

V. M. MOLOTOV

**SOVIET
FOREIGN
POLICY**



**THE MEANING OF
THE WAR IN FINLAND**

TWO CENTS

This pamphlet is the text of the speech of V. M. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, before the joint session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on March 29, 1940.

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SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

THE MEANING OF THE WAR IN FINLAND

BY V. M. MOLOTOV

COMRADES and Deputies: Five months have elapsed since the last session of the Supreme Soviet. In this brief interval events have occurred that are of first-rate importance in the development of international relations.

It therefore behooves us at this session of the Supreme Soviet to examine the questions relating to our foreign policy. Recent events in international life must be examined first of all in the light of the war that broke out in Central Europe last autumn.

So far there have been no big battles in the war between the Anglo-French bloc and Germany, matters being confined to isolated engagements, chiefly on the sea and in the air. It is known, however, that the desire for peace expressed by Germany last year was declined by the governments of Great Britain and France and as a result preparations for expansion of the war were intensified by both sides.

Germany, which has lately come to a unit of about 80,000,000 Germans, which has brought certain neighboring states under her sway and which has in many respects strengthened her military might, has evidently become dangerous competition for the principal imperialist powers of Europe—Great Britain and France.

They therefore declared war on Germany under the pretext of fulfilling their obligations to Poland. It is now clearer than ever how far the real aims of the governments of these Powers are removed from the purpose of defending disintegrated Poland or

Czechoslovakia. This is shown if only by the fact that the governments of Great Britain and France have proclaimed that their aim in this war is to smash and dismember Germany, although this aim is still being concealed from the masses of the people under the cover of slogans of defense of the "democratic" countries and "the rights" of small nations.

Inasmuch as the Soviet Union refused to become an abettor of England and France in this imperialist policy toward Germany, their hostility toward the Soviet Union became still more pronounced, vividly showing how profound are the class roots of the hostile policy of the imperialists toward a socialist state.

And when the war began in Finland, British and French imperialists were prepared to make it a starting point of war against the U.S.S.R. in which not only Finland herself but also the Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Norway, were to be used.

The attitude of the Soviet Union to the war developing in Europe is well known. Here too a peaceable policy of the U.S.S.R. has been quite definitely displayed. The Soviet Union at once proclaimed that its position is one of neutrality and it has unswervingly adhered to that policy all through this period.

A radical change for the better in the relations between the Soviet Union and Germany found its expression in the non-aggression pact signed last August. These new, good relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany have been tested in practice in connection with events in former Poland, and their strength has been sufficiently proved.

The development of economic relations, which was envisaged even then, last autumn, found concrete expression already in August, 1939, in the trade agreement, and then in the February, 1940, trade agreement. Trade between Germany and the U.S.S.R. began to increase on the basis of a mutual economic advantage, and there is ground for its further development.

Our relations with England and France have taken a somewhat

different course. Inasmuch as the Soviet Union did not wish to become the tool of British and French imperialists in their struggle for world hegemony against Germany; we have encountered at every step profound hostility of their policy toward our country.

This has gone farthest of all in connection with the Finnish question, on which I shall dwell later. But in the past few months there have been quite a number of other instances of hostility toward the U.S.S.R. on the part of the French and British policy.

Suffice it is to mention that a couple of months ago the French authorities found nothing better to do than effect a police raid on our trade representation in Paris. In spite of their efforts to pick on every trifle, a search of the trade representation premises yielded no result. It only brought disgrace on the initiators of this preposterous affair and showed that there were no real grounds whatever for this hostile action toward our country.

As we see from the circumstances connected with the recall of Jacob Suritz, our Ambassador to France, the French Government is seeking for artificial pretexts to stress its unfriendly attitude toward the Soviet Union.

In order to make it clear that the Soviet Union is not any more interested in relations between these two countries than France, we have recalled Suritz from the post of Ambassador to France.

Or take such instances of hostility toward the U.S.S.R. as the seizure by British warships in the Far East of two of our steamers proceeding to Vladivostok with goods purchased by us in America and China.

If to this we add such facts as the refusal to fulfil old orders for industrial machinery placed by us in England, attachment of funds of our trade representation in France, and many others, the hostile nature of actions of the British and French authorities with regard to the Soviet Union becomes still more manifest.

Attempts have been made to justify these hostile acts toward our foreign trade on the grounds that by trading with Germany

we are helping her in the war against England and France. It does not take much to see that these arguments are not worth a brass farthing.

