplomat or any sort of employee of the embassy could be harsh. This is indicated in a personnel request he made via radiogram to the War Department. On May 15,

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<sup>98</sup> Langer, “Red General”: 214.

1935, he reported that a stenographer, a Mr. Kinkead, resigned and that Faymonville needed a replacement for him. However, not just anyone for the post would do. Faymonville specifically requested that whoever was sent to Moscow to replace Kinkead be “employed in Washington, DC, and sent to Moscow under definite contract of service after preliminary training in Military Intelligence Division.” He preferred an “unmarried male stenographer in robust health and mentally prepared for difficult living conditions.” He concluded with “experience desirable, but youth and a healthy mental attitude indispensable.” Comments such as these suggest that Faymonville was very aware that an assignment to Moscow was one that was not for merely anybody and that whoever was sent there would have to be prepared to deal with hardships that they did not have to face in the United States.<sup>99</sup>

His controversial views and his behavior, which did much to breed a great deal of contempt for him in the embassy, did not stop Faymonville from seeking an additional extension of his duty. He had already received one extension of duty and this extension was about to expire. His assignment in Moscow was due to end in March 1939 and his request was under discussion early on that year.<sup>100</sup> A series of exchanges among government officials soon took place to discuss this possibility. On January 18, 1939, from Brussels, Ambassador Davies sent a letter to the President that praised Faymonville’s work as an attaché officer. The letter’s

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<sup>99</sup> National Archives, RG 165, 2231-217, NARA.

<sup>100</sup> Memorandum from Ambassador Joseph Davies to the President, January 18, 1939, Roosevelt Papers, OF 3601, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

subject was the reference to "the establishment of a secret liaison for the interchange of military and naval information with the Soviet government."<sup>101</sup> In it, he stated that the Soviet government "expressed confidence in the judgment, capacity and fairness of Lieutenant Colonel Philip R. Faymonville" and that in light of Roosevelt's previous extension of Faymonville's assignment in Moscow for one year that "you might wish to extend his duty there for another period."<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that Ambassador Davies had a very cordial relationship with Colonel Faymonville. Loy Henderson reports that when Davies arrived in Moscow in early 1937, Davies and Faymonville "greeted each other with enthusiasm" and that "friends of Faymonville had informed the Ambassador that Faymonville had won the confidence of the Soviet authorities and urged the ambassador to work closely with him"; as Davies was "eager to earn the goodwill of the Kremlin, he heeded this advice and during his tenure of office in Moscow continued to keep in close touch with Faymonville."<sup>103</sup> Contrast this with Faymonville's relationship with Ambassador Bullitt, whom Davies replaced. At first, the two men were quite close, but "when Faymonville perceived, however, that the ambassador (Bullitt) was becoming disillusioned regarding the intentions of the Soviet government to live up to the promises that Litvinov had given at the time of the establishment of relations" that the relations between Bullitt and Faymonville had cooled off considerably as relations between Bullitt

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Henderson, *Question*: 316.

and the Soviet leadership underwent further strain.<sup>104</sup>

The confidence that both Ambassador Davies and the Soviet authorities had in Faymonville is underscored in a message also sent from Davies to the President from Brussels. This report is recorded in *Foreign Relations of the United States*. In this lengthy report, Davies recounted some meetings he had with Soviet officials. In a section of the report, Davies reported on a conference he had with Stalin and the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Molotov, on June 5, 1938. At this conference Davies was asked about who the liaison officer would be, as they were concerned about the "lack of goodwill or the disinterestedness of some diplomatic representatives toward the Soviet Union." Davies noted that since Loy Henderson was to return to the United States shortly, the military attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Faymonville, was available. Davies said that he had "every confidence" in Faymonville's "good judgment, intelligence and character." Stalin and Molotov responded by speaking "very highly of Lieutenant Colonel Faymonville's fairness, objectivity, ability intelligence and stated that they found no objection to him."<sup>105</sup>

There were those with different designs for Colonel Faymonville, however. One of these was the Army Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, who weighed in with his own opinion concerning Faymonville in a February 1, 1939 memorandum for the President. In it, Craig rejected Faymonville's request and

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> *FRUS*, "The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State." The Soviet Union, 1933-1939: 597.



suggested that he should return to the United States. According to Craig, "Colonel Faymonville is already on a one-year extension of his four-year tour as Military Attaché in Russia. He has been of no use to the War Department for approximately a year" though General Craig calls his previous work there "helpful."<sup>106</sup> He went on to say that the State Department had already initiated his return home even as the War Department was preparing to bring him home in the summer.<sup>107</sup> He then stated that Major Hayne, Colonel Faymonville's appointed successor as Military Attaché, is "considered qualified" as he has been learning the position "for two years."<sup>108</sup> He closed the letter by reiterating that "Under the circumstances, it is my opinion that Colonel Faymonville should obey his present orders and come home, for the reason is that his usefulness...in Russia has been nil for a long time."<sup>109</sup>

Others in the military establishment went on the offensive against Faymonville as well. Sumner Welles, then Undersecretary of State, received a letter from one in the military intelligence establishment, who is only identified by his initials G.S.M., which excoriated Faymonville. He stated that "I am confident that all officers in the Department who have been stationed in Moscow in Faymonville's time there would agree that the public interest will be served if his tour of duty there was ended." The writer declared that Faymonville "is not

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<sup>106</sup> Memorandum from General Malin Craig, 1 February 1939, Roosevelt Papers, OF 3601, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

cooperating fully with our officers in Moscow and has not for several years." Essentially calling Faymonville a loose cannon, he also accused Faymonville of making derogatory remarks about the embassy staff in Moscow in order to magnify his own importance to Soviet authorities, this in spite of the good relations he maintained with Ambassador Davies. The Military Intelligence Division at the time felt that attaché officers should only concern themselves with the technical details of their posting, the letter continues, and that Colonel McCabe, the head of the Military Intelligence Division, believed that since Faymonville was not "playing ball" and cooperating with intelligence officers and embassy personnel, that his time as an attaché should come to an end. Even though he did not see the letter that Ambassador Davies wrote to the President, "I believe any arguments he could advance for the retention of Faymonville would be more than balanced by those we know exist for the termination of his tour of duty."<sup>110</sup>