One has only to compare the U.S.S.R., say, with Rumania. It is known that Rumania's trade with Germany makes up half of her total foreign trade and that, moreover, the share of her national production in Rumania's exports to Germany, for example, of such basic commodities as oil products and grain, far exceeds the share of its national production in the Soviet Union's exports to Germany.

Nevertheless, the governments of Great Britain and France do not resort to hostile acts toward Rumania and do not think it possible to demand that Rumania should cease trade with Germany. Quite different is their attitude toward the Soviet Union. Hence the hostile acts of England and France toward the Soviet Union are to be explained not by the fact that the U.S.S.R. is trading with Germany but by the fact that the plans of British and French ruling circles to utilize our country in the war against Germany have been frustrated and as a result they are pursuing a policy of revenge toward the Soviet Union.

It should be added that England and France have resorted to all these hostile actions even though the Soviet Union has so far not undertaken any unfriendly actions in regard to these countries.

As to the fantastic plans attributed to the Soviet Union of a Red Army "March on India," "March on the East" and the like, they are such obvious absurdities that one must completely lose his senses to believe such absurd lies.

This is not the point, of course. The point evidently is that the Soviet Union's policy of neutrality is not to the liking of the British and French ruling circles. What is more, their nerves do not seem to be quite in order. They want to force us to adopt a different policy, a policy of enmity and war against Germany, a policy that would afford them the opportunity of utilizing the U.S.S.R. for their imperialist aims.

It is time that these gentry understood that the Soviet Union never has been and never will be a tool of the policy of others, that the U.S.S.R. has always pursued its own policy and always will pursue it irrespective of whether these gentry in other countries like it or not.

I shall now pass to the Finnish question. What was the meaning of the war that took place in Finland during the last three-odd months? As you know, the meaning of these events lay in the necessity of safeguarding the security of the northwestern frontiers of the Soviet Union, and above all in safeguarding the security of Leningrad.

All through October and November last year the Soviet Government discussed with the Finnish Government proposals which, in view of the existing international situation, which was growing more and more inflammable, we considered absolutely essential and urgent for safeguarding the security of our country and especially Leningrad.

Nothing came of these negotiations, in view of the unfriendly attitude adopted by Finland's representatives. The decision of the issue was passed to the field of war.

It may be safely said that if Finland had not been subject to foreign influences and if Finland had been less incited by certain third states to adopt a hostile policy toward the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union and Finland would have arrived at a peaceful understanding last autumn and matters would have been settled without war.

But in spite of the fact that the Soviet Government reduced its requests to a minimum, the settlement could not be reached by diplomatic means.

Now that hostilities in Finland have ceased and a peace treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Finland has been signed, it is necessary and possible to judge the significance of the war in Finland in the light of incontrovertible facts. And these facts speak for themselves.

They show that in the neighborhood of Leningrad, all over the Karelian Isthmus to a depth of fifty to sixty kilometers, the Finnish authorities had erected numerous powerful ferro-concrete, granite and earth fortifications armed with artillery and machine guns.

The number of these fortifications ran into many hundreds. These fortifications, especially the ferro-concrete structures, attaining a high degree of military strength, connected by underground thoroughfares, surrounded by anti-tank trenches and granite anti-tank obstacles, and supported by countless mine fields, constituted what was known as the Mannerheim Line, which was built under the supervision of foreign experts on a model of the Maginot Line and the Siegfried Line.

It should be mentioned that until recently these fortifications were considered impregnable, that is, such as no army had ever broken through before. It should also be mentioned that Finnish military authorities had endeavored beforehand to convert every little village in this area into a fortified position, supplied with arms, radio antennae, fuel stations, etc. In many parts of South and East Finland strategic railways and highways of no economic importance whatever had been built, leading right up to our frontier.

In short, the hostilities in Finland have shown that already by 1939 Finland and especially the Karelian Isthmus had been converted into a *place d'armes* ready for an attack by third powers on the Soviet Union, for an attack on Leningrad. Incontrovertible facts show that the hostile policy that we encountered on the part of Finland last autumn was no fortuitous thing. The forces hostile to the Soviet Union had prepared in Finland such armed places against our country and in the first place against Leningrad, which in event of a certain foreign situation unfavorable to the U.S.S.R. was to play its part in the plans of the anti-Soviet forces of imperialists and their allies in Finland.

Not only has the Red Army smashed the Mannerheim Line

and thereby covered itself with glory as the first army to force its way under most difficult conditions through a deep, powerful zone of perfectly modern military fortifications, not only has the Red Army destroyed Finnish *places d'armes* that had been made ready for attack on Leningrad, but it also put an end to certain anti-Soviet plans that some third countries had been hatching during the past few years.

How far had gone the enmity toward our country on the part of the Finnish ruling and military circles which had prepared the *places d'armes* against the Soviet Union is also seen from the numerous cases of exceptionally barbarous atrocities perpetrated by the Finnish Whites on wounded Red Army men who had fallen into their hands. For example, when, in one of the areas north of Lake Ladoga, Finnish Whites surrounded our hospital dugouts, where 120 severely wounded men were lying, they killed them all to a man. Some were burned, others were found with shattered skulls, while the rest had been bayoneted or shot.

In addition to mortal wounds, a large number of men who died there and in other places were found to have been shot in the head or finished off with rifle butts, while some of the men who had been shot were found to have knife stabs in the face.

Some of the corpses had been beheaded and the heads could not be found. As to our medical nurses who fell into the hands of the Finnish Whites, they were subjected to special atrocities and incredible brutalities. In some cases corpses were found tied to trees head down.

All these barbarities and countless atrocities were the fruit of the policy of the Finnish White Guards, endeavoring to fan hatred toward our country among their people. Such is true in the face of these Finnish champions of "Western civilization."

It is not difficult to see that the war in Finland was not merely an encounter with the Finnish troops. No, the matter was more complicated than that. It was not merely Finnish troops that our

troops encountered but also the combined forces of the imperialists of a number of countries, including British, French and others who assisted the Finnish bourgeoisie with every form of weapon, especially artillery and aircraft, as well as with their men in the guise of "volunteers," with gold and every kind of supplies, and with their frenzied propaganda all over the world with the purpose of kindling the war against the Soviet Union in every way.

To this should be added that amidst this furious howling of the enemies of the Soviet Union, always the loudest of all were the squealing voices of all those prostituted "Socialists" of the Second International, all those Attlees and Blums, Citrines and Jouhaux, Trammels and Hoeglunds—all those lackeys of capital who have sold themselves body and soul to the warmongers.

Speaking in the House of Commons March 19, Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, not only expressed his malicious regret at having failed to prevent termination of the war in Finland, thus turning his "peace-loving" imperialist soul inside out for all the world to see, but also made something in the nature of an account of how and in what way the British imperialists endeavored to help fan the war in Finland against the Soviet Union.

He made public a list of war materials that had been promised and dispatched to Finland: 152 planes were promised, 101 sent; 223 guns promised, 114 sent; 297,000 shells were promised, 185,000 sent; 100 Vickers guns were promised, 100 sent; 20,700 air bombs were promised, 15,700 sent; 20,000 anti-tank mines were promised, 10,000 were sent, and so on.

Without the least embarrassment Chamberlain stated that:

"... preparations for an expedition were being carried on with all rapidity and at the beginning of March an expeditionary force of 100,000 men was ready to leave, two months before Mannerheim had asked for it to arrive. This was not necessarily the last force."

Such on his own admission is the true face of the "peace-loving" British imperialist.

As to France we learn from the French press that she dispatched to Finland 179 airplanes, 472 guns, 795,000 shells, 5,100 machine guns, 200,000 hand grenades, etc.

On March 11, Edouard Daladier, then French Premier, declared in the Chamber of Deputies that:

"France has taken the lead of the countries that agreed to supply munitions to Finland and in particular at the request from Helsinki she has just dispatched ultra-modern bombing planes to Finland."

Daladier announced that:

". . . the French expeditionary corps had stood ready and equipped since February 26. A large number of vessels are ready to sail from two large ports in the Channel and the Atlantic Coast."

He further declared that the Allies "would help Finland with all the forces promised." These hostile statements of Daladier toward the Soviet Union speak for themselves. However, there is no need to dwell upon these hostile utterances, as it is apparent that they no longer reveal a fully sober mind.

Mention also should be made of Sweden's part in the Finnish war. From reports printed in all Swedish newspapers during the war against the Soviet Union, Sweden supplied Finland with "a certain quantity of aircraft roughly equal to one-fifth of Sweden's total air force at the time." The Swedish War Minister stated that the Finns had received from Sweden 84,000 rifles, 575 machine guns, over 300 artillery guns, 300,000 hand grenades and 50,000,000 cartridges. All this material, as the Minister declared, was of the very latest pattern.