The view of Faymonville as a loose cannon and as an officer who was uncooperative with authorities is also substantiated by Loy Henderson. His secrecy and tendencies to reclusiveness did not just extend to the diplomats at the embassy: they also extended to his fellow attaché officers there. The War Department on occasion "expressed concern that it was not receiving military intelligence reports of value" from Faymonville during his tenure at the embassy

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<sup>110</sup> Memorandum by G.S.M., Tyler Kent Papers, Box 2, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Other researchers such as Mary Glantz also refer to the author by initials only, which suggests that no one is exactly sure who the author is.

in Moscow. When such charges were leveled, "he usually took the position that it was more important that he not jeopardize his standing with the Soviet government than that he undertake to provide the War Department with the piffling detailed intelligence that it desired." Captain Nimmer and another attaché officer left the embassy in Moscow in early 1935 and the War Department wished to send a replacement for them as an assistant to Faymonville. The War Department wanted to do this so the additional officer could "obtain information of the kind that Faymonville was failing to supply." Faymonville, Henderson continued, was not enthusiastic about having another assistant assigned to him because "apparently he feared the officer assigned might be someone whom he could not trust". In 1937, an assistant was sent to Moscow, but Faymonville "did not take this assistant fully into his confidence." To underscore this, he "became furious" when the assistant "agreed to share a *dacha*<sup>111</sup> in a village in the environs of Moscow with two members of the embassy." The apparent reason for this episode was Faymonville's paranoia: he feared that "the reputation of his office, so far as the Soviets were concerned, would be injured if his assistant maintained close friendly relations with representatives of the State Department."<sup>112</sup>

If the State Department and War Department could see what the Soviets were saying about Faymonville, the demands for his removal would have

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<sup>111</sup> A cottage.

<sup>112</sup> Henderson, *Question*: 316.

become even more fervent. Soviet officials investigating the American embassy in 1934 found Faymonville to be "friendly"; while this may not seem like much of an endorsement, one should bear in mind that the Soviets found then-Ambassador Bullitt to be "friendly but seeking a mutually advantageous relationship" but stated that Faymonville was "just plain friendly."<sup>113</sup> The implication here seems to be that Bullitt sought a *quid pro quo* approach to relations with the Soviet Union to the benefit of all parties involved in whatever dealings were being discussed, while Faymonville was engaged in a friendly relationship with no strings attached. Such knowledge would have had a chilling effect on American government officials who were already forming their suspicions of him based on his observations of the Red Army, his stance on the Soviet Union, and his personality and behavior in general.

In the end, Ambassador Davies words were considered but firmly rejected. On February 10, 1939, Davies received a response, apparently from President Roosevelt himself, that stated "I have checked up with both the War and State Departments and agree with their decision that the Colonel should comply with the Department's orders."<sup>114</sup> The Army Chief of Staff received a memorandum recommending that Colonel Faymonville be issued orders ending his tour at the embassy; it indicated that Faymonville's initial extension of duty

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<sup>113</sup> Dennis J. Dunn. *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 45.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from President Roosevelt to Ambassador Joseph Davies, February 10, 1939, Roosevelt Papers, OF 3601, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

as an attaché officer was due to the “extraordinary conditions prevailing in the Far East” and that now that conditions there had “changed”, the need for Faymonville to remain at his post has “passed.”<sup>115</sup> With that, Lieutenant Colonel Faymonville's increasingly stormy tenure in Moscow concluded. With Faymonville back in the United States, the advice that Roosevelt received in regards to how to deal with the Soviet Union was “influenced by diplomats and officers who thought it foolhardy to trust or cooperate with the Soviet Union.”<sup>116</sup>

As for Faymonville, he returned to the United States and served on the technical staff for the Chief of Ordinance in Washington, and remained there until October 1940, when he was reassigned to the Fourth Army headquarters in San Francisco as an ordinance officer, and in November 1940, he received a promotion to Colonel.<sup>117</sup> As Loy Henderson politely put it in his memoirs, “he was reassigned to a post not connected to foreign affairs in the United States.”<sup>118</sup> This took place in spite of the fact that Faymonville had performed extensive work in the area of foreign affairs, much of that with nations that would become the principal combatants of a rapidly approaching Second World War. This alone was most likely not unusual, for the Army viewed Faymonville, regardless of his controversial tenure as an attaché officer in Moscow, as an ordinance officer first and foremost, and as such, he needed to be developed and utilized as an ordinance officer, rather than as a military specialist in foreign affairs. Such

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<sup>115</sup> National Archives, RG 165, 2483-93, NARA.

<sup>116</sup> Mary Glantz, “An Officer and Diplomat?”: 148.

<sup>117</sup> Herndon and Baylen, “Col. Philip R. Faymonville”: 499-500.

<sup>118</sup> Henderson, *Question*: 314.

attitudes persist today in the military as it is frowned upon for officers to spend too much time out of their specialty. However, the Army's rumor mill suggested that Faymonville did not receive "the customary debriefing" at the end of his tour in Moscow; rather, he was immediately shunted off to a series of unimportant posts before settling down at his Fourth Army headquarters post in San Francisco which was an assignment intended to set up his retirement from the Army in his hometown.<sup>119</sup> If true, this suggests that Faymonville was quietly being disposed of and shown the door to end his Army career with no hope of further advancement. Due to events occurring around the world at the time, however, this state of affairs was not to last long. The world was at war in a conflict which would consume the world, and the United States was at a precipice where it was about to be pulled into the fray.