Nor was Italy behindhand in the efforts to fan the war in Finland, to which, for example, she dispatched fifty military planes.

Finland also received military aid from such devotees of

"peace" as the United States of America. According to incomplete information at our disposal the total munitions of all kinds sent to Finland by other countries, only during the war, amounted to not less than 350 airplanes, about 1,500 guns, over 6,000 machine guns, about 100,000 rifles, 650,000 hand grenades, 2,500,000 shells, 160,000,000 cartridges and much else.

There is no need to cite other facts to show that what was going on in Finland was not merely our collision with Finnish troops. It was a collision with the combined forces of a number of imperialist states most hostile toward the Soviet Union. By smashing these combined forces of our enemies, the Red Army has added another glorious page to its history and has shown that the springs of valor, self-sacrifice and heroism among our people are inexhaustible.

The war in Finland has exacted heavy sacrifices both from us and the Finns. According to estimates of our general staff on our side the number killed and those who died of wounds was 48,745, or somewhat less than 49,000 men and the number of wounded was 158,863.

Attempts are being made on the part of the Finns to minimize their losses, but their casualties were considerably bigger than ours. Our general staff places the number of Finnish killed at not less than 60,000 without counting those who died of wounds and the number wounded not less than 250,000. Thus considering that the strength of the Finnish Army was not less than 600,000 men one must admit that the Finnish Army lost in killed and wounded over one-half its total strength. Such are the facts.



The question remains, why did the ruling circles of England and France and of several other countries, too, take such an active part in this war on the side of Finland against the Soviet Union?

It is well known that the British and French Governments made desperate efforts to prevent the termination of the war and the restoration of peace in Finland, although they were not bound

by any obligations toward Finland. It is also well known that some time ago, even though there existed a pact of mutual assistance between France and Czechoslovakia, France did not come to the aid of Czechoslovakia. Yet both France and England positively forced their military aid upon Finland, doing the best they could to prevent termination of the war and restoration of peace between Finland and the Soviet Union.

The hired pen pirates, scribes who specialized in fraudulent news and hoaxes, are trying to attribute this conduct of Anglo-French circles to their particular solicitude for "small nations." But to attribute this policy of England and France to their particular solicitude for the interests of small countries is simply ridiculous. To attribute it to their obligations toward the League of Nations, which, it is alleged, demanded protection for one of its members, is also absurd.

In fact it was hardly a year ago that Italy seized and destroyed independent Albania, which was a member of the League of Nations.

Well, did England and France go to Albania's defense? Did they even raise a feeble voice in protest against Italy's predatory action in forcibly subjugating Albania, without the least regard for its population of more than 1,000,000 people and completely ignoring the fact that Albania was a member of the League of Nations?

No, neither the English nor the French Governments nor yet the United States of America nor the League of Nations, which has lost every vestige of prestige because it is dominated by these very Anglo-French imperialists, even raised a finger in this case.

For twelve months these "protectors" of small nations, these "champions" of the rights of members of the League of Nations have not dared raise the question of Italy's seizure of Albania in the League of Nations, although this occurred last April.

More, they have virtually sanctioned this seizure. Consequently, it is not the protection of small nations and not the protection of the rights of members of the League of Nations that explain

the support rendered Finland by the ruling circles of England and France against the Soviet Union. This assistance is to be explained by the fact that in Finland they had *places d'armes* ready for an attack upon the U.S.S.R., whereas Albania did not occupy such a place in their plans.

As a matter of fact, the rights and interests of small countries are just so much small change in the hands of the imperialists.

The *Times* of London, leading newspaper of British imperialists, and *Le Temps*, leading newspaper of French imperialists, not to mention other English and French bourgeois newspapers, have during these past months been openly calling for intervention against the Soviet Union without the least regard for the fact that so-called normal diplomatic relations exist between England and France on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

In step with these leading bourgeois newspapers and even a little ahead of them are speeches from the "Servants Hall" that has now been instituted in every respectable bourgeois state for "Socialists" of the type of Clement Attlee in England and Leon Blum in France, who are doing their utmost to fan and spread the flames of war.

In the utterances of the Anglo-French imperialist press and of its "Socialist" henchmen we hear the voice of infuriated imperialism which hates the Socialist State and with which we have been familiar from the earliest days of the Soviet Union.

As far back as April 17, 1919, the London *Times* wrote:

"If we look at a map we shall find that the best approach to Petrograd [now Leningrad] is from the Baltic and that the shortest and easiest route is through Finland, whose frontiers are only about thirty miles distant from the Russian capital. Finland is the key to Petrograd, and Petrograd is the key to Moscow."

If proofs were needed that British and French imperialists have not yet discarded these hare-brained plans, recent events in

Finland have dispelled all doubt on this score. These plans have again been thwarted not because of lack of zeal on the part of anti-Soviet forces in England and France and not merely because at the last moment leading circles in Finland and also in Sweden and Norway showed at last some glimmerings of reason. These plans were thwarted by the brilliant successes of the Red Army, particularly on the Karelian Isthmus.

Recent events have reminded us all of the necessity of continuing steadily to increase the might of our Red Army and of all defenses of our country.

In the beginning of February the Finns made practical moves for termination of the war in Finland. We learned through the Swedish Government that the Finnish Government desired to ascertain our terms upon which the war could be brought to a close. Before deciding this question we approached the People's Government of Finland for their opinion on this question. The People's Government expressed the view that in order to put an end to bloodshed and to ameliorate the condition of the Finnish people, a proposal to terminate the war should be welcomed. Thereupon we proposed our terms, which were soon after accepted by the Finnish Government.

I must add that the week after the negotiations with the Finns were opened the British Government also expressed the desire to ascertain whether there was any possibility of mediation, ostensibly with the object of stopping the war in Finland. But when Ivan Maisky, our Ambassador in England, informed London of our proposals, which were subsequently adopted in their entirety by Finland, the British Government did not wish to cooperate in stopping the war and restoring peace between the U.S.S.R. and Finland.

Nevertheless, an agreement was soon reached between the U.S.S.R. and Finland. The results of the agreement to termi-

nate hostilities and establish peace are contained in the peace treaty signed on March 12. In this connection the question arose of the People's Government dissolving itself, which it did.

You are familiar with the terms of the peace treaty. This treaty has changed the southern and partly the eastern frontiers of Finland. The whole Karelian Isthmus, together with Viborg and the Bay of Viborg, the whole western and northern shore of Lake Ladoga, together with Kexholm and Sortavala, have passed to the Soviet Union.

In the region of Kandalaksha, where the Finnish frontier approached particularly close to the Murmansk Railway, the frontier has been pushed further back. Finland ceded to the Soviet Union small sections of the Sredny and Ribachi peninsulas which belonged to her in the north and a certain group of islands in the Gulf of Finland, together with the Island of Hoagland.

In addition the Soviet Union has acquired on a thirty years' lease in return for an annual payment of 8,000,000 Finnish marks the Peninsula of Hangoe and adjacent islands, where we shall build a naval base as protection against aggression at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland.

Furthermore, the treaty provides facilities for the transit of goods for Sweden and Norway and the Soviet Union. At the same time the peace treaty provides for mutual abstention from aggression and from participation in hostile coalitions.



Attempts have been made in the English and French press to depict the Soviet-Finnish treaty, and particularly the transfer of the Karelian Isthmus to the Soviet Union, as destruction of the independence of Finland. This, of course, is absurd and a downright falsehood. Finland still comprises a territory nearly four times as large as Hungary and over eight times as large as Switzerland. If no one has any doubt that Hungary and Switzerland are independent states, how can there be any doubt that Finland is independent and sovereign?

The English and French press also wrote that the Soviet Union wants to convert Finland into a mere Baltic state. That, too, is absurd, of course. It is sufficient to point to the fact that after having occupied, during the war, the region of Petsamo on the Arctic Coast, the U.S.S.R. voluntarily restored this region to Finland considering it necessary to let Finland have an ice-free ocean port. From this it follows that we regard Finland as a northern and not merely a Baltic country.

The truth does not lie in these fabrications of English and French newspapers which are old hands in the art of forgery in their anti-Soviet propaganda. The truth lies elsewhere: It is that the Soviet Union, having smashed the Finnish Army and having every opportunity of occupying the whole of Finland, did not do so and did not demand any indemnities for its expenditures in the war as any other power would have done, but confined its desires to a minimum and displayed magnanimity toward Finland.

Then, what is the basic idea of the peace treaty? It is that it properly insures the safety of Leningrad and of Murmansk and the Murmansk Railway.