Perhaps if the Soviet Union were not invaded by Germany, Colonel Philip Faymonville would have toiled in Washington as a senior staff officer before shoving off to San Francisco where he would have worked until a quiet retirement, with nothing more being heard from him. If so, he would have been further consigned to an even more obscure place in the history books. Instead, June 22, 1941, the day when Operation *Barbarossa* commenced, changed Faymonville's fate. Early that day, the Soviet Union was dragged into the war on the side of the allies, two years after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed. This pact was a non-aggression treaty which served to divide Eastern Europe

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<sup>119</sup> Langer, "The Red General", 214.

between two spheres of influence and most infamously sealed the fate of Poland and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The German invasion of the Soviet Union was an abrogation of that pact of the cruelest sort. Now the

Soviet Union needed materiel assistance and the support of its new allies. Because of this, Faymonville was once again called upon to serve his country in a pivotal capacity in the Soviet Union. He thus entered the spotlight once more and the controversy around him would be revisited and assume new dimensions as World War II progressed. His tenure as an attaché officer and the reputation he cultivated as “the Bolshevik” looked certain to end his career. It was not to be, even though the controversy during the next phase of his career would kill his career and reputation once and for all.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

### CHAPTER 3 - FAYMONVILLE IN THE 1940s

Faymonville was still at the Presidio in San Francisco when Operation *Barbarossa* commenced on June 22, 1941.<sup>121</sup> He was soon called back into action in the diplomatic realm. The top military official of the Division of Defense Aid Reports, Major General James A. Burns, ordered Faymonville transferred from San Francisco to Washington to "head the Soviet section of that division," a division assembled by Roosevelt to administer the Lend-Lease Act.<sup>122</sup> Colonel Faymonville arrived at his office on July 13, 1941, and "set to work establishing the necessary office."<sup>123</sup> Once again Faymonville was at work in a position which would deal directly with the Soviet Union.

At this point the Soviet Union not only sustained an attack from the Germans which had them reeling. The Soviet Union had, soon after Faymonville left Moscow, suffered great humiliation. The Soviet Union attempted to invade Finland in 1939 and had been repulsed, a defeat by an army that the Red Army outnumbered two hundred times over.<sup>124</sup> Instead of winning an easy triumph they were repelled by the Finns and this defeat exposed severe weaknesses in the

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<sup>121</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville", 500.

<sup>122</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?": 149.

<sup>123</sup> Book Review, *Slavic Review* 47 no. 3 (Autumn, 1988):, 41.

<sup>124</sup> John Keegan. *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 176.



Red Army for the world to see, to include Hitler and the German High Command who were planning Operation *Barbarossa*.<sup>125</sup> The losses taken by the Red Army in the opening days of *Barbarossa* were massive. These events seemed to have contradicted Faymonville's predictions and assurances of the Red Army's preparedness and abilities and thus put him in a negative light. Just beyond the horizon lay the Harriman-Beaverbrook mission, in which he played a part, however, and this put him back at the embassy in Moscow and events would place him in an even greater role than that of a military attaché.

In the summer of 1941 frantic diplomatic exchanges broke out among Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin in the opening days of *Barbarossa*, especially as the first few weeks revealed little, if anything, about the true nature of the military situation in the Soviet Union.<sup>126</sup> It was clear, however, that the Soviet Union at minimum needed materiel aid in order to carry on the fight against the Nazis. It was on this note that the Roosevelt administration took the first halting steps towards aiding the Soviets by releasing \$39 million in frozen assets while deliberating what to do next on June 24, 1941.<sup>127</sup> Over in Britain, Churchill "offered to immediately send 200 Tomahawk fighters (P-40s), along with large quantities of assorted raw material essential to Russia's war effort" on July 26.<sup>128</sup> More was going to be needed, however, and to this end, a joint Anglo-American

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Blake W. Smith. *Warplanes to Alaska* (Surrey, BC: Hancock House, 1998): 23.

<sup>127</sup> George C. Herring. *Aid to Russia 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973): 9-10.

<sup>128</sup> Smith, *Warplanes*, 22-23.

effort was prepared. The previously referenced Harriman-Beaverbrook mission was the result. On August 18, 1941, President Roosevelt returned from a conference with Churchill and with Lord Beaverbrook, whom Prime Minister Churchill named his Minister of Supply; on September 5 the American contingent to this mission was named, with W. Averell Harriman as chief, and other notable members as Admiral William H. Standley and several other military personnel and technical specialists.<sup>129</sup> The list of specialists includes none other than one Colonel Phillip R. Faymonville. An order to Mr. Harriman that requested that he "proceed at his earliest convenience to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" to act as his "Special Representative and Chairman of the Special Mission to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the rank of Ambassador" contains a list of the people sent on the mission, and Faymonville's name can be found towards the bottom of this order.<sup>130</sup> Nowhere on the page is there a delineation of any sort of duties or positions that these officers were to fulfill nor is there an indication of the reason Faymonville was selected, but one can imagine that his selection was the result of his fluency in Russian and the four years he spent in Moscow as an attaché. Indeed, a document found in the Harriman papers at the Library of Congress notes that among those named to the Mission, was "Colonel Philip R. Faymonville, for many years attached to the office of Military Attaché in Moscow" which suggests that his experience in the

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<sup>129</sup> Edward R. Stettinius Jr. *Lend-Lease: Weapon For Victory* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1944), 125.

<sup>130</sup> Order pertaining to Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission personnel, Harry Hopkins Papers Box 140, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Moscow embassy was a prime consideration for his being made part of the Mission.<sup>131</sup> The same document also lists Faymonville as "Secretary of the Mission" and indicated that all men assigned to the Mission had the "personal rank of Minister."<sup>132</sup> Though there may have been grumbling in the State Department and the War Department at Faymonville's return to the embassy at Moscow, it is quite possible that he was, at least in terms of language and knowledge of the area, its people and culture, an indispensable choice. Admiral Standley indicated in his memoirs that Colonel Faymonville was the "Mission Secretary" for the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission as well as "one of Harry Hopkins' Lend-Lease Boys."<sup>133</sup>

After going to London to meet with the rest of the British contingent, the entourage proceeded to Moscow via Archangel; the conference began on September 29 and after 48 hours, on October 1, an agreement, referred to in Lend-Lease documents in the Roosevelt Library and elsewhere as "the First Protocol", was reached. It delivered a nine-month supply program that would have \$1 billion in supplies heading to the Soviet Union to aid the war effort on the Eastern Front.<sup>134</sup> The national contingents then went back to their respective

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<sup>131</sup> Report on Special Mission to The USSR, W.A. Harriman and Party, September and October 1941, by R.P. Meiklejohn, July 25, 1946. Box 165, Folder 7, W. Averell Harriman Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton. *Admiral Ambassador to Russia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), 74-75.

<sup>134</sup> Stettinius, *Lend-Lease*, 125.

homes in the United Kingdom and the United States; almost everyone, that is, except for Faymonville. According to a memorandum sent to the Treasury Department outlining expenses for the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission, "that with Mr. Harriman's departure from Russia he left behind Col. Phillip R. Faymonville and two junior officers to carry on all matters pertaining to the supply of war materials from America".<sup>135</sup> A concurring statement can be found in a report on Harriman's Mission to Moscow. In it, it states that "Colonel Faymonville and Lieutenants Cook and Olsen and Dr. Brown remained in Moscow as the nucleus of the organization that subsequently became known as the U.S. Supply Mission in Moscow."<sup>136</sup> In short, he would be in charge of all matters relating to the Lend-Lease program in the Soviet Union.

It is apparent that Hopkins was also aware of the unpopularity of Faymonville among those in the War Department and the State Department. In spite of his unpopularity, Faymonville's reputation of being a "Russian expert of long standing" was more than enough to qualify him for an assignment to the embassy in Moscow to oversee Lend-Lease operations. Hopkins saw to it that Faymonville was sent on the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission but the plan to keep Faymonville in the Soviet Union was a secret until October 2, 1941, when Harriman was cabled a message from Hopkins stating that "it is understood that

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<sup>135</sup>Harry Hopkins Papers Box 140, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

<sup>136</sup> Report on Special Mission to The USSR, W.A. Harriman and Party, September and October 1941, by R.P. Meiklejohn, July 25, 1946. Box 165, Folder 7. W. Averell Harriman Papers, Library of Congress. No information is given on the specific roles the other three men played in this document.

Faymonville...will remain in Russia."<sup>137</sup>

The decision to leave Faymonville behind at the embassy thus came as a surprise to one member of the Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission; a man who would eventually be named ambassador to the Soviet Union--Admiral William Standley. He mentioned in his memoirs that when asked when the mission was leaving, Faymonville replied "The rest of you are leaving on the fifth, but I am staying on". Standley goes on to say that this was how he found out about Faymonville staying behind in Moscow.<sup>138</sup>

From all indications, Faymonville had a powerful backer. In a note dated January 17, 1942, which from all appearances was used to track the internal flow of documents in the Roosevelt White House, Hopkins "sent a memo for the President attaching the nomination of Colonel Philip Ries Faymonville...to be Major General".<sup>139</sup> According to this document, Hopkins urgently pressed the case for Faymonville to be promoted because he "is Russia as the only representative of our country and that he has no rank which means a good deal over there"; he goes on to say that "the Russians like him."<sup>140</sup> Having Hopkins' approval was crucial. The Division of Defense Aid Reports of the Office of Emergency Management, later to become the Lend-Lease Administration, officially had no head; and as such, this agency reported directly to the President.

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<sup>137</sup> John Daniel Langer, "The Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission and the Debate Over Unconditional Aid to the Soviet Union", *Journal of Contemporary History* 14 No. 3 (Jul. 1979): 470.

<sup>138</sup> Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador*, 74-75.

<sup>139</sup> Harry Hopkins Papers Box 140, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

In practice, this meant that the agency reported to Harry Hopkins, officially listed as the Special Assistant to the President.<sup>141</sup> In September 1941 he would be formally replaced in his Lend-Lease role by Edward Stettinius, but since he remained as Roosevelt's Special Assistant, his influence on decisions pertaining to Lend-Lease would remain firmly in place.<sup>142</sup>

In the end, however, Faymonville would advance no higher than Brigadier General in his military career. The fact that he only had a single star on his shoulders seems to have not dimmed the way the Russians viewed him in the slightest. The Russians may have liked him but there were already complaints being lofted about Faymonville's position at the embassy by the likes of the former ambassador William Bullitt and Loy Henderson, who both "were quoted as feeling that Faymonville was too sympathetic to the Russians."<sup>143</sup> Forrest Pogue reported that there was strong opposition to his appointment as the Lend-Lease representative in Moscow from those in "Army circles."<sup>144</sup> Additionally, soon there was much friction in the embassy in Moscow as Admiral Standley clashed with Faymonville, and soon thereafter others who had their own issues with the Lend-Lease representative went on the offensive against him as well.<sup>145</sup>

The sympathy to the Soviets that people like Bullitt and Henderson were concerned about is perhaps best shown in communications that Standley had

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<sup>141</sup> Henry H. Adams, *Harry Hopkins* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977): 216.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>143</sup> Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador*, 237.

<sup>144</sup> Forrest Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope* (New York: Viking Press, 1965): 75.

<sup>145</sup> W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York: Random House, 1975): 228.

with Lend-Lease officials back home. In a message for Hopkins, dated October 11, 1941, Colonel Faymonville noted that Hopkins's list of shipments were well received by the Soviet General Staff and government but "stress urgent and immediate need" of "airplanes, tanks, machine guns, hand arms and ammunition in quantities exceeding wherever possible" the items agreed to on the list of shipments that were just agreed upon at the recently concluded Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission and the conference it attended. "Serious losses" had occurred in the seven days previous, Faymonville noted, and went on to report that the "military situation in Orel and in extreme south serious but not hopeless" and that the Soviet General Staff asserted that "Red Army troops almost surrounded at Vyazma are being re-formed and that adequate reserves are being used to prevent encirclement of Moscow." There would be no encirclement of Moscow, though the Germans got very close to the city, but the situation in the south proved to be a bit more than hopeless. Indeed, in the early phase of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, much of the European portion of the Soviet Union fell into German hands. The situation on the Eastern Front proved more desperate and more serious than Faymonville depicts here, even if he is simply relaying the view of the Soviet government to Hopkins to go with a new list of needed equipment. Such optimistic views of the Red Army proved troubling to Faymonville's embassy colleagues in the 1930s and this would prove

to be the case in the 1940s as well.<sup>146</sup>

Admiral William Standley was appointed as Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1942. He noted that Faymonville "proved to be a valuable aide, but, since he did not come directly under my authority, I found his activities an almost constant source of difficulty and embarrassment."<sup>147</sup> It is apparent that Standley did not fully appreciate how Faymonville was viewed by the Roosevelt administration. He went into the ambassadorship convinced that he would be not unlike the previous ambassadors even though the Roosevelt administration viewed him as primarily a "figurehead."<sup>148</sup> Faymonville in reality had a position that eclipsed Standley's office even as Standley was ambassador because as the overseer of Lend-Lease activities in the Soviet Union, his job was to "give the Soviets whatever they asked for" and this was the "focal point of American relations with the Soviet Union."<sup>149</sup> Standley admits he was "thoroughly briefed as to this situation" before he left Washington for the Soviet Union and that he understood his authority as ambassador "did not extend to Philip Faymonville and the Supply Mission."<sup>150</sup>