This time we could not confine ourselves merely to the desire we expressed last autumn, acceptance of which by Finland would have averted the war.

After the blood of our men had been spilt through no fault of our own and after we had become convinced that the hostile policy of the Finnish Government toward the Soviet Union had gone very far indeed, we were obliged to put the question of security of Leningrad on a more reliable basis and moreover to raise the question of security of the Murmansk Railway and Murmansk, which is our only ice-free ocean port in the west and is therefore of extreme importance for our foreign trade and for communication between the Soviet Union and other countries generally.

We pursued no other object in the peace treaty than that of safeguarding the security of Leningrad, Murmansk and the

Murmansk Railway. But we considered it necessary to settle this problem reliably and durably.

The peace treaty is based on recognition of the principle that Finland is an independent state, recognition of the independence of her home and foreign policy and at the same time on the necessity of safeguarding the security of Leningrad and the northwest frontiers of the Soviet Union.

Thus the object we set out to achieve has been achieved and we may express our complete satisfaction with the treaty with Finland.



Political and economic relations with Finland are now fully restored. The Government expresses the conviction that normal and good-neighborly relations will develop between the Soviet Union and Finland.

We must, however, utter a warning against attempts to violate the peace treaty just concluded that are already being made by certain circles in Finland, as well as in Sweden and Norway under the pretext of forming a military defensive alliance of these countries.

In the light of a speech recently delivered by C. J. Hambro, president of the Norwegian Storting, in which, referring to historical examples, he called upon Finland "to reconquer the frontiers of the country" and declared that peace like the one Finland has concluded with the U.S.S.R. "cannot last for long," in the light of this and similar utterances it is easy to understand that attempts to form the so-called defensive alliance of Finland, Sweden and Norway are directed against the U.S.S.R. and are unwisely fostered by the ideology of military revenge.

The formation of a military alliance of this kind in which Finland participated would not only run counter to Article III of the peace treaty, which forbids either of the contracting parties from joining any coalition hostile to the other, but to the peace treaty as a whole, which firmly defines the Soviet-Finnish frontier.

Loyalty to this treaty is incompatible with Finland's participation in any military-vengeance alliance against the U.S.S.R.

As to the participation of Sweden and Norway in such an alliance, that would simply imply that these countries had abandoned their policy of neutrality and had adopted a new foreign policy from which the Soviet Union could not but draw proper conclusions.

Our Government on its part considers that the Soviet Union has no points of dispute with Sweden and Norway and that Soviet-Swedish and Soviet-Norwegian relations should develop on a basis of friendship.

As to the rumors that the Soviet Union is demanding ports on the west coast of Scandinavia, such as Narvik, these rumors were spread for anti-Soviet purposes and are so wild that they need no refutation. Efforts of "Socialist" gentry like Hoeglund in Sweden and Trammel in Norway to spoil relations between these countries and the Soviet Union should be branded as efforts of sworn enemies of the working class who have been bought by foreign capitalists and are betraying the interests of their own people.

The conclusion of the peace treaty with Finland consummates the task we set ourselves last year of safeguarding the security of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Baltic. This treaty is a necessary complement to the three pacts of mutual assistance concluded with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively. Our experience during the six months that elapsed since these pacts of mutual assistance were concluded enables us to draw very definite and positive conclusions concerning these treaties with the Baltic countries.

It must be admitted that the treaties concluded by the Soviet Union with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have served to strengthen the international position of both the Soviet Union and of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In spite of the scare raised by the imperialist circles hostile to the Soviet Union, the state and political independence of

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania has not suffered in any way while the economic intercourse between these countries and the Soviet Union has begun markedly to increase. The pacts with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are being carried out in satisfactory manner and this creates premises for further improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and these countries.

Recently the foreign press has been devoting extreme attention to relations between the Soviet Union and its neighbors on the southern borders, particularly on the Transcaucasian border and with Rumania.

Needless to say, the Government sees no ground for any deterioration of our relations with our southern neighbors, either.

It is true in Syria and in the Near East generally extensive and suspicious activity is afoot in the creation of the Anglo-French, mainly the colonial, armies headed by General Weygand.

We must exercise vigilance in regard to attempts to utilize these colonial and non-colonial troops for purposes hostile to the Soviet Union. Any such attempt would evoke on our part counter-measure against the aggressors.