Standley makes clear in his memoirs that in terms of personal feelings, he found Faymonville to be a "pleasant, agreeable fellow, with a warm personality"

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<sup>146</sup> *FRUS*, "The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State." Volume I, 1941: 846.

<sup>147</sup> Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador*, 127.

<sup>148</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 159.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*: 158.

<sup>150</sup> Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador*, 237.



with "good presence" and "properly deferential." In the business realm, he was quite critical of the head of the Lend-Lease mission. Standley complained that not only were the Soviets getting the material needed in accordance with the Lend-Lease Protocol but the Soviets also got "much American and British military information, which could never under any circumstance be considered Lend-Lease material." He also pointed out that while the embassy evacuated Moscow for the temporary Soviet capital of Kuibyshev in October, Faymonville stayed on at Moscow. All of this made Faymonville increasingly suspect in Standley's eyes.<sup>151</sup>

Standley could not discipline Faymonville, perhaps, because he was beyond his control, but he decided, instead, to embellish the prestige of his military attachés such as Colonel Michela, one of Faymonville's successors in that post. This failed, because Faymonville was giving the Soviets whatever they wanted, and they continued to bypass Michela in favor of Faymonville, much to the consternation of Admiral Standley. What did not hurt matters for Faymonville was the fact that he had known and befriended many younger officials in Moscow during his sojourn as a military attaché in the 1930s and that many had risen in the Soviet ranks as time went by; chief among these was Commissar for Foreign Trade Mikoyan, who Standley describes as Faymonville's "principal contact among Soviet officials." All of this was increasingly too much for Standley, who later thought to himself as he considered Faymonville across

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid: 238.

the office from him, "If I were a captain of a ship or admiral of a division again and you were one of my officers, I'd know what to do. I'd say, 'Damn it all, Faymonville, do what your told or else.'" Repeated requests from Standley to Faymonville to keep the embassy and military and naval attaché officers in the know about his dealings with the Soviets were heard but ignored.<sup>152</sup>

One example of the disagreement between Faymonville and Standley on how Standley saw his position in the embassy can be found in a memorandum by Charles Bohlen. It dealt with a request from one Professor Robinson, the Head of the Russian Section of the Office of Strategic Services, by way of a Mr. Hazard of the Lend-Lease office. The request was for Faymonville to supply "certain information regarding the food situation in the Soviet Union." The telegram that Robinson wished to send had "certain specific questions regarding the rationing in the Soviet Union and estimates of the current and future food problems there." This request for information was specifically addressed to General Faymonville. Bohlen talked with Admiral Standley about this request, and he "objected very strongly to the dispatch of the telegram by Lend-Lease to Faymonville directly." Standley objected on the grounds that the subject was best handled by the Embassy Reporting Section and not by Faymonville and Lend-Lease as it "did not relate directly to the question of supply." Standley did, however, approve of the embassy's requesting of Faymonville's views on

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid: 238-247.

Professor Robinson's concerns and questions. Eventually the memorandum with Robinson's questions were drafted and sent to Moscow, and it requested Faymonville's direct response. Standley objected to this yet again and the telegram was then "sent to Kuibyshev and repeated for information purposes only to Moscow."<sup>153</sup>

Were Standley's suspicions of Faymonville justified? If looked at from the Soviet perspective, it would seem that he might have been on to something. Though it is unclear precisely what military information Faymonville may have been conveying to the Soviets, the Russian archives indicate that "the Soviet military used Faymonville as a kind of super military agent."<sup>154</sup> This implies that the Soviets were indeed on very good terms with him and thought quite highly of him. Though nothing can be found as of yet indicating that sensitive information was being passed from Faymonville to Soviet military authorities, it seems that the concerns of the State Department and the War Department were justified to a degree.

For another perspective, the words of another Foreign Service Officer, John F. Melby, should be considered as well. Upon arrival at Spaso House, which was the ambassador's residence in Moscow, Ambassador Standley made Melby a "house manager" in Melby's words. When W. Averell Harriman succeeded Standley later in 1943 as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Melby

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<sup>153</sup> National Archives, Records Group 59, Microfilm, Bohlen File, Box 1-8, Roll 2, NARA.

<sup>154</sup> Dunn, *Caught*, 171.

retained his "house manager" role. In this position he had his own view of the intrigues and personalities in the embassy and many years later he made his views known via recorded interviews. In one interview, Melby stated of Standley that he "didn't have very much to do, and he would leave by mid-summer (1943) anyway." Why did Standley leave, in Melby's view? According to Melby, Standley was summoned back to Washington "because most of what the Embassy might have been doing was being done by the military mission and General [Philip] Faymonville, a very charming guy -- very pro-Russian, ideologically pro-Russian. To him the Russians could do no wrong, even saying no to them, never. Anything they wanted was fine with him." Melby continued with some critical commentary on Faymonville. When the interviewer commented that it was American policy at the time to give the Soviets whatever they needed as quickly as possible, Melby retorted with "Well, yes, but you didn't have to go as far as he did. After all, we didn't have unlimited supplies; we were involved in a war, and we had our own needs and so on. And the Russians could be pretty demanding. Not only could be, but they were." While it is true that in war that many supplies that combatants may want are in short supply and that Soviets were in fact very demanding of their allies, no indication is given by John F. Melby what exactly he meant by Faymonville "going as far as he did." Neither, for that matter, did Standley get into specifics when he

objected to the transfer of military information that was, in his view, not remotely related to Lend-Lease aid.<sup>155</sup>

Standley saw himself as an ambassador that had to have control of the embassy and the personnel in it much like he would have command in the Navy as an admiral, but here at the embassy in Moscow, he did not have command over several individuals, and this included Faymonville, who reported to the White House and no other.<sup>156</sup> This did not stop Standley who nonetheless sought control of Faymonville. When he traveled to Washington for consultations with Roosevelt and his administration in late 1942, he demanded that his Naval Attaché be made a Rear Admiral; that his military attaché, Colonel Michela, be made a Brigadier General to be on the same level as Faymonville, and finally, that General Faymonville be placed under his "administrative direction and control."<sup>157</sup> These conditions had to be met, Standley threatened, or the exasperated ambassador could not return to Moscow in that capacity.<sup>158</sup> The White House relented, ordering that the chief of the Supply Mission report to the chief of the Diplomatic Mission, which, on paper, at least, placed Faymonville under Standley's authority.<sup>159</sup> In spite of this, conditions at the

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<sup>155</sup> Oral history interview with John F. Melby by Robert Accinelli, November 7, 1986, Ontario, Canada. Harry S Truman Presidential Library.<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/melby1.htm> (accessed October 13, 2011). All underlined words in the quotation are underlined in the transcript.

<sup>156</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 160.

<sup>157</sup> Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador*, 310.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid: 309.

<sup>159</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 162.

embassy only got much worse due to the increasingly personal acrimony between Colonel Michela, soon promoted to Brigadier General, and Faymonville. General George Marshall, for his part, considered the promotion to Michela to Brigadier General to be unusual practice for a military attaché, but, to quote Marshall, "if that is the way you want it, Bill, Michella [sic] will be promoted."<sup>160</sup>

Faymonville's and Michela's attitudes towards the Soviet Union were opposite one another and thus, "from its inception, the relationship between Michela and Faymonville had been strained."<sup>161</sup> This is a repeating of the pattern Faymonville established during his days at the embassy as an attaché officer when relations between him and Ambassador Bullitt and others became strained due to disagreements on how to view the Soviet Union. Michela was severely critical of the Red Army and its capabilities while Faymonville had always been optimistic about its chances; further, Michela was thoroughly anti-Soviet in his outlook while Faymonville clung to his position that the Soviets could and should be used as an ally.<sup>162</sup> Michela provided the Army with information and analyses that made no secret of his contempt for the Soviet Union to the point where "he was so blinded by his prejudices that he was no longer capable of providing useful intelligence" to the military intelligence establishment in Washington.<sup>163</sup> Michela despised Roosevelt's policies towards the Soviet Union.

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<sup>160</sup> Forrest Pogue. *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945*. New York: Viking Books, 1973: 290.

<sup>161</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 164.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.: 167.

Eventually, since he could not change Roosevelt's mind, he did what in his view would be the next best thing: attack the greatest advocate of that policy in the embassy and indeed the overseer of that policy.<sup>164</sup> His bitter hatred and contempt for Faymonville became all-consuming; nothing less than the destruction of Faymonville's career would suffice and eventually this clash became public to the point where it threatened the execution of Roosevelt's policy in the Soviet Union.<sup>165</sup>

How all consuming did this drive to destroy Faymonville become? It became public knowledge in June 1943, and would result in an investigation, conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, instigated by Michela.<sup>166</sup> Faymonville was accused, in this instance, of homosexual behavior, and the FBI acted. Documents at the Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library indicate that this investigation reached the desk of J. Edgar Hoover himself. Agents descended on Faymonville's trail, especially in his hometown of San Francisco, where interviews of various associates and informants took place. As could be expected in the case of such investigations, Faymonville's past was examined in minute detail to find even the slightest sign of homosexual behavior. The files also indicate that his name appeared in various Communist publications on the West Coast. However, the investigation, from all appearances, came to naught. Lines such as this from one agent's report are typical: "He (an informant) felt

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid: 168.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid: 172.

'definitely certain' that General Faymonville is not perverted in any manner.

This was the opinion of all persons interviewed and no derogatory information as to General Faymonville's moral character was uncovered."<sup>167</sup> Another report indicated that "responsible individuals" reported that Faymonville was many things: a "splendid man", an "excellent musician", a "student of military affairs", "reticent", "cultured", a "delightful personality" who "never interested himself in the opposite sex."<sup>168</sup> The last point may have inadvertently opened up Faymonville to this attack by Michela and as well explains why no mention of, say, a spouse or children left behind were mentioned in his obituary in the *New York Times*.

The Army Chief of Staff conducted its own investigation of Faymonville as well but this also came to naught. While this was going on General James H. Burns visited Moscow in April 1943 and "busied himself with Faymonville and spent very little time with the Ambassador."<sup>169</sup> The Chief of Staff's investigation was completed in July 1943 and was initiated for less salacious reasons; namely, the accusation that Faymonville was so pro-Soviet that questions were raised about whether or not he was blackmailed by the Soviet government in some

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<sup>167</sup>Tyler Kent Papers Box 2, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Jones, Robert Huhn. *The Roads to Russia: United States Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press): 136.



way.<sup>170</sup> The report was very poorly done and is replete with "rumor and innuendo" and "personal animosity."<sup>171</sup>

The report triggered a furious response from Major General James A. Burns, in a handwritten report in which, among other things, he attacked the investigation for being carried out without Faymonville's knowledge and apparently for no other reason than personal animosity. While he conceded that it "contained much worthwhile information and analysis with reference to Faymonville," it also contained "much gossip and hearsay evidence for which Gen. Michela seems largely responsible." He also poured much cold water on the allegations lofted at Faymonville. General Burns stated in the report that "he conducts himself in his personal life with the dignity and respectability that his position requires" and that "there is no evidence to show that Faymonville is being blackmailed into giving undue assistance to Russia or that he is failing to protect the interests of America." While he did point out that Faymonville is "obviously friendly to Russia" and followed a policy of "giving her maximum Lend/Lease assistance without demanding military information in return," he further stated that this was "understood to be military policy" and thus not in violation of any restrictions. Perhaps belaboring the obvious, Burns stated that Faymonville "has the respect and friendship of high-level...Russians" and that he had a long list of enemies in the embassy, to include Ambassador Standley and