And the danger of playing with fire in this way must be perfectly obvious to the powers hostile to the U.S.S.R. and to those of our neighbors who would become tools of this aggressive policy against the U.S.S.R.

As to our relations with Turkey and Iran, they are determined by our existing pacts of non-aggression and by the unswerving desire of the Soviet Union for observance of mutual obligations arising out of them. Our relations with Iran in the economic sphere are regulated by the Soviet-Iran trade treaty just concluded.

Of the southern neighboring states I have just mentioned, Rumania is one with which we have no pact of non-aggression. This is due to the existence of the non-settled dispute, the question of Bessarabia whose seizure by Rumania the Soviet Union

has never recognized although it has never raised the question of recovering Bessarabia by military means.

Hence there are no grounds for any deterioration in Soviet-Rumanian relations. It is true that it is some time now since we have had a Minister in Rumania and his duties are being performed by a chargé d'affaires. But this has been due to specific circumstances of the recent past. If we are to deal with this question, we must recall the dubious role played by Rumanian authorities in 1938 in relation to Butenko, who was then Soviet acting Minister to Rumania. It is well known that the latter in some mysterious way disappeared not only from the legation but from Rumania and to this day the Soviet Government has been unable to obtain any authentic information about his disappearance, and what is more we are expected to believe that Rumanian authorities had nothing to do with this scandalous and criminal affair. Needless to say, things like this should not happen in a civilized state, nor in any well-ordered country, for that matter. After this, reason for delay in appointing a Soviet Minister to Rumania will be clear. It is to be assumed, however, that Rumania will understand that such things are not to be tolerated.

In our relations with Japan we have not without some difficulty settled several questions. This is evidenced by the conclusion on December 31, last, of the Soviet-Japanese fisheries convention for the current year, and also by Japan's consent to pay the last installment for the Chinese Eastern Railway, which had long been overdue.

Nevertheless, we cannot express great satisfaction over our relations with Japan. To this day for example, notwithstanding the prolonged negotiations between the Soviet-Mongolian and the Japanese-Manchurian delegates, important questions of determining the frontier line on territory in the area of the military conflict of last year has remained unsettled. Japanese authorities

continue to raise obstacles to normal utilization of the last installment for the Chinese Eastern Railway, which Japan has paid. In many cases the treatment of employees of Soviet organizations in Japan and Manchuria by the Japanese authorities is quite abnormal.

It is time it were realized in Japan that under no circumstances will the Soviet Union tolerate any infringement of its interests. Only if Soviet Union-Japanese relations are understood in this way can they develop satisfactorily. In connection with Japan I will say a word or two on one, so to speak, unbusinesslike proposal.

The other day a member of the Japanese Diet put the following question to his Government:

“Ought we not consider how to end once and for all the conflicts between the U.S.S.R. and Japan, as, for example, by purchasing the maritime region and other territories?”

The Japanese Deputy who put this question and is interested in the purchase of Soviet territory, which is not for sale, must be a jovial fellow. But in my opinion his stupid questions will not help to raise the prestige of his Parliament. If, however, the Japanese Parliament is so keen on trading, why should not its members raise the question of selling South Sakhalin. I have no doubt that purchasers would be found in the U.S.S.R.

As regards our relations with the United States of America, they have not grown any better lately, nor for that matter have they grown any worse, if we do not count the so-called moral embargo against the U.S.S.R. which is perfectly meaningless, especially after conclusion of peace between the U.S.S.R. and Finland.

Our imports from the United States have increased as compared with last year, and they might increase still more if American authorities did not put obstacles in the way.

Such on the whole is the international situation as a consequence of the events of the past five months. From all that I have

said the main tasks of our foreign policy in the present international situation will be clear.

Stated briefly, the task of our foreign policy is to ensure peace between nations and the security of our country. The conclusion that must be drawn from this is that we must maintain a position of neutrality and refrain from participating in the war between the big European Powers.

This position is based on the treaties we have concluded and it fully corresponds to the interests of the Soviet Union. At the same time this position serves as a restraining influence in preventing further extension and instigation of war in Europe and it is, therefore, in the interests of all nations that are anxious for peace and are already groaning under new and enormous burdens of privations caused by the war.

In summing up the events of this past period, we see that in regard to safeguarding the security of our country we have achieved no mean success. And it is this that makes our enemies furious.

Confident, however, in our cause and in our strength, we will continue consistently and unswervingly to further our foreign policy.

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