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<sup>170</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 174.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

General Michela among other names in the report. He also indicates unidentified "State Department officials" as being among Faymonville's enemies. Perhaps most damning, however, was Burns' judgment of the Lend-Lease organization in Moscow. While he said that it "conducts itself no worse than the rest of the American representation in Moscow," he called "the general standard of all...quite unsatisfactory." He also said that all American representation in the Soviet Union "lacks the teamwork, prestige, dignity, ability...and respectability essential to the important work involved and is not a credit to America." Among his recommendations were such acts as "cleaning house of all who were not loyally carrying out the President's policies" and those who were "not conducting themselves in such a way as to bring credit to America," ordering a new ambassador to create a new organization that was well imbued with "teamwork, dignity, ability and respectability," and even a promotion of Faymonville "if satisfactory to the new ambassador." It is not overtly stated in the handwritten report, but the references to a "new ambassador" in the report's recommendations suggests that General Burns called in a subtle fashion for the removal of Ambassador Standley from his position.<sup>172</sup>

The clashes and intrigues at the embassy got to be too much for those working within the embassy. Standley became fed up with his position in Moscow and eventually asked to be relieved of his duties.<sup>173</sup> He left Moscow for

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<sup>172</sup> Handwritten report, dated 16 August 1942. Harry Hopkins Papers Box 140, Group 24, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

<sup>173</sup> Pogue, *Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 290.

good in September 1943 and both Faymonville and his antagonist Michela were recalled to the United States soon thereafter.<sup>174</sup> Both warring generals were replaced by both Brigadier General John R. Deane, to be head of the Military Mission, and Brigadier General Sidney P. Spalding, head of the Supply Division of the Mission.<sup>175</sup> Standley was replaced by W. Averell Harriman, and in September 1943 he and General Marshall "decided that the military mission in the Soviet Union would be clearly under the direction of the ambassador," which was the arrangement Standley had been pleading for his entire time as ambassador.<sup>176</sup> In the view of John F. Melby, who saw Secretary of State Cordell Hull go to the Moscow Conference in October 1943, "Harriman came in with (Hull), and he actually stayed on as the new Ambassador" adding that "(Harriman) cleaned out the whole military mission, and that's when Major General [John R.] Deane came in."<sup>177</sup>

Deane, for his part, seems sympathetic to Faymonville. He described the embassy in Moscow as "seething with cliques, gossip, etc" and further stated that Faymonville impressed him, as he told General Marshall in private correspondence that "he did his job well" and that he "was the only one who

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<sup>174</sup> Dunn, *Caught*, 197.

<sup>175</sup> Pogue. *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, 291.

<sup>176</sup> Jones, *Roads*, 171.

<sup>177</sup> Oral history interview with John F. Melby by Robert Accinelli, November 7, 1986, Ontario, Canada. Harry S. Truman Library.

didn't think everyone else in Russia both Russian and American was an S.O.B."<sup>178</sup>

Where did Faymonville go wrong in the view of Deane? According to his memoirs, Deane observed that "Faymonville had had instructions from the President that no strings were to be attached to our aid program to Russia and that the program was not to be used as a lever to obtain information about and from the Russians."<sup>179</sup> However, Faymonville proceeded to take these instructions from President Roosevelt "almost too literally," which caused further problems in Deane's view when the Army and Navy attaché officers attempted to procure information from Faymonville on even the Red Army's use of the Lend-Lease aid, which was "information Faymonville did not have."<sup>180</sup>

From Moscow in 1943, Faymonville went back to the United States and entered a period of obscurity. His prediction that the Red Army would hold out against the Germans would seem to have validated him and his ideas considering that the Red Army would eventually triumph.<sup>181</sup> By this point, though, it seems that Faymonville was too severely damaged by the controversy to be vindicated by the turn of events in the war. The investigations by the FBI and the Army Chief of Staff and his rankling of State Department officials proved to be a lead weight on his career and succeeded in stopping his progression in the ranks. On September 28, 1943, Faymonville, upon being formally recalled to the United States from the embassy in Moscow, reverted to

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<sup>178</sup> Pogue. *Marshall: Organizer of Victory*: 288.

<sup>179</sup> John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance* (New York, The Viking Press, 1952): 91.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville", 504.

the rank of Colonel.<sup>182</sup> Eventually Faymonville was posted to the Texarkana Ordinance Center, where he would remain until retirement from the Army in 1948. In his post-military career, he went to work for the State Department as an advisor "on matters relating to Japan, the Soviet Union, and China."<sup>183</sup> He eventually went back to his hometown of San Francisco where he was a patron of the arts, where he especially supported local opera, and "participated in discussion groups on world affairs with a small circle of friends" and supported Stanford University.<sup>184</sup> He could not escape the shadow of the past, however. His name came up again during the Red Scare of the 1950s, specifically in hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Internal Security Subcommittee, who composed a file on the retired general.<sup>185</sup> The oft-cited book by Admiral William Standley, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, has an entire chapter dedicated to Faymonville. When asked about this by Anatole Mazour, and more specifically why Faymonville did not counter the charges leveled against him by Standley, the general looked at Mazour with "sharp eyes, pleasantly smiled, and after some hesitance simply replied, 'I never debate publicly any Peglerian interpretation of history.'"<sup>186</sup> Very little was heard from the General in his later years, and he died in relative obscurity in San Francisco on March 29, 1962. The gravesite locator found on the Department of Veterans Affairs website indicates

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<sup>182</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and a Diplomat?", 175.

<sup>183</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville", 503.

<sup>184</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville", 84.

<sup>185</sup> Mary Glantz, "An Officer and Diplomat?", 177.

<sup>186</sup> Mazour, "Faymonville", 83.

that Brigadier General Philip Faymonville is buried at the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Francisco, where his grave can be found at Section X, Site 64.

## CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSION

So far the views of State Department officials, senior military officers, and even the Soviet government to a degree can be seen on the controversy that surrounded General Faymonville. What is most striking, perhaps, as Mazour found out, was the lack of response or of any sort of rejoinder by the General himself. It seems that he was content to fade into obscurity and said very little on his behalf; nor is there a memoir penned by him detailing his exploits to be found. Mazour, for one, was astonished by this reticence to speak out on the General's part. Mazour's attempts to find out from Faymonville "the nature of the difficulties he encountered with members of the War, Navy and State Departments" often ended ambiguously; Mazour notes that he "usually smiled pleasantly, uttered a few innocuous remarks and said mainly nothing."<sup>187</sup>

In Mazour's thinking, this attitude rankled officials as much as any perceived friendliness towards the Soviets.<sup>188</sup> It certainly proved to be the case for William Standley. In the 1930s as military attaché Faymonville's optimism regarding the Soviets and their military capabilities put him at odds with other officials who were either pessimistic about the Red Army, or were profoundly

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.: 83-84.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

those viewpoints, Faymonville proved unpopular. The anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiment was so strong that it could only be explained, in some minds, by Faymonville being sympathetic to the Soviets and their cause. The same held true in the 1940s and this sentiment was exacerbated by his role in the Lend Lease program and his being a point man in providing much materiel support for the Red Army. Again, had those like Standley and Michela known what Soviet officials said about him at the time, one can only imagine that the chorus of voices demanding Faymonville's recall to Washington would have reached a deafening roar. The constant, unflinching military philosophy of Faymonville of using the Soviet Union as a natural ally against a major threat to United States supremacy in the Pacific is often obscured by these discussions.

In the end, however, it would seem that both sides have a good case to make. Faymonville had a philosophy in military affairs that was the bedrock of his thinking and thus the notion of using the Soviet Union as an ally against Japan was not going to be easily shaken. This does not necessarily make him a Soviet agent or a traitor. If this does, then the actions of the Roosevelt administration during the war should likewise be called into question. However, the slight amount of light shed into the Russian archives shows that Faymonville's detractors may have had a point as well. The Russians looked upon him warmly and this likewise cannot be denied. It remains to be seen, though, exactly why this was the case. Was this because, as Dennis Dunn pointed out, the Soviets sought to use Faymonville as a "super military agent," as



noted previously? Was military information that the Soviets were not privy to given to them by Faymonville, and if so, what exactly was it? Or was it simply a matter of the Soviets being comfortable with a man who knew and understood their language and culture as well as many of the people within the Soviet government on a personal level and was the lone voice in the American intelligence community who called for the government to avoid selling the Red Army short?

All of these questions render Faymonville difficult to evaluate, even now, nearly a half-century after his death. Herndon and Baylen confessed as much in 1975 and thirty-seven years later the passage of time has done little to lift the fog.<sup>189</sup> The difficulty ultimately lies in the fact that many sources were biased against him to an extreme degree, with relatively few voices countering those with the same passion and intensity, if they bothered to counter Faymonville's detractors at all, and finally, in the deafening silence from Faymonville himself. An objective view on Faymonville will be difficult, but not impossible to construct. Ultimately, many of the answers to the controversy surrounding General Faymonville can best be answered not within the United States and its archives but within Russia and its archives. Only a combination of American and Russian viewpoints can answer these questions once and for all. The glimpse we have into the Russian archive thus far seems to point in the favor of Faymonville's detractors, but they will have to be opened fully in order for the

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<sup>189</sup> Herndon and Baylen, "Col. Philip R. Faymonville", 504.

most accurate picture to be drawn of him. However, based on the evidence provided from this composite image we can draw from the sources described, though admittedly with limited input from the Russian archives, Philip Faymonville was not by any stretch of the imagination a spy for the Soviets nor a member of the Communist party. Charles Bohlen conceded as much in his memoirs. He stated that "I do not believe that Faymonville was in any sense of the word a Communist, or had even toyed with the idea of joining the American Communist Party" but rather "he was simply pro-Russian, which, under the circumstances of the 1930s, forced him into a pro-Bolshevik position."<sup>190</sup> He believed in his notion that the Soviet Union was *the* natural ally for the United States in the event of a war with Japan and he believed so to a fault. This left Faymonville open to following his conviction to the point where he at least lent the perception of being willingly naïve about the nature of Soviet Union. Additionally, this seems to have been such an obsessive devotion for him that everything else became secondary: he felt that he had to go out of his way to personally cultivate good relations with the Soviet Union on the basis that the United States would need such relations some day. Or perhaps Faymonville was cultivating these good relations for his own benefit: would not the Army view him as even more indispensable if his views of the world took hold? By itself, this would not have been such a bad thing, had he thought to share this idea with some other embassy personnel or others in the military for whom he was

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<sup>190</sup> Bohlen, *Witness*: 57.

working; they would at least know what he was up to and might have possibly lent him even more backing for his activities. However, when Faymonville's belief is compounded by a secretive, reclusive personality, and further compounded by the fact that his most sought after companion in the event of a future war with the Japanese was in the 1930s and 1940s a Communist state that was busily violently oppressing its own people and bent on exporting revolution worldwide, one cannot help but understand why the State Department and the War Department expressed concern over his activities and why some in the embassy might have greeted them with outright hostility.

What may have saved Faymonville a lot of trouble would have been more open communication with the embassy and his military superiors. Had he merely pulled them aside and explained what it was that he was doing with his efforts to cultivate contacts with senior Red Army personnel and Soviet government officials, a lot of trouble could have been avoided and he would have been further consigned to an even more obscure corner of the history of the Second World War. His reports would similarly have been dismissed as merely wrong, or possibly an alternative analysis, at least until events proved him right, and he would not have been suspect by those around him for much of anything except being too optimistic concerning the Red Army. That Faymonville seems to have not been aware (or possibly simply not cared) of how others were viewing his activities and how people may have perceived them in the most sinister ways was a result of his flawed personal judgment, and thus makes him

a controversial figure in the history of the Second World War and in the history of American diplomacy in the Soviet Union for all time.

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